



PM urges global efforts to boost girls' education

- Shehbaz seeks collective efforts to remove sociocultural impediments
- Muslim World League chief highlights need to counter misconceptions
- Malala attends conference snubbed by Afghan Taliban

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has called for collective efforts to remove cultural or social impediments to ensure women's access to education, as education leaders from Muslim countries convened in Islamabad to collaborate on initiatives for advancing girls' education.

A two-day international conference, 'Girls Education in Muslim Communities: Challenges and Opportunities,' commenced in Islamabad on Saturday to foster dialogue and find actionable solutions to address problems in this regard.

The summit brought together leaders from Muslim-majority countries, including Nepal, Laos, Malala Yousafzai, but without Afghanistan — the only country where girls are banned from pursuing higher education. Education Minister Khadija Majeed Siddiqui told AFP that Islamabad had extended an invitation to Kabul, "but no one from the Afghan government was at the conference".

In his address at the conference, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called upon global and local organisations, philanthropists, and entrepreneurs to join them in creating scalable and sustainable opportunities for ensuring women's education.

The premier said that in the next decade, millions of young girls would enter the job market. As they do so, they have the potential not to just lift themselves, their families, and the nation out of poverty but also to enrich the global economy and find innovative solutions to their shared challenges, he added.

PM Shehbaz stressed that they

should assure the women that their rights would be respected, their ambitions would be met, and that no cultural or social impediment would stand in the way of their dreams. He said that despite their rich legacy, the Muslim world, including Pakistan, was facing numerous challenges in ensuring equitable access to education for girls. He said denying education to girls was tantamount to denying them their right to a bright future.

'Education apartheid' schooling in crisis in Pakistan — Page 5

In Pakistan, the prime minister said, women comprised half of the population, but the female literacy rate stood at 49 per cent, while alarmingly around 22.8 million children, in the age bracket of five to eight years, were out of school. The premier said inadequate infrastructure, safety concerns, as well as deeply entrenched societal norms further exacerbated this problem, creating a cycle of deprivation, spawning generations.

He also extended gratitude to the Muslim World League for its unwavering commitment to education and announced the signing of the 'Islamabad declaration' in line with the UN objectives and as a collective aspiration for the Muslim Ummah.

'Countering misconceptions'

Muslim World League (MWL) Secretary General Muhammad Bin Abdul

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif holds the MoU signed during the International Conference on Girls' Education 2025, on Saturday. — AFP

Pakistan, China commit to top-notch CPEC 2.0

Foreign secretary, Chinese vice minister discuss bilateral ties; ambassador sees more strategic cooperation in future

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China have reaffirmed their commitment to high-quality development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) 2.0, with emphasis on industrialisation, Special Economic Zones (SEZs), clean energy, agriculture and livelihood projects.

This was agreed between the two sides in the 5th meeting of the CPEC Joint Working Group on International Cooperation and Coordination (JWG-ICC) held in Beijing, the Foreign Office spokesperson said in a statement on Saturday.

The meeting was co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Arshad Baloch and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong. The meeting acknowledged the pri-

mal role of CPEC in promoting regional connectivity, cooperation and common prosperity.

The two sides reviewed the progress made since the fourth meeting of the JWG-ICC in Islamabad on Jan 21, 2024.

The foreign secretary described CPEC as the cornerstone of economic cooperation between the two countries and a "shining symbol of the enduring friendship".

Gwadar's potential: Editorial on Page 6

The Chinese vice foreign minister highlighted the new avenues introduced under CPEC 2.0 — growth, livelihood, innovation, open and green corridor — and their integration with Pakistan's national development framework centred on five Es: exports, e-Pakistan, energy, environment and equity.

The two sides expressed their resolve to deepen cooperation in the fields of

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Ogra cracks down on adulterated LPG sale

By Kalbe Ali

ISLAMABAD: With ample stocks available in the country, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) has launched a major operation against the sale of adulterated liquefied petroleum gas, collecting samples from multiple LPG companies to detect the presence of harmful chemicals.

The crackdown comes after complaints of adulterated LPG being sold in non-compliant cylinders, prompting the regulator to deploy special teams to conduct operations across Punjab and Sindh.

The action has reportedly led to a reduction of around Rs20 per kilogram in LPG retail prices, bringing some relief to consumers during the winter season.

The modified retail price of LPG stands at Rs255 per kg, but open market rates had surged to Rs320 due to increased seasonal demand.

The daily LPG consumption in the country is around 2,000 tonnes. However, smooth winter trade with Iran and steady imports from Turkmenistan have ensured adequate stocks, enabling Ogra to conduct quality checks across LPG companies.

LPG Distributors Association chairman Brian Khokhar welcomed the crackdown, highlighting the safety risks posed by adulterated LPG.

"The sale of adulterated LPG increases the

Continued on Page 5

Govt, PTI locked in war of words over stalled dialogue

- NA speaker says neither side has approached him for next round of talks
- Quiser claims Sadiq inaccessible since Jan 4, terms PML-N remarks major hurdles in moving forward
- Khawaja Asif says Imran's release is court matter

By Riam Juraiki and
Muhammad Khan

ISLAMABAD / SWAP: Claim and counter-claims between the government and the opposition continued on Saturday despite the initiation of dialogue after months of deadlock, with the PML-N-led coalition and the PTI accusing each other of derailing negotiations and lacking seriousness.

As the blame game continued, National Assembly Speaker Sardar Arshad Sadiq claimed that neither the government nor the PTI had approached

him for the next round of negotiations, despite his willingness to provide a venue.

He said it was not possible for him to arrange a meeting between the PTI committee members and incarcerated party founder Imran Khan and suggested they should approach the government for this purpose.

However, Mr Sadiq said PTI leader Anas Quiser had contacted him on Jan 4 to inform him that the party's desire for meeting with Imran Khan had already been conveyed to the government. He said he had advised Mr Quiser to directly

contact Raza Razaullah and other government representatives regarding the matter.

However, Anas Quiser, speaking to Dawn, confirmed reaching out to the NA speaker on Jan 4 but said Mr Sadiq became inaccessible afterwards. "I tried to contact him on Saturday and even sent a text message, but there was no reply. I don't know if he is in Pakistan or still abroad. I wanted to ask if the government is serious about the talks and what kind of hurdles exist in its way," he said.

Mr Quiser emphasised that PTI had entered into talks

solely for the sake of Pakistan, considering the country's law and order situation at its borders. "Pakistan cannot be run the way the incumbent government has been trying to run it. PTI is the largest political party, and our leader is in jail just for the sake of Pakistan," he added.

'PML-N leaders sabotaging talks'

He criticised the statements of PML-N leaders, alleging they were sabotaging the negotiation process. In a video message, he accused Defence Minister Khawaja Asif and

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz of attempting to obstruct the ongoing talks.

The former NA speaker reiterated PTI's commitment to dialogue despite the November 25 incident, where "peaceful party members were denied their right to protest and subjected to direct firing". "We are negotiating for the sake of Pakistan's progress, even in the face of illegal government actions," he said.

Condemning the trials of PTI workers in military courts, Mr Quiser vowed the practice

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Six dead, seven hurt in fireworks explosion

By Wassam Ashraf Butt

GUJRAT: At least six people lost their lives and seven others sustained injuries when the roofs of two houses collapsed following a fire caused by exploding materials in Kot Phuley Shik village of Mandi Bahaudin on Saturday.

According to rescue and police officials, the tragedy unfolded at the house of Khalid Khokhar, who was reportedly involved in manufacturing fireworks for weddings and celebrations in the area.

The stored explosive materials ignited during the night while the family was asleep, triggering a massive explosion. The blast caused the roof of Mr Khokhar's house to collapse, with debris also causing the roof of a neighbouring house to cave in.

The deceased were identified as Samaira Bibi (40), Haroon Faris (7), Imran (41), Rishma Bibi

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ON OTHER PAGES



Sindh hosts Governors' Summit

The governors of all four provinces and Gilgit-Baltistan have expressed a shared commitment to strengthen cooperation between provinces. This was decided in the first-ever Governors' Summit, convened at the Governor House in Karachi. Today, politics took a back seat, and the state came forward. Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori said after the meet. **Page 3**

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JIT to probe into forged pics of CM, UAE head

LAHORE: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) cyber crime wing has expanded scope of the probe against those involved in editing and spreading doctored images/videos of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and United Arab Emirates (UAE) President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on social media and formed a Joint Investigation Team (JIT).

The FIA Lahore on Saturday arrested five persons from different areas of Punjab for allegedly uploading fake images/videos of the foreign dignitary and CM Punjab and also making objectionable comments and booked them under PECA.

The JIT comprises the deputy directors from Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Multan and Lahore. The JIT will be headed by FIA Lahore Additional Director Chaudhary Sarfaraz. The FIA scrutinised a number of suspected accounts on social media and registered cases against five culprits.

According to the FIA, preliminary findings showed that 20 social media accounts were involved in uploading the manipulated images and videos of the UAE president and the Punjab CM. The identified accounts were reportedly used to spread false visuals and create a negative impression among social media users. More arrests are expected in coming days, the FIA said.

The UAE president had arrived at the Rahim Yar Khan Airport on Sunday last, where Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif welcomed him. Maryam Nawaz was also present there and greeted the visiting dignitary with a handshake. However, Ms Nawaz faced criticism from some quarters that termed her handshake with the UAE president inappropriate.

Later, AI-generated videos and pictures of her interaction with the UAE president were also widely circulated online. CM Maryam Nawaz reportedly was annoyed over this social media campaign against her and directed the authorities concerned for strict action against those involved in it. Subsequently, the FIA, cyber crime wing, Lahore, became complainant in this matter and launched the inquiry. — Staff Reporter

Fog forces closure of key motorway sections in Punjab

LAHORE: The National Highways & Motorways Police (NHMP) on Saturday announced the closure of multiple motorway sections in Punjab due to severe fog. The affected routes include:

M1 - from Kala Shah Kaku to Kot Momin Interchange and Kot Momin Interchange to Salam Interchange; M2 - from Kala Shah Kaku to Kot Sarwar Interchange; and M3 - from About Hakeem Interchange to Darkhana.

Visibility in these areas has plummeted to as low as 50-60 meters, rendering driving conditions extremely hazardous. The closures have been implemented to safeguard motorists.

Authorities have enforced all necessary safety measures and alerted relevant agencies to ensure public safety. Travelers are urged to stay updated on traffic and weather conditions and exercise extreme caution while traveling. — Staff Reporter

Imran moves LHC for post-arrest bail in eight May 9 riots cases

By Waqif Ahmad Sheikh

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf incarcerated founding chairman Imran Khan on Saturday approached the Lahore High Court (LHC) seeking post-arrest bail in eight cases of May 9 riots including an attack on the corps commandant's residence.

Eight separate bail petitions have been filed before the LHC in as many cases through barrister Salman Siddiq.

A two-judge bench comprising Chief Justice Aulia Nadeem and Justice Asad Javed Ghori will take up the petitions on Monday.

An anti-terrorism court had on Nov 27 denied bail to the former prime minister in these cases.

The petitions mainly argued that the prosecution failed to establish the petitioner's association with the unfortunate occur-

rences narrated in the FIRs.

They said the petitioner has been implicated in the May 9 cases as a result of a well-orchestrated plan merely to harass and humiliate him for political reasons even though admittedly he was in the custody of the NAB.

The arrest of the petitioner was never required in the cases, which was evident from the fact that police remained reluctant to secure his arrest during five months and 12 days after the dismissal of his pre-arrest bail by the trial court.

The petitions alleged that the indifferent behaviour of police and lack of effort in securing the arrest of the petitioner at a time when he was detained at Adiala Jail, substantiate the argument that arrest of the petitioner was not required in the cases.

The sole allegation against the petitioner in the cases is of "abstention", which has been

supplemented by the prosecution most vaguely, the pleas added.

They argued that the trial judge overlooked the fact that frivolous and baseless allegations related to the May 9 events have already been rejected due to inconsistencies in the story of the investigating agency.

Moreover, the trial judge also passed a lengthy order by ignoring the basic principle of the law of bail, laid down by the superior courts that "deeper appreciation of evidence should not be done at bail stage and only tentative assessment should be done."

The petitions argued that Imran Khan has been facing an unprecedented political victimisation for two years. The May 9 cases are yet another effort by the state/police to implicate the petitioner in a criminal matter under the sole allegation of abstention, they added.

The petitions ask the LHC to set aside the trial court's decision and grant bail to the former prime minister in the eight FIRs.

Denying bail to the PTI founding chairman, the ATC had declared that the charges of abetting and conspiring with the perpetrators of the May 9 riots against the petitioner were not ordinary in nature.

"The offences fall within the prohibitory clause of section 497 of CrPc. Petitioner was found guilty," ATC-I Judge Mansoor Ali Gill had observed in his order.

The judge had 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 occurrences.

Therefore, he said, the argument of the petitioner's counsel that his client was behind the

bar at the time of offences had no weight.

The judge had also rejected another stance by the counsel that the petitioner's post-arrest bail in so many other cases had already been allowed by different courts.

"This court also is of the view that it is not an ordinary case of abetment, instigation or conspiracy," the trial judge had remarked in his order.

He had observed that being the founding chairman of PTI, the petitioner's speeches and directions were strictly followed by his workers and supporters.

Separately, ATC-III Judge Arshad Javed had on Nov 8, 2024 granted post-arrest bail to Imran Khan in four other cases, including burning the PML-N office in Model Town, a constable near Kalma Chowk, police vehicles in Gulberg, and violence at Shorpu Bridge during the May 9 riots.

Families demand action against human traffickers

By Our Correspondent

GUJRAT: Families and children of dozens of missing people from the June 2023 Libya Coast boat capsule tragically staged a protest after receiving phone calls from alleged human traffickers in Libya, demanding additional money.

The demonstrators from Gujrat, Gajrawala, Mandi Bahauddin, Sheikhupura and Bhimber district of Anad Kashmir gathered at Kotla Chavki. Their rally culminated at Gujrat Press Club, carrying banners and placards demanding that the government take immediate action for the recovery of their loved ones, dead or alive.

The families claimed at least 75 Pakistanis were among those missing in the 2023 tragedy. They chanted slogans against



human traffickers and criticised the authorities for failing to meet their expectations.

Protesters alleged that hundreds of people were stranded in safe houses controlled by international human trafficking mafias in Libya.

Several protesters shared distressing accounts of receiving phone calls from members previously used by their missing relatives.

The callers, allegedly traffickers, demanded additional ransom for either returning the bod-

ies of the deceased or arranging phone conversations with the missing individuals. Despite sharing this information with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), no action has been taken, they said.

One protestor emphasised that

beyond the 75 missing Pakistanis from the 2023 tragedy, hundreds have been detained by traffickers for years.

The captives reportedly demand large sums for their release, exacerbating the families' suffering.

The protesters urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to intervene for the safe recovery of these held captive in Libya's safe houses and to ensure the return of the deceased victims' bodies.

Gujrat and Gajrawala FIA circles have registered dozens of cases against human traffickers linked to the incident, claiming to have arrested several suspects in crackdowns. However, the victims' families expressed dissatisfaction with the progress and demanded stricter actions to ensure the recovery of the missing persons.

PTI-backed candidate wins LBA election

LAHORE: PTI-supported Maheshwar Behman Chaudhry of Hamed Khan-led Professional Group was elected president of the Lahore Bar Association (LBA) for 2025-26 in the election held on Saturday.

Maheshwar, who was a unanimous candidate of the final Lawyers Forum (LRF), bagged 2,400 votes, ending his group to reclaim the bar after a gap of a year.

Supporters of the winning president celebrated the victory with slogans and festivities, dancing in the dreamboats. They also chanted slogans in support of incarcerated PTI found-

ing chairman Imran Khan. Some supporters of the winning candidates also resorted to aerial firing on Fane Road near the Lahore High Court.

Adeeb Aslam Bhandar, an independent candidate, once again stood runner-up with 2,058 votes.

He came second in the last year's election as well when Khuram Shad of the Professional Group could secure third position.

Interestingly, this year the presidential candidate of Aama Jahangir Group, Mian Fais Ali, stood third with 1,867 votes, while another independent candidate Irfan Hayat Bajwa bagged 1,708 votes.

Mian Sharjeel and Saif Khokhar were elected as vice presidents. Waqas Aslam Khatoun was the vice president seat for Model Town and Afshan Jhokhar secured the vice president position for Cantonment.

For two positions of the secretary, Naseer Bhutta of professional group and

Malik Sharjeel Khokhar of Aama Jahangir Group emerged victorious.

Shujaat Ali Khan was the joint secretary seat and Ejaz Gujjar was elected as finance secretary, while Samina Khokhar secured the librarian position. Prof Arfaiz Ahmed Khan won the seat of auditor.

MULTAN: Malik Javed Dogar was elected president of the District Bar Association Multan for 2025-26.

Interestingly, Mr Javed was not only supported by the lawyer wings of the PTI but also the PML-N and the PPP besides various other factions.

Malik Javed is a brother-in-law of PTI MNA and Chief Whip of the National Assembly Malik Amir Dogar, who remained present at the bar during the whole election activity on Saturday.

Malik Javed secured 2,106 votes against his main rival Syed Bashir Nagvi who bagged 819 votes. — Staff Reporter

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An initiative to battle climate change

Qureshi tells PPP to take stand on canals or quit coalition

Jailed PTI leader says Bilawal's party should demand CCI meeting; calls party's differences with PML-N 'noora kushi'

By Mansoor Malik

LAHORE: The incarcerated PTI vice-chairman, Shehbaz Mahmood Qureshi, has advised the PPP to either demand a Council of Common Interest (CCI) meeting or quit the coalition in the Cane over its objections to proposed canals to irrigate land in Punjab.

The PPP, which is in alliance with the PML-N in the federal government, has expressed serious reservations over a plan to build new canals on the Indus River for farming in Punjab's Christian region.

The PPP leaders have also raised these concerns in talks with PML-N, saying the project would cut the province's water share and render its lands "completely barren".

On Friday, PML-N leader and Federal Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal dismissed PPP's concerns over the project as "useless debate".

In a handwritten letter seen by Dawn, Mr Qureshi said the PPP should demand an immediate meeting of the CCI, which has representatives from all four provinces.

The CCI meeting — which should take place every three months as per the Constitution — hasn't been held for almost a year, Mr Qureshi said, adding that in this scenario, the demand for a meeting would be "fair and within the spirit of the Constitution".

Water, being a very "sensitive issue," required consensus amongst the federating units as per the Constitution, Mr Qureshi said.

"Why the PPP is quiet over [this issue] being debated in Sindh," Mr Qureshi stated.

"People of Sindh want to know the correct position [of PPP]. They

are interested in the whole truth," the PTI leader stated.

Mr Qureshi added that the PPP should split the coalition if it cannot take a stand on this issue.

He, however, downplayed the difference between PPP and PML-N, calling it "nothing more than a 'noora kushi'".

According to Mr Qureshi, the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA), a group of political parties from Sindh, was also accusing the PPP of surrendering the province's water rights.

He said if the proposed canals are built, Balochistan, being a lower riparian province would suffer the most.

The federal government's approval for six canals over the River Indus will be detrimental to Sindh's agriculture and needed to be revisited, the PTI leader warned.

The GDA, as per Mr Qureshi, has claimed the federal government must consult with the plan after approval from President Asif Zardari.

The jailed PTI leader also commented on PPP's grip over not being consulted by the PML-N on major government decisions.

Recently, the PPP took exception to the establishment of the Pakistan Maritime and Seaport Authority (PMSEA) by the federal government, calling it a "unilateral decision".

Mr Qureshi said the PPP criticised the federal government for failing to consult before forming the new body and asserted the federal government's survival hinges on its support.

The PTI vice-chairman, while citing media reports, stated that the Sindh government deflected plans to allot 14,000 acres of land to an army-backed company for corporate farming.

However, it was also reported that an agreement had been signed by the Sindh government with Green Corporate Initiative (GCI) Ltd, and the provincial Sindh government had consented to allot 52,000 acres of state land for corporate farming in six districts of Sindh.

PM urges global efforts to boost girls' education

Continued from Page 1

Karim Aijana stressed the need to counter misconceptions propagated by certain groups regarding girls' education per Islam. He said misconceptions existed in some Islamic societies, but this conference had brought together scholars to refute them. "We aim to spread this message globally, particularly in Islamic countries, to counter the misinterpretation propagated by certain groups," he explained.

He said the event, organised by the MWL in collaboration with Pakistan, aimed to highlight the significance of women's education in Muslim societies and address misinformation surrounding the issue. Dr Aijana stated that this conference was part of an initiative by the Muslim World League to promote women's education and underline its importance.

He said a session with



Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Malala Yousafzai meets delegation members at the summit on 'Girls' Education in Muslim Communities', on Saturday. —AFP

scholars from various Islamic schools of thought was held on Friday in which they unanimously agreed that education was equally essential for women as it was for men. Dr Aijana highlighted that the conference would culminate in the 'Islamabad declaration', which would dispel misconceptions about women's education in Muslim countries.

This declaration will be a message to the world that all Islamic scholars and schools of thought were in agreement on the necessity of women's education for societal progress, he said, adding that Islam strongly supported women's education and that those opposing it had no valid basis.

Sheikh Dr Nizam Moham-mad Ayad, Mufti of the Arab Republic of Egypt, stressed the Quranic and prophetic emphasis on education as a universal right. "Educating women is not a privilege; it is an obligation deeply rooted in Islamic jurisprudence and essential for the advancement of society," he remarked.

Professor Hina Taryaba Khattab, vice-chancellor of Pakistan Institute of Fashion and Design, Lahore, stressed the economic and social gains of empowering women through education.

Drawing on examples from Pakistan, she pointed out that investment in girls' education leads to long-term benefits for families and communities. "International and Islamic charters together create a robust framework for advocating women's education as a fundamental right and a social necessity," she noted.

Malala in limelight

Nobel Peace Prize laure-

ate Malala Yousafzai said she was "overwhelmed" to be back in her native Pakistan on Saturday, as she attended a summit on girls' education in the Islamic world that has been marked by Afghanistan's Taliban government. Ms Yousafzai, who was shot by the TTP militants in 2012 when she was a schoolgirl, will address the conference today.

"I'm truly honoured, overwhelmed and happy to be back in Pakistan," she said AFP as she arrived at the conference with her parents. On Friday, she posted on social media that she would speak about "why leaders must hold the Taliban accountable for their crimes against Afghan women & girls".

Since returning to power in 2021, the Afghan Taliban government has imposed an austere version of Islamic law that the United Nations has called "gender apartheid". —Agencies

Kundi seeks Centre's intervention for Kurram peace

KP governor blames PTI govt's failure to handle situation for escalating crisis

By Imran Ayub

KARACHI: Amid ongoing unrest in Kurram district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday called for urgent intervention from the federal government and armed forces to restore stability.

"There are bunkers and sophisticated weapons that our police are unable to manage or combat. The peace deal has not yielded significant results because those working to resolve the issues lack support from the government. Without that backing, peace cannot be achieved," he said.

After months of violence that killed more than 120 people, a peace agreement was signed between the warring

sides last week. But despite a halt in fighting, the route connecting Peshawar with the rest of the province remains blocked.

Asked about the way forward, given the failure of the second to bring peace, Mr Kundi promptly shared his perspective. "I believe the only way forward is for the federal government and armed forces to intervene and bring peace," he said.

The KP governor raised concerns over the PTI government's handling of provincial resources, questioning its spending of substantial funds since 2013 while failing to strengthen the police force.

"The PTI government must explain how it spent the Rs500 billion it has received from the Centre for the war on terror since 2013," he said. "This province is at the forefront of terrorism, yet it lacks

a police force capable of combating it. Our police are under-equipped, with inadequate weapons, technology, and training. It's a waste of public money, and the PTI government should be held accountable for this failure."

He also suggested inclusion of leaders of the opposition in the provincial apex committee, which formulates strategies against terrorism.

Governor Kundi also criticised CM Ali Amin Gandapur, noting that his role in cases related to terror, murder, and violence undermines his ability to address the KP's deteriorating security situation.

"How can the CM, who is himself implicated in these cases, explain the worsening crisis due to the security administration? He is part of the problem," he added.

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Fazl accuses establishment of clinging to power

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Farhat Reza Khan on Saturday accused the country's establishment of clinging to authority despite widespread criticism from all sectors of society, alleging that "it remains indifferent to what is right or wrong" and that "its sole concern is maintaining power".

Speaking to reporters, Maulana Fazl sharply criticised the establishment for failing to change its approach, citing several examples of what he claimed proved the powerful quarters' tendency to "ridicule democracy".

Asked about the future of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's government — the JUI-F leader argued that democratic success depended not on the completion of a term but on the legitimacy of the government's executive mandate.

"It's not about completing the term. We have seen in the past that martial law regimes have had the longest tenures," he said. "The real question is whether this government can claim that it came to power through fair elections and holds a genuine mandate with moral and legal authority."

Highlighting irregularities in recent by-elections in two Balochistan Assembly constituencies, Maulana Fazl said, "In one constituency, Nadra verified only two per cent of the votes as genuine. In another, a candidate was declared victorious despite not winning a single polling station. How can we trust such elections?"

He criticised the establishment for its refusal to change its attitude, accusing it of having no ideology beyond a "thirst for authority". He added, "They may get angry over criticism, but when they mock democracy in this way, how can they expect not to face public backlash?"

To a question, the JUI-F chief said the legislation for the registration of madrassahs has already been enacted at the parliamentary level and asked why provincial governments are delaying legislation when a national law is already in place.

He called for immediate implementation through provincial laws. He also mentioned that relief had been provided for madrassah registration through a presidential ordinance and clarified that JUI-F had no objections to the government's efforts to bring certain madrassahs under its control.

On economic issues, he stressed that the public would remain dissatisfied until the common man felt the effects of economic progress.

He also noted that the PTI had not taken the public into confidence regarding its ongoing negotiations with the government, so he refrained from commenting on the matter.

ECP suspends Jattak's victory notification, summons RO

By Imshad A. Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan has suspended the victory notification of Balochistan minister and PPP lawmaker Ali Madad Jattak from PB-45 and summoned the Returning Officer as well as original Form-45 of the 15 polling stations where re-poll was held on Jan 5.

On Sept 10, 2024, an election tribunal had declared the victory of Balochistan Minister for Agriculture Mir Ali Madad Jattak null and void and ordered re-polling at 15 polling stations in the PB-45 Quota constituency. The tribunal, headed by Justice Abdullah Baloch of the Balochistan High Court had rendered the decision on a petition filed by Mir Usman Pirkozi of JUI-F.

Mr Jattak, however, retained his Balochistan Assembly seat in the

by-election held at 15 polling stations of PB-45 Quota. According to unofficial results, Mr Jattak secured 1,883 votes in the by-election held on the election tribunal's order. Nasrullah Zery of the Peshawaran National Awami Party (PNAP) remained second with 4,122 votes, while JUI-F's Mir Usman Pirkozi received 3,731 votes.

Mr Pirkozi had filed a plea with the ECP alleging that the RO "manipulated" all the election documents, pertaining to 15 polling stations where re-poll was ordered by the tribunal. He contended that Form-45 of the respective 15 polling stations handed over to the respective polling agents by the polling officers concerned did not match with Form-47.

The ECP issued notices to RO and all other respondents to appear before the commission and submit their response to the petition.

Kidnap victim issues video statement

By Umar Farooq and Paizul Gull

PESHAWAR: Two security personnel were martyred and six terrorists killed in an exchange of fire in rebel Datta Khel of North Waziristan district on Saturday, sources said.

The clash occurred in the Zangori area, where around a dozen terrorists stormed a security checkpoint with light and heavy weapons.

Two security personnel were also injured in the crossfire. The injured, along with the bodies of the martyrs, were airlifted to Miranshah.

The sources said that four security personnel were injured after a hand grenade exploded in Fort Biji in Mir Ali area. The injured were airlifted to the Combined Military Hospital in Bannu district.

No statement was issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations, the military's media wing, till late in the night.

In a separate development, one of

private workers of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) has urged the government to take immediate steps for their release.

"The government is requested to immediately accept the [militants'] demands. Our release is conditional upon the fulfilment of the Taliban's demands," said Bashir, one of the abductees, in a video message recorded and released from an undisclosed location.

On Jan 9, a senior police official from Lakki Marwat district confirmed that at least 17 PAEC contractual workers, along with their driver, were kidnapped by armed militants while travelling along the Lakki-Marwat Road to a private vehicle.

A rescue operation was immediately launched, resulting in the recovery of eight workers, including one who was injured, he said.

Sources said the PAEC contractual workers were on route to a project site in the Qaboolkhal area of the district when their coach was intercepted by armed assailants.

The kidnappers took the hostages to an undisclosed location before abducting and setting fire to the coach in

a forested area along the Kurram River.

On Saturday, Mr Bashir, who shared some demands from the militants, appealed to the government to immediately meet them.

"Today is January 11, 2025 — our third consecutive day [in captivity]. Now some demands have come from them [referring to the kidnappers]," he said in the video message.

The Taliban, arrested in Lakki Marwat, should be immediately released, and their [Taliban's] houses should not be demolished in the future, Mr Bashir shared, detailing the demands.

According to Mr Bashir, the Taliban also demanded that the owners of demolished houses be compensated. While addressing his senior officers, Mr Bashir appealed that the demands be considered, as their release was contingent upon accepting these conditions.

He also clarified that rumours circulating in the media suggesting that the captive contractual workers had been released were false. "There is no such thing; 10 persons are still in captivity," he added.

Politics takes back seat at first-ever Governors' Summit

Five governors from across Pakistan share stage to strengthen inter-provincial cooperation

By Tahir Siddiqui

KARACHI: Five governors from across the country on Saturday joined hands with a shared commitment to strengthen inter-provincial cooperation and enhance the constitutional role of governors for the benefit of the nation.

The first-ever historic Governors' Summit was convened at Governor House in Karachi under the chairmanship of Sindh Governor Karman Khan Tessori. Besides Mr Tessori, Punjab Governor Salim Hashir Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, Balochistan Governor Sheikh Jaffer Khan Mandokhail and Gilgit-Baltistan Governor Nyeal Mehdi Shah discussed the roles and powers of governors.



Sindh Governor Karman Tessori addresses the first-ever Governors' Summit, on Saturday. —Dawn

Expressing gratitude to the attending governors for their presence, Sindh governor stated, "It is an honour to host this landmark event. The participation of all governors has added great value to this initiative."

During the summit, Balochistan

Governor Sheikh Jaffer Khan Mandokhail highlighted the need to enhance the constitutional role of governors, calling it the need of the hour.

KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi highlighted the importance of foster-

ing inter-provincial communication, calling it essential for national unity.

The GB governor expressed his appreciation for Sindh governor's initiative, stating, "Thank you for hosting this summit. Together, we will work towards common goals."

Following the summit, Mr Tessori, accompanied by the other governors, addressed the media, declaring the event a historic milestone. "Today, politics took a back seat, and the state came forward. Governors from different political affiliations have united under one roof. We all stand firmly with the Constitution and the state," he said.

He elaborated that the summit aimed to strengthen harmony among provinces. "Governors are constitutional representatives, and the Constitution is designed to serve the people. It is imperative for us to utilise our roles and powers to better serve the public," he added.

He stated that all governors were committed to public service at their respective levels and were keen to play a more active role in facilitating governance and delivering services to the people.

Asked about future plans, Mr Tessori hinted at organising an International Governors' Summit, adding, "Pakistan faces numerous challenges, and governors can play a significant role in addressing them."

The Punjab governor commended Mr Tessori for hosting the summit, remarking, "By organising this summit, the Sindh governor has set a new benchmark. The next Governors' Summit will be held in Lahore, with participation from former and current governors," he announced.

The KP governor expressed a desire to contribute to the country's economic development, while the Balochistan governor noted that such summits could help resolve pressing issues, highlighting the crucial role governors play in bridging provinces and the federal government. The GB governor extended his support to Sindh governor, stating, "We stand with you as you lead the way forward."

The summit concluded with a shared commitment to strengthen inter-provincial cooperation and enhance the constitutional role of governors for the benefit of the nation.

Commission sought for release of children trapped in blasphemy cases

ISLAMABAD: Human rights activists have demanded of the government to form an independent investigation commission to get children trapped in blasphemy cases released.

The demand came from lawyer Usman Warrach, Rana Akhbar Hashmi

Advocate and Imam Manzoor Advocate and the parents of the affected children at a news conference here at the National Press Club.

Lawyer Usman Warrach said that according to a report by the Special Branch last year, a suspicious religious extremist

group is trapping Muslim boys and girls into sharing blasphemous content online under specific plan.

No far, more than 450 Muslim youth have been victims of false cases, including more than 150 in Adiala Jail, more than 170 in Lahore Camp Office Jail and Kot Lakhpur Jail

and 55 youths in the cell cells of Karachi Central Jail.

He said that a group has recruited young boys and girls for trapping innocent who befriended innocent youths on social media and have them by pretending to be in love with them.

Under various pretexts including friendship, job, date or spending the night, they go to the Safe House located in G-8 area of Islamabad. They call where the members of this group brutally torture these boys, which includes hanging them upside down and beating them with sticks, making their videos, etc. The number of people associated with this group is 25 to 30 who become plaintiffs after trapping young people from all over Pakistan, and each plaintiff is involved in trapping more than 20 young people. These plaintiffs also write their incorrect addresses in the FDS.

The lawyers have demanded that until a commission is formed in this regard proceedings over such cases should be stopped and minor children should be released.

— Staff Reporter

Several Islamabad colleges face teachers' shortage

Years on, five model colleges await regular teaching staff

By Kashif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: Several colleges run by the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) are facing a shortage of teachers while five model colleges in the federal capital were functioning without a regular teaching staff.

Source said the girls' college in Bhara Kahra, and the boys' colleges in Humak, Sector E-14, and Sector E-9/3 are without adequate teaching staff. Meanwhile, the model colleges in Mera Bagwal, Pakistan Town, Sector G-13, and Sector G-15 did not have regular teaching staff even though they started functioning a few years ago. According to an FDE official, "The education ministry should look into this issue and all posts should be filled with regular staff in the greatest interest of students."

An education official, however, said that only the Bhara Kahra college was facing a shortage of teachers. Except for this college, no other colleges were facing an immediate shortage of teachers. The official said six new teachers recently joined

the FDE and a majority of them would be posted to this college.

Speaking about the regular staff for model colleges, the official said that the FDE had moved a summary in this regard.

"The FDE has moved PC-4 (for regular posts) of four colleges to the education ministry to get approval for regular posts. Once these posts are approved, we will request the FPSC (Federal Public Service Commission) for appointments," he said, adding that PC-4 for the Mera Bagwal college would be sent to the education ministry soon.

In reply to a question about the shortage of college teachers in other colleges, he said the FDE in September had forwarded their case to the FPSC for the recruitment of 10 associate professors (two male and eight female) and 11 assistant professors (18 male and 15 female), 58 female lecturers, and 33 male lecturers. Once the recruitment process is finalised, the department will have 110 new teachers.

At present, the department introduced a rationalisation policy under which surplus teaching staff was transferred to other colleges to meet the shortage of teachers. Under this policy, after the input from the principals concerned, some male teachers were assigned to girls' colleges, and some female teachers were assigned to boys' colleges.

On the other hand, an FDE offi-

cial criticised the education ministry and the directorate for a delay in recruitment for the model colleges. He said these colleges took several years to build and the government could have hired teachers in the meantime, but that did not happen.

"This is unfortunate that five model colleges, which started operations a couple of years ago, still don't have sanctioned posts. Similarly, some other colleges, like the one in Bhara Kahra, started classes many years ago, but are still facing a shortage of teachers," he said.

FDE is the supervisory body of 431 schools and colleges in Islamabad. Besides, around three hundred schools, there are 12 FC colleges and 26 model colleges under its supervision.

Interestingly, like its colleges, the FDE itself is struggling as it is being run through ad-hoc arrangements since July last year. The post left vacant in July, when the education ministry abruptly got then-DC Dr Iqbal Ali Malik removed. Since then, the ministry is running the FDE without a regular head.

When contacted, a senior official at the education ministry said there was no delay on part of the education ministry. "We have moved a summary carrying names of three shortlisted candidates to the federal government," he said, hoping a name for the post would be approved soon.

Pakistan tops world in hepatitis C cases: PM's aide

By Our Staff Reporter

Hepatitis C, a significant public health challenge facing Pakistan.

He further highlighted its dire consequences saying, "If we do not act, Pakistan will face over 11 million HCV cases by 2035, leading to 500,000 plus liver cirrhosis cases, over 100,000 cases of liver cancer and 130,000 HCV-related deaths."

The economic impact would be a loss of over \$285 million annually, he said.

Dr Bharrath pointed out that as of 2021, only 14 per cent of Hepatitis C cases in the country had received treatment, with testing and treatment access being the key

challenges.

According to a statement, the federal government, in collaboration with provincial governments, has launched the Prime Minister's Programme for the Elimination of v(HCV) Infection in addition to these challenges with a plan to allocate Rs34.15 billion over the next three years.

In addition, provincial governments will contribute Rs33.61 billion, bringing the total funding for the initiative to Rs 67.77 billion.

"Pakistan has made significant strides toward hepatitis elimination," Dr Bharrath said.

DR. PAUJWANI CENTER FOR MOLECULAR MEDICINE AND DRUG RESEARCH (INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES) UNIVERSITY OF KARACHI, KARACHI-75270

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DIRECTOR, ICCBS



GOVERNMENT OF SINDH KARACHI WATER & SEWERAGE CORPORATION INVITATION FOR BIDS



DESIGN, FINANCE, BUILD, OPERATE, MAINTAIN AND TRANSFER OF THE 5-MGD SEAWATER DESALINATION PLANT PROJECT UNDER PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP MODE

Country: Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Procuring Agency: Karachi Water & Sewerage Corporation, Government of Sindh

RFP Ref. No.: KWSC-PPP/PROC-5MGD/2024-25

PROJECT BRIEF

Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation (KWSC), a public sector organization responsible for the provision of water and sewerage services in Karachi under the Karachi Water & Sewerage Corporation Act 2023, intends to engage a private to design, finance, build, operate, maintain and transfer a Desalinated Water Supply System to ensure long term potable grade water supply to the city of Karachi (Project).

The Project is being implemented as part of the KWSC's overall development pipeline to increase water availability and improve water services in Karachi through Public-Private Partnerships (PPP).

Capitalized terms used herein and not otherwise defined shall have the meaning given to them in the RFP.

PROJECT SCOPE

The Project's scope of work shall include, inter alia, the following:

- Detailed design of the Project in consultation with KWSC;
- Construction of the Desalinated Water Supply System (including intake structure, the pre-treatment facility, reverse osmosis seawater desalination plant, pumping station, outlet structure etc.);
- Operations and maintenance of the Project; and
- Transfer Project to KWSC on the Final Expiry Date.

CONCESSION PERIOD

The Project is structured for a Conditions Precedent Period of six (6) months, Construction Period of two (2) years and Operations Period for twenty-five (25) years. For more details of the Project scope and time, please refer to the request for proposal document (RFP), which will be issued by KWSC on 16th January 2025.

ELIGIBLE BIDDERS

KWSC hereby invites the interested Parties, either as a single entity or a consortium formed by two (2) or more persons to participate in the Tender Procedure and to submit their Bids for the Project in accordance with the requirements of the Applicable Evaluation Documents.

PRE-BID MEETING SCHEDULE*

Pre-bid Meeting: Monday, 10th February 2025

*For further details, refer to the RFP Section 9 (Data Sheet) of Part 1 (Instructions to Bidders)

BIDDING PROCEDURE

The Project's procurement shall be conducted in accordance with the international competitive bidding using single stage two envelope procedure as per the Applicable Evaluation Documents.

Project Director-5 MGD Desalination Project

Karachi Water & Sewerage Corporation

Address: Room No. 26, First Floor, Block B, 9th Mile, Karsaz, Karachi - Sindh (Pakistan)

Phone: +92 21 99245130 - 99222193 Fax: +92 21 99211537 Email: info.ppproc@gmail.com

Website: KWSC - <https://www.kwscb.gov.pk>; SPPRA - <https://ppma.ppsindh.gov.pk/PPMS/>; PPP Unit - <https://www.pppunitsindh.gov.pk/>

ENR/2025/001

www.kwscb.gov.pk

Balochistan Levies merged into police despite opposition

1,116 personnel to be absorbed in police in three districts

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: Despite opposition from both treasury and opposition benches in the provincial assembly, the Balochistan government has merged the Levies force of three districts — Quetta, Gwadar and Lasbela — into the provincial police force with immediate effect.

The decision, approved in a meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Shaukat Qadir on Jan 6, was made after consultations with the district administrations concerned regarding the shifting of operational command from district Levies to district police. An official notification was issued on Saturday.

Under this decision, a total of 1,116 Levies personnel, including officers and other staff, will be absorbed in the Balochistan police in these three districts.

The notification stated that the director general of the Levies Force in Balochistan had sent a letter to the additional chief secretary of the home department, recommending the merger of Levies personnel: Quetta Levies into Quetta Police, Gwadar Levies into Gwadar Police, and Lasbela Levies into Lasbela and Hub Police.

A total of 1,116 personnel from the Levies Force in these three districts have now been merged into the police force.

These include various ranks such as weapons inspectors, clerks, risaldars, nail risaldars, dafadars, khansadars, jamadars, havildars, soldiers, wireless operators and footmen, spanning Grade 1 to Grade 11 positions.

Specifically, 346 Levies personnel from Quetta, 281 from Gwadar, 226 from Lasbela and 263 from Hub have been integrated into the police force of these districts.

The Levies, police stations, vehicles, weapons and other official equipment will be transferred following a thorough assessment.

During the winter session of the Balochistan Assembly, which concluded last week, both the opposition and some members of the government strongly opposed the decision to merge Levies into police.

They demanded that the government withdraw the decision and instead equip Levies with modern weapons, bulletproof vehicles and other necessary equipment to strengthen the force.

It is important to note that the Levies Force in Balochistan had been merged into the police during the coalition government led by Jam Yousaf.

However, in 2008, the Nawab Aslam Raisani-led PPP coalition government reversed that decision and restored Levies as a separate force.

The Levies Force was responsible for policing around 90 per cent of Balochistan, while police operated in the remaining 10 per cent of the province.

Another coal miner killed as Sanjdi victims confirmed dead

Balochistan Mines Department orders legal action against owner

By Our Staff Correspondent

QUETTA: A miner was killed in the Duki coal field area due to a landslide inside a mine on Saturday, while officials confirmed that eight coal miners trapped 4,000 feet deep inside a collapsed mine in the Sanjdi area of Quetta have lost their lives.

The eight miners were among 12 who had been buried under tonnes of debris following a methane gas explosion on Thursday. Despite continuous rescue efforts over the past 60 hours, teams managed to recover only four bodies from around 3,500 feet below the surface.

"Unfortunately, it is now confirmed that the remaining eight coal miners have perished under the weight of thousands of tonnes of debris," Balochistan Chief Inspector of Mines Abdul Ghani Baloch told Dawn, adding that

efforts to recover the bodies were still underway. In Saturday's incident, the miner killed in the Duki coal field area due to a landslide inside a mine was identified as Muhammad Ramzan, a resident of Qila Saifullah. He was recovered by fellow miners and shifted to the district hospital.

Legal action against mine owners

The Mines and Minerals Department has decided to take legal action against the owner of the collapsed coal mine in Sanjdi over not taking precautionary measures for the safety of the coal mine.

In a letter, Mr Baloch has asked the district administration to take legal action against the mine owner and file an FIR to bring those responsible to justice.

Balochistan Minister for Mines and Minerals Shaukat Noshadani also vowed strict action. "Those responsible for the incident will be brought to justice after an inquiry," he said, adding that the safety of miners was a top priority for the government and that a strategy was being devised to ensure proper safety protocols in all coal mines.

Govt, PTI locked in war of words over stalled dialogue

Continued from Page 1

unconstitutional. "The government's misuse of military courts to try civilians will not intimidate us. We are standing firm," he declared.

He also accused the government of backtracking on its promise to facilitate a meeting between the PTI committee and Imran Khan during negotiations. "Now they are resorting to coercion and delaying tactics," he said.

Highlighting the need for political and economic stability, Mr Qasim reiterated PTI's demands for a constitutionally governed country, a strong parliament and an independent judiciary.

He concluded by stating that Imran Khan is emerging as a global leader, embarking on hard ships in jail for Pakistan's future. "The entire nation stands with him," he said.

PTI Central Information Secretary Sheikh Wasim Akram on Saturday emphasised his party's commitment to making the dialogue process meaningful, noting Imran Khan's decision to allow the party's negotiating team to submit their demands in writing as proof of their sincerity.

He accused those who had "frankly" seized power of

attempting to sabotage the talks by deploying their allies to undermine the process.

He said these elements viewed the release of Imran Khan as their political downfall and would resort to fraudulent and vindictive tactics to keep him unjustly imprisoned.

Mr Akram also criticised PMI-N's social media team for their campaign against Reuters BBN, wife of Imran Khan. Referring to Maryam Nawaz's remarks about Hassan Nisar, the PTI leader commended him for his loyalty to Imran Khan and their shared vision of transforming Pakistan into a genuine welfare state, despite adverse circumstances.

'Courts to decide Imran's release'

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said that nothing is currently known about the release of Imran Khan, as this is a matter for the courts to decide. Speaking to the business community in Sukkur, he emphasised that while talks with the PTI are ongoing, they are not being formalised in writing. He said that only the PTI could explain why the party is reluctant to give its demands in writing.

He said the PTI delegation has conditioned the progress of

talks on arranging a meeting with Imran Khan, which he believed was causing delays in the negotiation process.

Mr Asif recalled that he had suggested in an interview that both sides should sign the minutes of the talks to formalise the process.

However, he pointed out that a PTI tweet followed his suggestion, and since then, talks with the PTI were not held. The tweet had suggested the dialogue process and hindered progress on negotiations, he added.

Mr Asif acknowledged that there is no issue in arranging a meeting with Imran Khan, but expressed concern that such meetings are often used for political purposes.

According to him, after every meeting, PTI holds a press conference or a rally, which he claimed is obstructing meaningful negotiations. However, he suggested that if meeting Imran Khan could help move the dialogue forward, it should be facilitated.

The defence minister accused the PTI delegation of leveraging the issue of Imran Khan's detention for political gains.

Abul Mahmood in Narwal also contributed to the report

Poliovirus detected in sewage samples from 17 districts

By Iqram Junaid

ISLAMABAD: The wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) has been detected in environmental samples collected from 17 already infected districts, the National Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the National Institute of Health has confirmed.

According to a lab official, sewage samples collected from Islamabad, Lasbela, Khuzdar, Quetta, Pilla Saifullah, D.G. Khan, Bakhsh, Siba, Daska, Mastung, Laski Marwat, Bahawalpur, Gujranwala, Noshki, Kochi, Faisal Yee Khan and Lahore have tested positive for WPV1.

The official explained that if the virus is found in the sewage, the sample is called positive, and whenever a child is paralysed by the virus, it is called a positive case.

"A sewage water sample from an area is the basic parameter to determine if polio vaccination campaigns are being carried out successfully," he added.

15 Levies men dismissed after Khuzdar attack

By Abdul Wahid Shahwani

KHUZDAR: Fifteen personnel of the Levies Force in the Khuzdar district of Balochistan have been dismissed from service for failing to resist terrorists and surrendering their weapons.

On Jan 8, 80 militants riding motorcycles and vehicles entered the Zohal Tehsil of Khuzdar and caused damage to several government buildings, including the Levies station, Nadra office, and municipal committee. They also took some Levies personnel hostage, seized their weapons, government vehicles and escaped.

The Balochistan government took notice of the local administration's delayed response and ordered an investigation.

However, before the investigation was completed, Khuzdar Deputy Commissioner Yasir Iqbal Dastgir dismissed the 15 Levies personnel, stating that no inquiry was needed due to their negligence in duty.

A notification issued by the Khuzdar deputy commissioner on Saturday stated that the Levies personnel showed cowardice and surrendered during an attack by terrorists.

Ogra cracks down

Continued from Page 1

risk of accidents," he said, adding that investigations revealed that carbon dioxide was being mixed with LPG extracted from towers.

"We have reports of Ogra using containers filled with carbon dioxide at certain LPG plants," he said. "This action is crucial because distributors like us are on the front line, dealing with consumer complaints."

Mr Khokhar explained that mixing carbon dioxide with LPG elevates cylinder pressure from the standard 540 pounds per square inch (PSI) to dangerous levels of 900 to 1,200 PSI. This pressure imbalance has caused cylinder explosions in Lahore and other parts of the country.

He said Ogra had also taken measures in collaboration with LPG distributors to recall the adulterated gas already sold in the market.

'Education apartheid': schooling in crisis in Pakistan

Country's dream of universal literacy hampered by poverty, poor resources, climate change, militancy

KARACHI: Amina Harman drops off her tattered school bag at her rural home in Pakistan and hurriedly grabs lunch before joining her father in the fields to pick vegetables.

The 11-year-old's entry into school at the age of seven was a negotiation between teachers and her parents in her farming village on the outskirts of Karachi.

"Initially, many parents were not in favour of educating their children," head teacher Rukhsar Amina told AFP.

"Some children were working in the fields, and their income was considered more valuable than education."

Pakistan is facing a severe education crisis, with more than 26 million children out of school, the majority in rural areas, according to official government figures — one of the highest rates in the world.

Pakistan is hosting a two-day international summit to advocate for girls' education in Muslim countries, attended by Nobel Peace laureate and education activ-

ist Malala Yousafzai.

In Pakistan, poverty is the biggest factor keeping children out of classrooms, but the problem is worsened by inadequate infrastructure and underqualified teachers, cultural barriers and the impact of climate change-fuelled extreme weather.

In the village of Abdullah Goth on the outskirts of Karachi, the non-profit Noorhan Pakistan Foundation school is the first in decades to cater to the population of over 2,500 people.

"There was no school here for generations. This is the first time parents, the community and children have realised the importance of a school," said Hamaira Rehail, a 36-year-old education advocate from the public and privately funded foundation.

'Education apartheid'

Public schools funded by the government offer free education but struggle with limited resources and overcrowding, creating a huge market for private schools whose costs can start from a few dollars a month.

In a parallel system, thousands of madrasas provide Islamic education to children from the poorest families, as well as free meals and housing, but often fail to prepare students for the modern world.

"In a way, we are experiencing an edu-

cation apartheid," said Asif Najam, an international relations professor at Boston University who has researched Pakistan's education system.

"We have at least 35 different systems, and you can buy whatever quality of education you want, from absolutely abysmal to absolutely world-class."

Even young student Azeema, who has set her mind on becoming a doctor after health professionals visited her school, recognises the divide with city kids. "They don't work in field labour like we do."

'Education emergency'

In the small market of Abdullah Goth, dozens of children can be seen drinking in and out of street-side cafes serving truck drivers or stacking fruit in market stalls.

Muhammad Haril, the 24-year-old owner of the workshop, does not support the idea of education and has not sent his own children to school.

"What's the point of studying if after 10 to 12 years, we still end up struggling for basic needs, waiting time and finding no way out?" he told AFP.

Najam, the professor, said that low-quality

education was contributing to the rise in out-of-school children.

Parents, realising their children cannot compete for jobs with those who attended better schools, instead prefer to teach them labour skills.

"Asking a crisis as children being out of school is the quality of the education in schools," said Najam.

Education in Pakistan is also increasingly impacted by climate change. Frequent school closures are announced due to heavy rain, heatwaves and floods.

In Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, education faces significant setbacks due to ongoing militancy, while classes are routinely disrupted in the capital, Islamabad, due to political chaos.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif declared an "education emergency" last year and said he would increase the education budget from 1.5pc of GDP to 4pc over the next five years.—AFP

Six dead, seven hurt

Continued from Page 1

(39), Iqra Bibi (34), and Palwasha (22). The injured include Farhan Khalid (7), Hashim Ali (15), Raza Isha (10), Muhammad Qasim (5), Muhammad Huss (3), Areej Faris (5) and Aysha Faris (10).

The incident occurred in the jurisdiction of Pabaranwali police.

Rescue officials shifted the dead and injured to Pabaran Tehsil Headquarters Hospital and the Pabaranwali Rural Health Centre for treatment. The bodies were later handed over to the relevant families after legal formalities.

CM expresses sorrow

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz expressed deep sorrow over the loss of six lives in the fireworks explosion. She offered condolences to the bereaved families and directed the authorities to ensure the best possible treatment for the injured.

The chief minister also ordered an immediate and strict ban on illegal fireworks manufacturing and sale to prevent such incidents in the future.



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16th INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON NATURAL PRODUCT CHEMISTRY

(Karachi, February 17 - 20, 2025)

H.E.J. Research Institute of Chemistry, University of Karachi, (International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences, University of Karachi) is organizing a Major International Symposium. The aim of this Symposium Series is to bring together the Leading Experts in the field of Natural Products Sciences from all around the world and forge a Global Partnership for sustainable utilization of Natural Resources for the common benefits of Humanity and rapid Development of the Countries in the South. Following aspects of Natural Product Sciences will be covered:

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The Last Date for Registration is 24th JANUARY, 2025. For details kindly contact Mr. Raheel Baig, Academic Coordination Office (ACO), H.E.J. Research Institute of Chemistry, UAN: 021-111-222-292; Ext. 395; Email: raheelh@iccs.edu

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INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES
University of Karachi, Karachi-75270 (Pakistan)



DAWN

Increased inflows

REMITTANCES sent home by migrant Pakistani workers have been a saving grace for the country's faltering economy for the last two decades. With export revenues growing at a painfully slow pace — and often stagnating for years in between — and foreign capital and investment inflows drying, successive governments have relied on remittances to push import-based consumption to boost growth. Thus, even a tiny increase in cash sent home by overseas Pakistanis can always be a moment for celebration. The ongoing fiscal year has proved to be exceptional for remittances, with inflows soaring by a third to a record level of \$17.8bn in the first half of the year to December from \$13.4bn a year ago. This lends hope that the country will be able to meet the targeted inflows of \$35bn in remittances, far surpassing export earnings, this year. No wonder the prime minister has used this occasion to "congratulate" the nation and boast of his government's success in stabilising the economy while underlining the commitment of overseas Pakistanis to their country's development.

The market players attribute the surge in remittances through formal banking channels to numerous factors: clampdown on illegal currency trade and smuggling to Afghanistan, stricter controls on exchange companies, exchange rate stability, and increased labour migration, especially young IT professionals, from the country in recent years. It is believed that remittances have a potential to grow to \$40bn a year if illegal currency trade is stemmed and customs controls strengthened against under-invoicing of imports by major traders from China, Dubai and elsewhere.

The increase in remittances is indeed a positive development for the economy as these have been driving the current account surplus for the last several months, contributing significantly to exchange rate stability and improvement in the State Bank's foreign reserves in the absence of foreign direct investment, as well as any meaningful bilateral and multilateral inflows. But it is not a wise policy to rely on them for external account stability. Remittances have their downsides as well. Studies have shown that higher remittances boost consumption and imports, lead to decline in domestic manufacturing and exports, and make economies of recipient nations more vulnerable to global and regional economic crises. No matter how favourable an impact these have on economic growth, remittances cannot be a substitute for exports and foreign private investment, which increase domestic productivity and generate jobs. Moreover, the quantum of remittances a country receives can never be predicted. Remittances represent hard-earned money by migrant Pakistanis that must be channelled into productive use for the country's social and economic development instead of squandering on imported luxuries. At the same time, the government needs to devise a strategy to increase industrial and agricultural productivity to boost exports and reduce reliance on uncertain remittances.

Gwadar's potential

THE Gwadar deep-sea port, completed in 2007, was supposed to be a shining success for the other newly built ports in the region and beyond. Yet eight years after the official launch of port operations — an event marked by the first-ever container ship with cargo from China passing through it — it lags behind even other China-built ports in Sri Lanka, Nigeria and Cameroon. Barely any vessel calls at Gwadar. Given the situation, it is not surprising that the planning and special initiatives minister is vexed over the failure of relevant authorities to "market the Gwadar port to expedite its commercialisation". Built as part of the multi-billion-dollar CPEC transport and energy infrastructure project, the port remains a non-starter and, in the words of the minister, a "white elephant instead of becoming a regional transshipment hub". During a meeting the other day, he blamed the maritime ministry and the SLC for their unprofessional handling of what would be the 'crown jewel' of the corridor initiative.

There's a reason the government is concerned over the fact that the Gwadar port has not kept pace with similar facilities in the region. Robust trade through Gwadar is crucial to develop the region and alleviate rampant poverty in Balochistan. Hence, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has recently ordered to route 60pc of all public sector cargoes through Gwadar to "trigger port activities". That is unlikely to happen anytime soon due to capacity constraints and much higher cost of transportation from Gwadar to the rest of the country compared with Karachi. On his part, the planning minister has directed the relevant authorities to hire an international consultant to prepare a plan to compete with other regional ports in attracting business for Gwadar. But a market plan, no matter how grand, cannot improve the security situation in Balochistan or bring peace to Afghanistan, without which it is impossible to get business from Central Asia. Nor can it convince China to relocate its industry here for export westward, or start importing oil through Gwadar. Moreover, it won't help address the capacity and power supply issues that constrain trade through the port. Unless the issues containing the potential of Gwadar are addressed, no executive order or marketing plan can make the port city a regional shipping and trade hub.

Broken metropolis

KARACHI, Pakistan's economic juggernaut, is the largest contributor to the nation's tax revenue. The Federal Board of Revenue's latest data reveals that Karachi's Large Tax Office accounted for 30.74 per cent of the total tax collection during 2023-24, generating a staggering \$42.52 billion. Despite this, the metropolis is a picture of neglect, suffering from chronic infrastructural decay and a lack of basic amenities. The state of Karachi's roads is a case in point. They resemble war zones, with crater-sized potholes even on major thoroughfares, turning daily commutes into hazardous ventures. Meanwhile, public transport remains grossly inadequate for a city of over 20 million people. Residents are forced to rely on private transport, exacerbating traffic congestion and air pollution. The Green Line BRT, while operational, barely scratches the surface of the city's mass-transit needs.

The energy crisis compounds Karachi's woes. Gas shortages and persistent electricity loadshedding disrupt daily life, affecting households and industries alike. It's ironic that the city that drives Pakistan's economy is left grappling with such crippling power outages. Water scarcity is yet another pressing issue. The majority of Karachi's residents are deprived of access to clean and sufficient water, relying on private water tankers at exorbitant rates. This basic human necessity has turned into a lucrative black market, further burdening citizens. Despite Karachi's unparalleled contribution to the national exchequer, it continues to languish without adequate investment in its infrastructure and services. This neglect is not just unfair but counterproductive, as a deteriorating Karachi threatens to undermine the very economy it bolsters. The federal and provincial governments must urgently prioritise Karachi's development. A city that gives so much deserves better roads, reliable utilities, and efficient public services. Investing in Karachi is not just about fairness; it is essential for Pakistan's future growth and prosperity. Anything less would be a betrayal of its citizens and economic self-sabotage.

OPINION

BY MUHAMMAD AMIR RANA



How to counter insurgencies

Public support for the state is critical for a successful counterinsurgency strategy.

IT is easy to say that the state must develop comprehensive and distinct counterterrorism and counterinsurgency strategies; however, what does comprehensive mean? This critical aspect is often missed in policy and public discussions. As insurgents in Balochistan have escalated their attacks, marking a significant increase in frequency and intensity over the past several months, it becomes essential to analyse the characteristics of the insurgency.

Another question often raised during policy discussions is how to compare the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). How are they different, and why does the BLA qualify as an insurgent group while the TTP does not?

The operational strategy and capabilities of Baluch insurgent groups have evolved significantly. The BLA, in particular, has transitioned from conducting low-intensity, small-scale attacks several years ago to executing more sophisticated, high-profile operations today. Similarly, the TTP has adopted operational strategies similar to the BLA's, albeit on a different scale. Both insurgent groups draw inspiration from the Afghan Taliban's strategy, which was effectively employed in Afghanistan.

The Taliban did not invent new strategies; they mainly adopted classic guerrilla warfare tactics, maintaining a high footprint and avoiding large-scale conventional battles except in situations with overwhelming local superiority. This approach allowed them to sustain a prolonged conflict against more powerful adversaries. Both the BLA and TTP have incorporated elements of this strategy, adapting it to their local contexts to prolong their campaigns.

Barry E. O'Neill, one of the leading scholars of modern warfare, insurgency, and terrorism, provides valuable insights into these complex subjects. His work helps answer critical questions, such as what constitutes a comprehensive strategy in addressing insurgency and terrorism. Among his many contributions, O'Neill's book *Insurgency & Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare* stands out as particularly important for understanding these issues in local and global contexts.

O'Neill emphasises that the primary distinction between insurgency and terrorism lies in the politi-

cal goals and public sympathy that violent actors seek to cultivate. Insurgencies are often defined by their broader political objectives and the level of public support they command. In contrast, terrorist organisations typically lack widespread appeal in their political messaging and resort to terrorist tactics to generate fear and attention.

Insurgency and terrorism can be distinguished based on their goals, methods, and scope of operations. Insurgents aim to overthrow existing governments, achieve autonomy, or enact significant political change. For example, the TTP has attempted to enhance its insurgent credibility by reducing attacks on civilians and focusing on broader political aims.

On the other hand, terrorist operations tend to be more decentralised and clandestine, focusing primarily on high-profile attacks to instil fear and undermine the authority of the state. O'Neill acknowledges that there is often significant overlap between insurgency and terrorism. Insurgent groups may employ terrorist tactics as part of a broader strategy, while some terrorist groups may evolve into insurgencies if they gain sufficient popular support or territorial control.

The key distinction lies in the scope of ambitions and the nature of operations. Insurgencies are typically long-term movements involving large-scale organisations, with military and political wings working in tandem. They tend to operate within a specific region or country, aiming to challenge the state's authority and legitimacy directly. In contrast, terrorist groups usually conduct isolated attacks designed to draw attention to their cause, disrupt societal order, and demoralise opponents.

In this context, the TTP is an insurgency in the making. O'Neill categorises insurgency into seven forms, the worst being the anarchist type, which seeks to destroy the current order without replacing it. Such insurgencies tend to proceed slowly and have limited capacity for dialogue. In contrast, socialist insurgencies aim to create a new independent state. Traditionalist insurgencies seek to restore a previous social, political, or religious order.

Both the BLA and the TTP overlap these categories. Other forms of insurgency include capitalis-

of which characterise the BLA or the TTP.

O'Neill outlines a typical three-phase approach used by insurgent movements. The first phase is the Latent and Incipient Phase, during which insurgents build support, recruit members, and establish networks. The BLA has completed this phase, while the TTP is struggling to regain the confidence of people in tribal districts and religious schools in Pakistan. To overcome this weakness, the TTP is mainly recruiting people from Afghanistan and Pakistani refugees in Afghanistan who migrated during military operations in North Waziristan.

The second phase is the Guerrilla Warfare Phase, characterised by small-scale hit-and-run attacks aimed at weakening government forces. The final phase involves insurgents engaging in more conventional military actions to confront the government.

However, insurgent groups with socialist tendencies require a political face, which the TTP lacks, and the BLA is still seeking. O'Neill also emphasises the importance of Counterinsurgency (COIN) principles, which provide key insights into comprehensive counterinsurgency strategies. The first principle is that the state must restore its image and be perceived as legitimate by the population. Population support and public perception of the state are critical components of a successful counterinsurgency strategy.

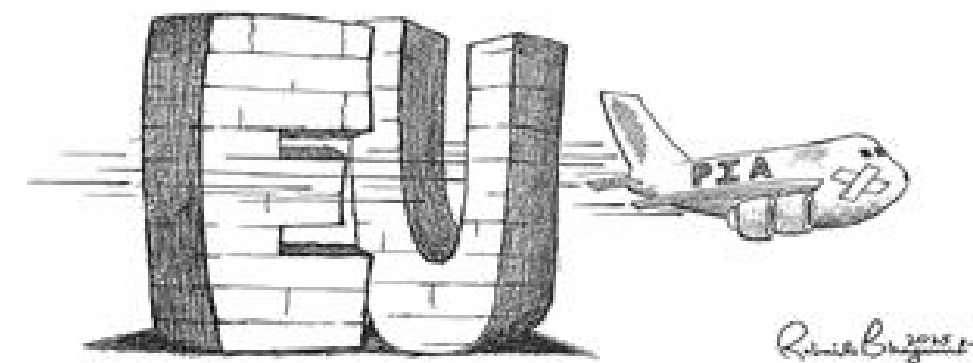
The second component is accurate and timely intelligence to disrupt insurgent networks, which is only possible with the population's support. Securing the population and preventing insurgents from gaining support is crucial. This means the state must end policies based on discrimination.

In Balochistan, resolving the issue of missing persons can limit the BLA's appeal. Winning the 'hearts and minds' of the population is essential to denying insurgents the base of support they need. Addressing socioeconomic grievances is also an integral part of COIN.

Usually, states with fragile political and social structures do not learn from history. They keep repeating similar mistakes and try to fill the gap of intellect through intel. ■

The writer is a security analyst.

PIA RETURNS TO EUROPEAN SKIES AFTER 4 YEARS



BY ABBAS NASIR



Two sides of the social media coin

WITH social media platforms running amok without much regulation or oversight, the hybrid Pakistani government and those considered established democracies in Europe, such as the United Kingdom and Germany, seem to be sailing in the same boat.

When Elon Musk bought Twitter for some \$44 billion, nearly all market and media analysts thought he'd paid way more than the platform was worth. Many believed the world's wealthiest man, a narcissist, had been led to a disaster by his ego.

They also believed that Twitter, that he renamed X, would prove to be his Waterloo. Flummoxed largely through banks, it is too early to say whether a tech index turned out to be a financial fiasco in the long run, because its revenue streams would never be able to justify the price he paid for it.

For now, however, the platform has battered him the rest of month, even worse, he could not have dreamed of despite his staggering wealth. After having donated a \$100 million to the Trump campaign, being by the president-elect's side during the run-up to the elections, and now named to a senior government role, Elon Musk's wealth and political power have grown.

Where the Pakistani hybrid set-up's near-total control of traditional media platforms, from TV radio to newspapers, has meant compliance and the dissemination of a view favourable to it, it has had to turn off the tap completely in terms of social media because of its inability to influence/control the dominant narrative there.

The hybrid set-up not just has most traditional media groups on their knees, it also has a monopoly over coercive tools, with armed state institutions/ organisations at its beck and call. In the opinion corner, the PTI decisively its leader Imran Khan continues to hold sway over public opinion and consolidates its considerable support base in the country via its unbridled ascendancy over social media and the latter's narrative-building tools.

The Pakistani state, or more accurately, its hybrid government, has appeared helpless in countering the PTI narrative, which continues to find resonance among large chunks of the country (to those who will ask how I reached the 'large chunk' conclusion, I would point to the last election, where the party emerged with most seats, despite underwhelming headwinds of all sort).

It has lacked knowledge of social media, sophis-

tication and expertise in evolving a policy where it is not always the case of using a sledgehammer — authoritarian means — to break out views not favourable to it or in line with its desires. It could do well to look elsewhere.

One recent lesson that Elon Musk raised on X with his over 200m followers are a prime example of how to stay ahead on social media despite your mistakes. Elon Musk took on the core of the hard right of the dominant pro-Trump Republican Party, which is vehemently anti-immigration, by supporting (last-track) 31-18 visas for specialist experts so they could contribute to the US economy.

While Musk made sense in this case, the backlash was severe. One can be sure Trump transition team members may have had a quiet word with him. Musk's response, which could well have ended

Musk raised a red herring often used by the far right in the UK to support Islamophobic, racist Tommy Robinson.

itself to his media team, raised a controversial issue away from the States and successfully drew attention away from what many hardcore Republicans saw as an outrageous stance.

Musk raised a red herring often used by the far right in the UK to support Islamophobic, racist Tommy Robinson, currently imprisoned on contempt of court charges. Musk implied that many British-Pakistani Asian girls involved in grooming (underage (child) girls for sex) were not persecuted because of considerations for their ethnicity and because Pakistani-origin Britons were a voting bloc for Labour.

He also implied that this happened under the current Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer's, watch when the latter was director of public prosecutions for five years from 2008 to 2013. Historically, some prosecutions did not happen when Starmer was DPP because the police and local prosecutors believed there was insufficient evidence and

'unreliable witnesses'.

However, these decisions not to prosecute were overturned by Nadia Afzal, herself of Pakistani origin, chief prosecutor for Northwest of England, appointed by Starmer in 2011. Afzal has a sterling record of prosecuting these gangs and of earning record convictions and sentencing.

A national inquiry report (called the Jay Report) in 2014, after a 2012 *The Times* investigation into the child sex grooming scandal in Rotherham in northwest England, and later a (parliamentary) Commons Home Affairs Committee, did not point the finger at Starmer.

In fact, the Home Affairs Committee lauded his efforts to address the issue in these words: Mr Starmer has striven to improve the treatment of victims of sexual assault within the criminal justice system throughout his term as Director of Public Prosecution (DPP). In 2014, he was knighted for his 'services to law and criminal justice'.

None of this was acknowledged by Musk when, bizarrely, asked the king to dissolve parliament and order fresh elections. Under which law and why, one may have asked Musk, given the opportunity. But his purpose was served. By creating this huge controversy, his vocal support for 31-18 visas and the Republican backlash was quickly brushed under the carpet.

Not content with taking sides in UK politics, where the opportunistic Conservatives, who did nothing to implement the Jay Report's 22 recommendations for all their years in office, jumped on the bandwagon and raised it in the Commons, Musk expanded his political role elsewhere in Europe.

Specifically siding with the German anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim and far-right AfD party and its leader, Musk has forced some European leaders to call for examining social media regulations so an individual can't manipulate public opinion and undermine the democratic order. But I seriously doubt such legislation will ever be passed.

In the end, it will have to be social media managers with their expertise in how, even evolving, platforms who can help keep the narrative on track. Or the democratic architecture as we know it is doomed. ■

The writer is a former editor of Dawn. abbas.nasir@hotmail.com

OPINION



BY MUNA KHAN

Real pain

AS luck would have it, I streamed *A Real Pain* the night before Kieran Culkin received an award for his supporting role in Jesse Eisenberg's film about two cousins visiting Poland to honour their grandmother's dying wish. Initially, I didn't want to watch it because the film's topic was about the Holocaust, and after watching a genocide live on our screens, I wasn't in the mood for pretending events in Palestine don't qualify as genocide.

However, curiosity got the better of me for two reasons. I like Culkin — he played a similar role to Shakespeare's Roman Roy, a gritty-mouthed man-child with a repressed energy, albeit one who cares about others. Two, I wanted to see what yet another film about the Holocaust looks like. Even if it's not a central character, how does the Holocaust or connection to Jewish trauma get portrayed in 2024?

A Real Pain was ok. It was sometimes pretentious, sometimes funny and sometimes sad. I feel Culkin's win was Hollywood's nod to the Holocaust, whose memory is kept alive at the cost of other genocides — Rwanda, Cambodia, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and, of course, Palestine.

Ultimately, films about the Holocaust mean the Nazis remain the greatest villains.

I remember Kate Winslet's excellent portrayal of Hanna, a train conductor in West Germany in the 1950s, in *The Reader*. It's told in flashback but is about an illicit relationship between Hanna and a teenage student, Michael, who asks him to read to her. One day she disappears, only to surface years later, in a military tribunal, where Michael, now a law student, learns Hanna was a camp guard in Auschwitz. He discovers she is illiterate; that as a guard she would choose prisoners to read to her. Hanna was complicit in those terrible crimes, yet there is a vulnerability to her. While the film was lauded by many, and Winslet received an Oscar for it, there were plenty of critics who slammed it for not showing the horrors of Auschwitz and for portraying Hanna as human.

In one of the film's most powerful scenes, Hanna asks the tribunal judge: "What would you have done?" You will find a lot of anger in reviews at this particular line, because it added complexity, even humanity, to a time that was awful. It is so awful that any attempt to question it or deny it or compare it to events in Palestine today will get you cancelled, as the kids say. At the very least, you will be labelled antisemitic.

The Holocaust was significant because of its scale; the meticulous manner in which it was carried out that resulted in the death of six million people. It was also extensively documented, both visually and

in the way the Nazis kept records. You can easily conjure up images of the concentration camps, the mass graves, skinny people with shaved heads and the Stars of David on their coats peering at the camera from cages. It is chilling.

But as someone who saw chilling war images in Vietnam's war museums, I understand the power of memorialising the American war. I also know it is not done to reduce another's suffering. It is rare to find someone use their suffering as an excuse to perpetuate wrongs on others.

We need new villains — and us, I don't mean Hamas. Their villainisation is part of the problem. Too many Muslims and supporters of a free Palestine are portrayed in a condemning manner to show their humanity.

Why can't the world see Palestinian humanity? At the risk of sounding like a conspiracy theorist, is it that neither the perpetrator nor victim in European? Consider in Asia, the Middle East, Latin America or of indigenous people don't make for good memorialising on screens.

How many films or TV shows come to mind when you think about the horrors of partition, one of the largest and fastest migrations? Too few and even less if you think of those told from our perspective. It's why I enjoyed the episode about partition on the TV show *Mr. Marmalade*, because it was written by Farina Aghar and directed by Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, both Palestinians.

The many countries have dark parts, and struggle with the shadows of leaders like Stalin, Mao, Mussolini etc, but it is how they have confronted their past that matters most.

We should learn how the Holocaust has effectively remained in the global consciousness. It will be an uphill battle, but even the smallest of wins should serve as an encouragement. A small example is Brian Onda's Emmy win in September for her documentary, *It's About Time* from *Gaze and the Still Alive* — despite concerted campaigns to rescind her. At least 46,000 Palestinians have been killed since Oct 7, 2023. We must record the moral failing of this moment. And ensure their stories are not lost to future generations. ■

The writer is an instructor of journalism. X: @LeadingLady



BY MASOOD LOHAR

Time bomb

THE decision to interlink the waters of the Indus with the Cholistan desert through six canals has sparked a debate on its environmental, social, and demographic consequences. There is widespread concern in Sindh that such a large-scale diversion will trigger significant regional and ecological imbalances throughout the entire system.

The Cholistan desert lies in the arid bed of the ancient Hakra — also called the Karaswari River — which is said to have gone dry about 5,000 years ago. The redirection of Indus waters to this area is aimed at transforming arid lands into fertile plains for increased agricultural production and habitation of humans. But is that all?

The Indus River maintains a dynamic equilibrium all the way from the Himalayas up to the fertile plains of Sindh, and then onwards to the Indus Delta. It is this delicate balance between the glacial melt of the Himalayas and the mangroves within the delta that plays an integral part in weather patterns and monsoons.

Diverting water upstream would be akin to tinkering with this system. The implications for the delta are significant: salinity, loss of mangroves, and shoreline retreat. These changes would impact other ecosystem processes in the region, affecting monsoons and worsening climate fluctuation throughout the Indus Valley.

To Sindh, the project spells disaster. Reduced river flows will compound water stress within the already vulnerable districts of Badin, Thatta, Sujawal, and Tando Muhammad Khan. Agriculture — the lifeblood of these districts — will lose its freshwater availability and hence die. In this regard, the availability of drinking water will come under threat, causing communities to migrate to seek better livelihoods.

The water crisis in Sindh is just one domino in a series that could culminate in mass rural-to-urban migration in the province, something which, according to conservative estimates, could displace 10 million people. More importantly, such migration would have its ripple effects for the cities, and at the front line of this incoming wave would be Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad. The demographic effect will be nothing less than seismic.

History provides plenty of grim reminders of such environmental miscalculations. The human-induced drying of the Aral Sea, resulting from Soviet irrigation policies, inflicted a terrible scourge on Central Asia, chiefly in the shape of economic decline and widespread displacement. Pakistan finds itself at a similar

precipice today, where such risks of irreversible ecological damage and sociopolitical upheaval are very real.

While Cholistan's water scarcity needs attention, there are other, viable alternatives to address this that would not cause ecological disaster and sociopolitical turmoil. These include modern irrigation techniques and desalination, as well as water-efficient crop cultivation. Dr Hassan Abbas, a renowned water expert, has highlighted the significant aquifer potential beneath the old riverbeds of the Satlej. According to his research, the floods of 2023 revealed that a substantial amount of water percolated into the ground, replenishing the aquifers under the ancient river channel. He described these reserves as a "hidden treasure" that holds clean, drinkable water, which could potentially meet the needs of the region's population, livestock, and even support sustainable agricultural activities.

Instead of investing billions in constructing hundreds of kilometres of canals, wouldn't it be more worthwhile to capitalise on the ancient aquifers within these riverbeds? These aquifers naturally recharge every year during the monsoon season.

More than just a river, the Indus is the very essence of a civilisation that has sustained itself for thousands of years. If the course of the Indus is altered, it will impact the interlinking ecosystems of the river.

Should this issue be mismanaged, it could possibly culminate in an environmental disaster, washing away centuries-old cultural landscapes and leading millions into despair. The stakes for Pakistan, then, are very high. Strangely, there is an old Sindh proverb that says "Hakra nahande Hakra, Hakra nahande Hakra, Sindh nahande Sindh" (The Hakra River will flow again in all its former glory. The Hakra River will flow again in all its former glory. The Hakra River will flow again in all its former glory). The barrage at Aror (ancient Rohri or Sukkur) will be destroyed, unleashing such devastation that the King of Sindh will come to view lotus roots, waterlily roots, and fish as rare and precious gifts. ■

The writer is an expert on climate change and sustainable development and founder of Clifton Urban Forest. mlohar@gmail.com X: @masoodlohar

FROM THE PAST PAGES OF DAWN

1975 Fifty years ago

Pak-India shipping

NEW DELHI: The Indian and Pakistani negotiators agreed on guidelines of an accord on restoring shipping services between the two countries, the two delegation heads told newsmen after the first round of talks which began here today (Jan 11). They emphasised that the restoration of trade between the two countries was deeply linked with restoration of shipping. The leader of the Indian delegation, Mr Rama Krishna Mahia, said that India's trade delegation would proceed to Islamabad after the talks... were over. The two Governments had already prepared a list of trade items, he added. Today's talks were held in a cordial atmosphere. ... [Pakistan's delegation head] Mr Kishor told the Press that he would like to finish the talks in four days. — News agency

[Meanwhile, as reported by news agencies from Cape Canaveral, Florida,] a huge section of a 42-ton Saturn space rocket was believed to have re-entered the earth's atmosphere this morning somewhere over the east coast of Africa, US Space officials said. They said they thought the ... second stage of the Saturn-5 which launched the Skylab space station in May 1973 and since then has been orbiting the earth — came down at about 0632 GMT.

1950 Seventy-five years ago

Britain's assurances

KARACHI: Britain has assured the Government of Pakistan that she has no intention of taking unilateral action with regard to Pakistan's sterling balances, Dr Mahmud Hasan told Parliament ... on Wednesday (Jan 11).

The Deputy Foreign Minister, was replying to a question ... with reference to Mr Clement Attlee's statement ... in the order last to the effect that the sterling balances would have "to be cut down as much as possible."

He said that the current Pakistan-United Kingdom financial agreement was in no way affected, and that the Government ... had been assured that "nothing will be done about Pakistan's sterling balances without full consultation and discussion with the Government of Pakistan."

[Meanwhile, according to reports from Tehran,] the Iranian Government resigned today (Jan 11). The Premier, Mohammed Saad, in a letter to the Shah stated that the country's present situation demanded a change of Government. Political circles here expected that either Mohammed Saad or Gholi Ghobadlou, Finance Minister in the last Cabinet, would lead the new Government. ... Mohammed Saad took office in November, 1948. ... — News agencies

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.

New number plates, but why at all?



THIS is with reference to the report 'Over 1m Sindh vehicle owners told to replace number plates by April 3, 2025' (Dec 19). It is strange that the relevant department is yet to issue number plates of cars bought and registered in 2022 for which all taxes and relevant fees have been paid.

First, the Sindh government must ensure immediate issuance of all the number plates that are still outstanding without the collection of fresh fee. Second, it may give a thought to the level of corruption and inconvenience, apart from additional expense and loss of valuable work hours, the whole process would entail.

There is one central office at the Circle

Centre in Karachi, which, as everyone knows, is already overwhelmed, especially since the closure of designated bank branches for the purpose of motor vehicle tax collection.

Now imagine the huge number of people owning all sorts of vehicles who would transacted on this office to acquire new number plates and registration books. Agent mafia and perceived corruption will surely extend the whole exercise to multiple visits.

While it may be a wise step in the long run to have standardised number plates and security features, I wonder if the department concerned handling this huge task will make it possible to get the new number plates/registration books issued through the existing online system.

Additionally, the registration books and motor vehicle plates already in the possession of vehicle owners must be replaced, if it is really necessary. Free of charge or at a nominal fee.

As the April 3 deadline is fast approaching, the Sindh Excise and Taxation Department should find a proper service-oriented and convenient way for people to willingly make the change without feeling harassed or inconvenienced.

Rashid S. Farooquee Karachi

Fleeing the public

THE Sindh Excise and Taxation Department has recently ordered the replacement of all the existing number plates of private and commercial vehicles in the province with new plates by April 3. This involves a change of number plates

for three million vehicles in a period of just over three months. Every motorist who has already paid for the previous number plates is being asked to pay Rs2,450 again for the new number plates.

This implies that the department is fleecing the motorists to the tune of a whopping amount of Rs2.35 billion. There is no justification for charging the cost to the motorists who are already paying a plethora of taxes to the government.

Besides, the change of all number plates in such a short time is a practically impossible task, considering the track record of the department, which issued thousands of number plates from "BIA" to "BIR" and other registration series with a delay of three to five years.

The relevant department needs to give a realistic deadline of at least 12 months for the change of vehicle number plates. Furthermore, the cost of the new number plates should be borne by the government, and should be adjusted against the rather hefty motor vehicle tax that all the motorists continue to pay every year.

Aamir Malik Karachi

FBR's utter failure

THIS is with reference to the editorial 'Revamping tax policy' (Dec 26). One should be forgiven for thinking that Pakistan was created for facilitating looting and plundering by smugglers, tax-evaders as well as other such 'wealthy' citizens.

When one sees media advertisements for building projects worth a trillion rupees (which appeared in the same issue

of the newspaper), one wonders why the real estate sector is left untaxed.

My driver's cousin had to borrow Rs1 million from friends and relatives to pay an agent who helped him get a Canadian visa and work permit.

Unsurprisingly, the victims of the recent boat tragedy near Greece paid up to Rs3.5 million each to agents to get into that country illegally.

In contrast, more than three million Pakistanis go to Saudi Arabia every year without paying due taxes, while from Bangladesh the figure is just 100,000. Obviously, there are thousands, if not more, of tax-evaders in the country. But the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) is unable to 'identify' them.

Our restaurants and shopping malls are full of people who are seen buying and stuffing themselves with clothes and food, and our wedding halls overflow with wealthy women wearing jewellery worth millions. Yet, we have less than a million taxpayers because the FBR is simply unable to 'identify' tax-evaders.

Unfortunately, each and every successive government in Pakistan has lacked the courage to take action against those who evade taxes.

But, then, is this not because we have been ruled for decades by those who have exempted themselves from paying taxes?

Shahid Lakhani Karachi

Dubious practices

ON Dec 21, I went to the Clifton driver's licence branch in Karachi to get my driver's licence renewed. It turned out to be a mixed experience. Since I went early at about 9am, the queue was not long and the initial registration process was completed neatly. However, since the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) counter cashier was missing, the applicant had to keep waiting for his arrival on the scene. The next step of medical examination also entailed an irritating wait because the duty doctor had not arrived yet.

On the way out, I was approached by a shady-looking man, who offered his services for my licence-related matter. As I approached my properly parked car, a parking mafia man appeared out of nowhere and demanded a parking fee, which I refused to pay. I was not astonished when he claimed that the licence branch officials were well aware of the practice and, in fact, had a share in the day's collection.

He only relented when I threatened to call police at Helpline 15 to report his illegal activity. Obviously, there have been some improvements in the licence issuing procedure, but why can we not get rid of certain dubious practices that seem to continue forever?

Nasrat Yousaf Karachi

Judicial reforms should precede jail reforms

THIS is with reference to the report 'LHC calls for comprehensive jail reforms in Punjab' (Dec 26). This is, indeed, a step in the right direction. However, as mentioned in the report, the primary focus seems to be on building new prisons to resolve the problem of overcrowding and providing facilities that may make detention centres resemble a golden cage. While basic necessities are imperative and non-negotiable, the reality remains that a prison is still a prison.

As I see it, the focus should also extend to other departments of the criminal justice system to address the root causes of overcrowding and avoid unnecessary incarceration resulting from inefficiency in the system.

Moreover, the intrinsic issue of overcrowding begins with the registration of the first information report (FIR) by the local police. We frequently witness cases where individuals, once transferred to jail for minor narcotics offences or theft, return every few months, and secure bail and acquittal every time.

Additionally, the slow pace of adjudication further compounds the problem. This includes prolonged delays caused by judicial vacations, both summer and winter, similar to those of teachers, while inmates continue to languish in jail.

It would, therefore, be better and more practical if, along with addressing other aspects of jail reforms, attention is



also given to the processes of sending people to jail, and ensuring that inmates do not languish unnecessarily due to systemic inefficiencies, particularly due to judges' vacations.

Bilal Ahmed Assistant Superintendent, Jail Abbottabad

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: dmahmudsiddiqi@gmail.com

PTI leader Bangash indicted for firing on police

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: An anti-terrorism court on Saturday indicted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader and former provincial minister Kamran Khan Bangash for allegedly firing gunshots on police and sheltering absconding former federal minister Muneer Saadat.

Mr Bangash pleaded not guilty to the charge and decided to stand trial.

Judge Asad Khan fixed Jan 20 for next hearing and also summoned prosecution witnesses on that date.

The FIR of the occurrence was registered on Oct 20, 2023, at Chamkani police station under different provisions of the Pakistan Penal Code and Anti-Terrorism Act.

A big contingent of police had raided the residence and huts of Mr Bangash and had taken him into custody.

The police alleged that they had information about presence of an absconder, Muneer Saadat at the place.

It was alleged that when the raiding team visited the huts of Mr Bangash some armed men also fired at them resulting in injuries to two cops, identified as Rashid and Kaleem.

Mr Bangash was subsequently granted bail by an ATC on Oct 30, 2023. He had denied the charges and stated that the CCTV footage of the police raid didn't show any attack on police personnel.

He claimed that neither the police recovered any weapon from his possession nor were any evidence or marks of fired bullet available on record.

He stated that the case was politically motivated aimed at victimising him.



CHILDREN play near the broken embankment of the Yakatoot Canal in Peshawar on Saturday. — White Star

Nine killed, 12 injured as trailer falls over passenger coach in Karak

CM, governor condole deaths, order best possible care for injured

By Ghulam Mursalin Marwat

LAKKEMARWAT: Nine people lost their lives and a dozen sustained injuries in a tragic road accident in Karak district on Saturday.

Police and Rescue 1122 officials said that a trailer fell over a passenger coach when its driver lost control of the vehicle due to brake failure near Anshari Kallay area. They said that the container also damaged other vehicles parked there.

Rescue officials said that eight persons died on the spot, while 12 others were injured, who were provided first aid by the rescuers and later shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital, Karak. They said eight rescue service's ambulances and recovery vehicles took part in the relief efforts after the accident.

The officials said the mishap



— Dawn

occurred on the busy Peshawar-Karachi Highway in the limits of Yaqub Khan Shahzad police station.

A police official said that a contingent along with the traffic wardens reached the scene immediately and launched a rescue operation. He said that the injured persons were retrieved from the coach and other vehicles and shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital.

The police official said eight injured, including a minor girl, succumbed at the hospital.

A rescue official, however,

said that nine people perished in the accident.

The deceased were identified as Mohammed Ishaq, 59, a resident of Karak, Awam Khan, 45, resident of Titterkhal area of Lakki Marwat, Anna, 24, resident of Mashkhal, Nails, 3, Qaiser Khan, 38, Sharafat Ali and Saim Khan, 45, residents of Titterkhal, and Qadir, 58, a resident of Kiri Harad. One of the deceased persons could not be identified immediately.

The injured included Ejaz, 39, resident of Takh Naurati Karak, Samiullah, 41, resident of Lakki Marwat, Mir Shahbaz

Shah Zaman, 45, resident of Sirakhal, Khatil, 33, resident of Gardi Banda, Mohammed Laili, 50, resident of Monakan, Hanifullah, 49, resident of Aljaji Karak, Ali Abla, 50, resident of Chakara Karak, Azeema, 4, Zainab Bibi, 50, and Khadija, 2, residents of Tangaray, Agbi, 24, resident of Titterkhal, and Allah Bakht, 71, resident of Yama Shari (Fanjah).

The police official said that they had arrested the trailer driver, Samiullah, a resident of Lakki Marwat, in injured condition and shifted him to the

hospital.

He said that the highway had been cleared for vehicular traffic.

Meanwhile, in a statement issued in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur expressed his sorrow over the deaths of nine people in the traffic accident. The statement said that the chief minister also extended his sympathies to the families of those who lost their lives and those who were injured.

Mr Gandapur directed the health authorities to provide the best possible medical facilities to those who were injured in the traffic accident.

Another statement said KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi took notice of the traffic mishap and directed the relevant authorities to furnish details about it.

He also directed the health authorities to provide all possible assistance to the injured during their treatment. He also directed the Pakistan Red Crescent Society to carry out relief activities and asked the party workers to donate blood for the victims of traffic mishap.

Four miners laid to rest in Shangla

By Our Correspondent

SHANGLA: Bodies of four young miners, who died in a mine accident in Balochistan, were brought here and laid to rest in their ancestral graveyards on Saturday.

According to locals, over a dozen miners got stranded in the coal mine when a portion of it collapsed due to an explosion on Thursday.

They said that a rescue operation was still continuing and four bodies had been recovered so far and shifted to Alpori.

They said the miners were under 20 years of age.

They were laid to rest in their ancestral graveyards in Ilasi and Pir Abad areas of Alpori talah.

VC for Chitral varsity demanded

By Our Correspondent

CHITRAL: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's Chitral information secretary and human rights activist Niaz A Niaz Advocate has demanded of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to fill the post of vice-chancellor of the University of Chitral, which has been lying vacant for the last one-and-a-half year, affecting this nascent institution.

Talking to reporters here on Saturday, he said that all the three key administrative positions of registrar, controller of examinations and treasurer were also lying vacant.

He said that the university had no academic staff above BPS-19 and positions of associate professor (BPS-20) and professor (BPS-21) were vacant.

Mr Niaz said that the PTI government should give up its 'obnoxious policy of politicising the universities', which must be treated only as the high seats of learning.

Mr Niaz regretted that the dual charge of the university had been given to the vice-chancellor of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Sheringal Upper Dir, which was not possible for the incumbent to look after its affairs.

Committee formed for campaign against KP-Fata merger

By Our Correspondent

KHAYBER: The Fata Quami Jirga (FQJ) on Saturday announced the formation of a 48-member committee to bolster their campaign against the 2018 Fata-Khyber Pakhtunkhwa merger in all seven tribal districts and six former Frontier Regions.

The development came during a FQJ meeting held in the Jamrud area here with Malik Bismillah Khan in the chair. Elders from tribal districts and Frontier Regions showed up in large numbers.

Mr Bismillah said that people in tribal districts knew of the failure of the move to merge Fata with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2018 and that they're upset by the federal government's failure to fulfil commitments regarding the tribal region's development.

He intimated that while the federal government failed to execute major development projects in any of tribal districts through

the timely provision of promised funds, the region had plunged into complete administrative chaos amid worsening law and order situation.

"People of the tribal region have realised that the merger plan was ill-conceived, while most stakeholders weren't taken into confidence by authorities at the time of the passage of 25th Constitutional Amendment, leaving the region with a plethora of legal, security and political issues," he said.

The FQJ leader said that the newly formed committee consisting of three representatives from every tribal district would make frequent contacts with all stakeholders in the region and provide impetus to the anti-merger campaign among disheartened tribesmen.

He said that the FQJ was the main motivating force behind keeping the anti-merger campaign alive on both political and legal fronts as they had also challenged the 25th Constitutional Amendment in the Supreme

Court.

OATH-TAKING CEREMONY: Adviser to the chief minister on communication and development Sahal Afridi has said that journalists in Khyber tribal district have successfully highlighted the region's issues despite facing a very hostile and challenging environment.

During the oath-taking ceremony for the newly-elected cabinet of Jamrud Press Club the other day, Mr Afridi said that corruption and other ills could be wiped out from the region if journalists performed their responsibilities honestly and professionally.

He said that honest and sincere journalists could play the role of a bridge between the government and ordinary citizens.

The side to the CM announced a donation of Rs200,000 for the press club. The ceremony was attended by local elders, members of the local traders association and civil society, political activists, and members of the newly-elected cabinet.

Efforts on for safe release of contractual workers

LAKKI MARWAT: Local elders and authorities have accelerated efforts to secure the safe release of kidnapped Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission workers from terrorists.

In a video that surfaced on Saturday, the abductees asked the government to accept the demands of captors for their freedom.

Elders of Abo Shahzadkhal Jirga discussed the issue with authorities all through the day. It was their second meeting in the last two days with the local administration and security officials at the deputy commissioner's office in the District Headquarters Complex Tajana.

Relatives of the kidnapped workers as well as chiefs of other clans and members of the Marwat Quami Jirga also participated, according to an elder.

He told Dawn that government officials and elders discussed the kidnapping issue and agreed to launch concerted efforts to secure the

safe release of workers.

The elder said the meeting lasted until evening, with both sides agreeing on several important points which would pave the way to free abductees and take captors to task.

In the video clips, which went viral on social media, an abductee, accompanied by others, shared demands of the kidnappers.

"Today is our third day in captivity. The news of our release is not true as 30 weeks are still in custody," he said.

The worker said the captors wanted the government to release "mujahideen" and their family members, including children, and avoid demolishing their houses and disrespecting their bodies.

He added that the kidnappers demanded compensation by the government for their damaged houses.

The abductee urged authorities to accept those demands for the sake of their safe release. — Correspondent

KP govt pours Rs100bn into free healthcare since 2016

53pc of Sehat Card beneficiaries are women, says health dept report

By Ashtaq Yusufzai

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa health department has spent around Rs100 billion on the provision of free healthcare under the Sehat Card Plus programme to 3.89 million patients since its launch in 2016.

Beneficiaries of the health insurance scheme included 2.09 million (53.97pc) women, 1.79 million (46.03pc) men

and 17 transgender persons, according to an official report.

According to it, private hospitals earned Rs54.32 billion (51pc of the total), slightly more than men's Rs48.92 billion (49pc).

The report said the Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar treated 186,657 patients (4.8pc of the total) and earned Rs6.71 billion (6.8pc), while the Peshawar Institute of Cardiology offered treatment to 55,629 patients (1.4pc) and generated Rs6,023 billion (6.1pc).

The Hayatabad Medical Complex received 5.12 million patients (3pc of the total) and earned Rs5.19 billion (5.2pc). Institute of Radiotherapy and Nuclear Medicine, 81,607

90 and above.

The report said the cost of treatment for women was recorded at Rs50.66 billion (51pc of the total), slightly more than men's Rs48.92 billion (49pc).

The report said the Lady Reading Hospital Peshawar treated 186,657 patients (4.8pc of the total) and earned Rs6.71 billion (6.8pc), while the Peshawar Institute of Cardiology offered treatment to 55,629 patients (1.4pc) and generated Rs6,023 billion (6.1pc).

The Hayatabad Medical Complex received 5.12 million patients (3pc of the total) and earned Rs5.19 billion (5.2pc). Institute of Radiotherapy and Nuclear Medicine, 81,607

patients (2.1pc) and Rs3.36 billion revenue (3.4pc), Ayub Teaching Hospital Abbottabad 171,680 patients (1.4pc) and Rs3.3 billion income (3.3pc), and Khyber Teaching Hospital 111,088 patients (2.9pc) and Rs2.49 billion revenue (2.5pc).

The report also revealed that Rs22.65 billion was spent on 192,049 cardiology patients, Rs11.77 billion on 557,551 general patients, Rs11.03 on gynaecology patients, Rs7.06 billion on medical cases, Rs6.57 billion on oncology patients, Rs4.94 billion on orthopaedic cases and Rs4.85 billion on 49,367 neurosurgery patients.

Most patients (410,471) were treated in Peshawar's public and private hospitals. They

made up 10.55pc of the total patients treated under the SCP programme since its launch by the PTI government in 2016, according to the report.

All districts, except a few without well-equipped hospitals, received more than 5.1 million patients.

The report revealed that private hospitals, which had attracted bulk of the amount from the health insurance programme since 2023, recorded a decline last year as the government restricted them from carrying out most common procedures to benefit public patients.

It added that patients continued to visit government hospitals for appendectomy,

cholecystectomy, caesarean delivery, tonsillectomy, cataract, angiography and septoplasty and 584R after restrictions by government on private hospitals.

The restriction was meant to check misuse of the programme by private hospitals, which were found to be performing unnecessary procedures to increase earnings.

The government encouraged its hospitals to implement a revenue-sharing formula and thus, encouraging staff members to take a greater interest in SCP patients.

Now, the Lady Reading Hospital, the largest public sector health centre in the province, is administering all SCP

patients to generate better revenue, while the district-level hospitals are upgrading their services to attract more visitors and generate income to benefit employees and patients. The patients receive free services, while hospital doctors, nurses and paramedics get share in the income from SCP cases.

The report said of the total 8,8767 million patients from last year, the private hospitals received 0.24964 million (28pc) and the private hospitals 0.627 million (72pc).

The private hospitals received 99pc patients in 2016, 76pc in 2017, 65pc in 2018, 72pc in 2019, 81pc in 2020, 66pc in 2021, 66pc in 2022 and 52pc in 2023.

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Exports to Europe rise to \$3.8bn in July-Nov

By Mubarak Zeb Khan

ISLAMABAD: Exports to European countries grew 8.62 per cent in the first five months of the current fiscal year, mainly due to higher shipments to western states.

The resurgence in exports to Europe in the current fiscal year was due to a slight increase in demand for Pakistani goods in western, eastern and northern Europe.

In absolute terms, Pakistan's exports to the European Union (EU) reached \$3.866 billion in July-November FY25 from \$3.553bn in the same period last year, according to data compiled by the State Bank of Pakistan.

In FY24, Pakistan's exports to the EU dipped 3.12pc to \$8.240bn despite its GDP's status, which allows duty-free entry into most European markets.

In October 2023, the European Parliament unanimously voted to extend the GSP+ status for another four years until 2027 for developing countries, including Pakistan, to enjoy duty-free or minimum duty on European exports.

Western Europe, which includes countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, France, Italy, and Belgium, accounts for the largest portion of Pakistan's exports to the EU. The exports to this region increased by 11.67pc to \$1.933bn in SMFY25, up from \$1.731bn in SMFY24.

There is also a slight increase in exports to eastern and northern Europe during the period under review. The exports to the north of Europe saw a rise of 50.44pc to \$288.35bn in SMFY25, up from \$261.09bn in the corresponding month last year.

Exports to southern Europe saw a paltry decline of 2.89pc to \$1.273bn in SMFY25 from \$1.311bn in the corresponding period last year. In this region, exports to Spain dipped 5.44pc to \$660.87bn in SMFY25 from \$698.85bn in the preceding year.

Exports to Italy declined 5.24pc to \$480.75bn in SMFY25 compared to \$501.99bn in the same period last year. Exports to Greece recorded a marginal increase of 15.43pc to \$59.17bn during the year under review against \$51.26bn over the previous year.

However, exports to eastern Europe witnessed a growth of 44.93pc. The export value to this region stood at \$172.24bn, up from \$256.87bn in the corresponding period last year.

Before Brexit, Pakistan's major export destination was the United Kingdom. In the post-Brexit period, Pakistan's exports to the UK slightly went up to \$915.02 in SMFY25 from \$863.48bn over the corresponding period of last year, indicating an increase of 6.25pc.

In FY24, Pakistan's exports increased by 2.33pc to \$2.014bn to the UK from \$1.964bn in the preceding year.

The British government, however, has assured Islamabad that there will be no change in the post-Brexit scenario, as evidenced by Pakistan's inclusion in its preferential market access schemes.

Pakistan's exports to Western Europe increased by 11.67pc to \$1.933bn in SMFY24 from \$1.731bn last year.

Exports to Germany surged 15.29pc to \$707.65bn in SMFY24 from \$613.77bn. Similarly, exports to the Netherlands, the second biggest market for Pakistani goods, increased 10.86pc to \$621.16bn in SMFY24 from \$560.26bn over the corresponding period of last year.

Exports to France rose 11.42pc to \$239.86bn in SMFY24 from \$207.18bn, followed by a 9.17pc rise to Belgium's \$257.89bn against \$236.27bn over the same period last year.

Strategies discussed to boost trade with UAE

ISLAMABAD: While acknowledging the importance of the contribution of the Pakistani diaspora in the United Arab Emirates, Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan said that the private sector plays a pivotal role in solidifying trade and investment initiatives between the two countries.

Speaking at a luncheon hosted by the Pakistan Business Council in Dubai on Friday, Mr Kamal urged the business leaders to capitalise on opportunities to boost bilateral trade and unlock new avenues for economic development.

He enumerated the government's initiatives to boost trade, investment, and cooperation. He discussed strategies to strengthen Pakistan-UAE trade partnerships further. The event underlined the importance of collaborative efforts in achieving sustainable economic growth and fostering deeper bilateral relations.

Mr Kamal discussed trade and development with the Pakistan Business Council members. The gathering marked a renewed commitment by both public and private sectors to reinforce trade relations and unlock the untapped economic potential between Pakistan and the UAE.—Reporter

IMF chief sees steady world growth, disinflation

• Forecasts economic slowdown in EU, India • Global outlook report to be released on 17th

WASHINGTON: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) will forecast steady global growth and continuing disinflation when it releases an updated World Economic Outlook on January 17, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva told reporters on Friday.

Georgieva said the US economy was doing "quite a bit better" than expected, although there was high uncertainty around the trade policies of the administration of President-elect Donald Trump that was adding to headwinds facing the global economy and driving long-term interest rates higher.

With inflation moving closer to the US Federal Reserve's target and data showing a stable labour market, the Fund could afford to wait for more data before undertaking further interest rate cuts, she said.

Overall, interest rates were expected to stay "somewhat higher for quite some time," she said.

The IMF will release an update to its

global outlook on Jan 17, just days before Trump takes office.

Georgieva's comments are the first indication this year of the IMF's evolving global outlook, but she gave no detailed projections.

In October, the IMF raised its 2024 economic growth forecasts for the US, Brazil and Britain but cut them for China, Japan and the Eurozone, citing risks from potential new trade wars, armed conflicts and tight monetary policy.

At the time, it left its forecast for 2024 global growth unchanged at the 3.2 per cent projected in July and lowered its global forecast for 2025 growth in 2025 by one-tenth of a percentage point, warning that global medium-term growth would fade to 3.1pc in five years, well below its pre-pandemic trend.

"Not surprisingly, given the size and role of the US economy, there is keen interest globally in the policy directions of the incoming administration, in par-

ticular on tariffs, taxes, deregulation and government efficiency," Georgieva said.

"This uncertainty is particularly high around the path for trade policy going forward, adding to the headwinds facing the global economy, especially for countries and regions that are more integrated in global supply chains, medium-sized economies, [and] Asia as a region."

Georgieva said it was "very unusual" that this uncertainty was expressed in higher long-term interest rates even though short-term interest rates had gone down, a trend not seen in recent history.

The IMF saw divergent trends in different regions, with growth expected to stall somewhat in the European Union and to weaken "a little" in India, while Brazil was facing somewhat higher inflation, Georgieva said.

In China, the world's second-largest economy after the United States, the

IMF was seeing deflationary pressure and ongoing challenges with domestic demand, she said.

Lower-income countries, despite reform efforts, were in a position where any new shocks would hit them "quite negatively," she said.

Georgieva said it was notable that higher interest rates needed to combat inflation had not pushed the global economy into recession, but headline inflation developments were divergent, which meant central bankers needed to carefully monitor local data.

The strong US dollar could potentially result in higher funding costs for emerging market economies and especially low-income countries, she said.

Most countries needed to cut fiscal spending after high outlays during the Covid-19 pandemic and adopt reforms to boost growth in a durable way, she said, adding that in most cases, this could be done while protecting their growth prospects.—Reuters

Falling tea imports causing losses, says association

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: The Pakistan Tea Association (PTA) on Saturday claimed that the imposition of Rs1,200 per kg minimum retail price (MRP) has slowed down black tea imports.

PTA Chairman Muhammad Akhter informed the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) that tea imports plunged to 31,651 tonnes (576 million) during November/December against 40,626 tonnes (997m) in the corresponding period last year.

The declining imports have caused a revenue loss of Rs1.23 billion to the national exchequer in the first half of FY25.

He warned that if the MRP stays, the loss of revenue to the exchequer will cross Rs1.8bn by the end of the current fiscal year.

Moreover, he said the misuse of the government's various exemptions continues unabated on account of Fata/Pata followed by re-export under the Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS), gross misuse by undervaluation, underweight, quantity and quality of dry ports/facility etc.

He urged the FBR to withdraw the SRO 1736(I)/2024 relating to MRP imposed from Nov 1, 2024, and also limit quantitative imports under Fata/Pata as per their population, which is four million, which means their tea imports will be limited to four million kgs only.

Global job market poised for major technological shift by 2030: WEF

By Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: Technological change, geo-economic fragmentation, economic uncertainty, demographic shifts and the green transition — individually and in combination — are among the major drivers expected to shape and transform the global labour market by 2030, cautions a new report from the World Economic Forum (WEF).

The 'Future of Jobs Report 2025' released this week, brings together the perspective of over 1,000 leading global employers — collectively representing more than 14 million workers across 22 industry clusters and 55 economies from around the world — to examine how these macro-trends impact jobs and skills, and the workforce transformation strategies employers plan to embark on in response, across the 2025 to 2030 timeframe.

Reshaping digital access is expected to be the most transformative trend — both across technology-related trends and overall — with 60 per cent of employers expecting it to transform their business by 2030.

Advancements in technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI) and information processing (86 per cent), robotics and automation (58pc), and energy generation, storage and distribution (41pc), are also expected to be transformative, the report says.

These trends are expected to have a divergent effect on jobs, driving the fastest-growing and fastest-shrinking roles and fueling demand for technology-related skills, including AI and big data, networks and cybersecurity, and technological literacy, which are anticipated to be the top three fastest-growing skills.

Increasing cost of living ranks as the second-most transforma-



DEMAND for workers in technology-related roles like big data analysts, biotech engineers, AI and machine learning specialists, is rapidly rising.—AFP/FILE

tive trend overall — and the top trend related to economic conditions — with half of employers expecting it to transform their business by 2030, despite an anticipated reduction in global inflation. To a lesser extent, the general economic slowdown remains at the top of the mind and is expected to transform 42pc of businesses.

Factors driving job creation

Inflation is predicted to have a mixed outlook for net job creation to 2030, while slower growth is expected to displace 3.6 million jobs globally. These two impacts on job creation are expected to increase the demand for creative thinking, resilience, flexibility, and agility skills.

Climate change mitigation is the third-most transformative trend overall — and the top trend related to the green transition — while climate change adaptation ranks sixth with 47 per cent and 41 per cent of employers, respectively, expecting these trends to transform their business in the next five years.

This is driving demand for roles such as renewable energy engineers, environmental engineers and electric and autonomous vehicle specialists, all

among the 15 fastest-growing jobs. Climate trends are also expected to drive an increased focus on environmental stewardship, which has entered the Future of Jobs Report's list of the top 10 fastest-growing skills for the first time.

The report says two demographic shifts are increasingly seen to be transforming global economies and labour markets: ageing populations, predominantly in high-income economies, and expanding working-age populations, predominantly in lower-income economies.

Ageing populations drive growth in healthcare jobs such as nursing professionals, while growing working-age populations fuel growth in education-related professions, such as higher education teachers.

Geo-economic fragmentation and geopolitical tensions are expected to drive business model transformation in one-third (34 per cent) of surveyed organisations in the next five years. Over one-fifth (21 per cent) of global employers identify increased restrictions on trade and investment, as well as subsidies and industrial policies (21 per cent), as factors shaping

their operations.

Employers who expect geo-economic trends to transform their business are also more likely to offshore — and even more likely to re-shore — operations. These trends drive demand for security-related jobs roles and increase demand for network and cybersecurity skills. There is also an increasing demand for other human-centred skills such as resilience, flexibility, agility, leadership, and social influence.

Extrapolating from the predictions shared by Future of Jobs Survey respondents, on current trends over the 2025 to 2030 period job creation and destruction due to structural labour-market transformation will amount to 22pc of today's total jobs.

This is expected to entail the creation of new jobs equivalent to 14 per cent of today's total employment, amounting to 179m jobs. However, this growth is expected to be offset by the displacement of the equivalent of 8pc (or 92m) of current jobs, resulting in net growth of 7pc of total employment, or 78 million jobs.

Technology-related roles are the fastest-growing jobs in percentage terms, including big data specialists, biotech engineers, AI and machine learning specialists and software and application developers. Green and energy transition roles, including autonomous and electric vehicle specialists, environmental engineers, and renewable energy engineers, are among the fastest-growing roles.

Clerical and Secretarial Workers — including cashiers and ticket clerks, and administrative assistants and executive secretaries — are expected to see the largest decline in absolute numbers. Similarly, businesses expect the fastest-declining roles to include postal service clerks, bank tellers and data entry clerks.

Govt utilises 63pc of RDA inflows

Pakistan gets \$9.3bn via Roshan Digital Account

By Shahid Iqbal

KARACHI: Pakistan utilised 63 per cent of inflows it received through the Roshan Digital Account (RDA) by the end of December 2024, reported the State Bank of Pakistan on Saturday.

Since the launch of RDA on Sept 10, 2020, the country has received over \$9.34 billion, and \$5.911 billion has been utilised, reveals the SRP data.

According to the SRP, the RDA inflows proved highly important for the government waiting for a \$10n tranche from the IMF, while it received over \$2bn in

the calendar year 2024. The data showed the government utilised \$1.445bn from RDA inflows during 2024.

With the collaboration of commercial banks, the RDA facility allows Non-Resident Pakistanis (NRPs) to open a bank account in Pakistan digitally. The account can be used for banking, payments, and investments in Pakistan. The RDA can also be used to send foreign remittances to Pakistan.

With a 13pc surge in remittances during the first half of FY25, the government will likely meet the trade deficit and keep the current account in surplus during FY25. However, the foreign direct investment could not pick up pace as the FDI inflows were just \$1.1bn in SMFY25.

The RDA attracted overseas Pakistanis as it made it possible for the

first time to allow them to open an account in a Pakistani bank entirely digitally in a paperless manner without needing to visit any bank, embassy or consulate.

The SRP data further reveals that \$1.7bn has been repatriated since RDA launching, while \$1.73bn is still repayable. The rising number of accounts suggests many overseas Pakistanis are interested in RDA.

The SRP data shows that by the end of 2024, the number of accounts reached 778,713.

Bankers said the inflows in RDA during 2024 were higher than the previous year. They believe this was due to exchange rate stability. The dollar rate had been steady at Rs278 for more than a year.

However, despite higher remittances

and improved exports, the RDA and FDI inflows couldn't support the country's ability to meet its external debt repayment obligations without seeking support from the IMF and friendly countries.

Some bankers said the RDA proved a good source of foreign exchange for the government. They, however, observed that overseas Pakistanis have no confidence in investing in other financial products or sectors.

The overseas Pakistanis also like to see political stability while investing in housing and other such schemes, they believed. They said the RDA could not be an alternative to domestic bonds as it was before the year 2020, while the domestic bonds have now also lost attraction for foreign investors for many reasons.

PSX loses 4,340 points in first week of new year

By Muhammad Kashif

KARACHI: Amid growing political and security uncertainty, the stock market ignored positive economic news and underwent massive selling as panicked investors indulged in aggressive selling in the ongoing week.

However, in highly volatile trading during the weekend session, the bulls managed to end the four-session losing streak on the back of last-hour institutional value buying across the board.

Avif Habib Ltd (AHIL) said the market faced consistent pressure throughout the week, with the index closing at 113,247 points. The decline was attributed to several factors, including profit-taking by

institutional investors, political uncertainty and new tax amendments imposing restrictions on non-filing PSX investors.

On the economic front, several positive developments were observed, such as the World Bank set to approve a \$20 billion lending package and the UAE rolling over \$2m debt. Moreover, the remittances surged 13pc year-on-year in 1H FY25 to \$17.8bn. Furthermore, cut-off yields dropped by 21-50bps in the T-bill auction, reaching the lowest levels since 2022.

Moreover, the government successfully raised Rs138bn at the GDS auction across all tenors, with the majority sourced from the 10-year variable rate rental sukuk.

The SRP reserves remained under pressure, dropping \$5.5m to \$15.67bn. However, subdued quarterly GDP growth of 0.92pc

from 2.3pc in the same period last year, mounting political tensions, both at the local and international front and the resurgence of violence triggered panic-selling, chipping off 4,340 points or 3.7pc from the benchmark index to settle at 113,247 points week-on-week.

Sector-wise negative contributions came from banks (367 points), fertilisers (660 points), OMCs (534 points), technology (453 points) and cement (167 points). Meanwhile, the sectors that contributed positively were sugar (77 points), miscellaneous (21 points), and REIT funds (9 points). Script-wise negative contributors were Engro Fertiliser (423 points), Muri Petroleum (343 points), P90 (333 points), United Bank (301 points), and Systems Ltd (228 points). Meanwhile, script-wise posi-

tive contributions came from JMW Sugar Mills (77 points), Oil and Gas Development Company (63 points), Pakistan Power (48 points), Murree Brewery (29 points), and Standard Chartered Bank (Pak) Ltd (19 points).

Foreign selling continued, totalling \$5.7m compared to a net buy of \$0.7m last week. Major selling was witnessed in banks (\$3.8m), followed by fertilisers (\$2.2m). On the local front, buying was reported by companies (\$10.1m) and individuals (\$5.7m).

The average trading volume tumbled by a quarter to 782m shares and the value by 27pc to \$115m week-on-week.

According to the AHL, the market will likely see a recovery supported by the expectation of positive current account fig-

ures for December 2024. Additionally, after the recent correction, many scripts will attract buying interest.

According to AKD Securities Ltd, the market will likely maintain its positive trajectory, driven by an anticipated shift of funds from fixed income to equities amid falling fixed income yields. With easing inflation, the upcoming MPC meeting will remain a key focus.

Over the medium term, the index is anticipated to sustain its upward momentum through FY25, where we foresee the KSE-100 Index to reach 165,215 points by December 2025, primarily driven by the strong profitability of fertilizer companies, higher sustainable ROEs of banks and improving cash flows of T&Ps and OMCs, benefitting from falling interest rates.

Syrian leader, Lebanese PM discuss moves to fortify border

DAMASCUS: Syria's de facto leader Ahmed Al Sharaa met Lebanon's caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati in Damascus on Saturday in a bid to improve long-fought ties, with the pair focusing on strengthening their shared border.

The trip was the first by a head of government to Syria since Bashar Al Assad was toppled by a sweeping offensive on Dec 8, and the first visit by a Lebanese premier to neighbouring Syria in 15 years.

Ties between Damascus and Beirut have often been fraught since they became independent states in the 1940s.

The countries agreed to work together to secure their land borders and delineate their shared land and sea borders as a matter of priority, Mikati said following the meeting.

"At the top of the list of priorities is the demarcation of the land and sea borders between Lebanon and Syria" and securing



LEBANON's Prime Minister Najib Mikati (left) shakes hands with Syria's new leader Ahmed Al Sharaa before their meeting in Damascus on Saturday.—AFP

TikTok warns of broader consequences if US top court allows ban

WASHINGTON: The lawyer for TikTok and its Chinese parent company ByteDance offered a warning during arguments at the top US court over a law that would compel the sale of the short-video app or ban it in the United States.

If Congress could do this to TikTok, it could come after other companies, too.

The law, which was the subject of arguments before the nine Supreme Court judges on Friday, sets a Jan. 19 deadline for ByteDance to sell the popular social-media platform or face a ban on national security grounds.

The companies have sought, at the very least, a delay in implementation of the law, which they say violates the US constitution's protection against government abridgment of free speech.

Noel Francisco, representing TikTok and ByteDance, argued that Supreme Court endorsement of this law could enable statutes targeting other companies on similar grounds.

"AMC movie theatres used to be owned by a Chinese company. Under this theory, Congress could

order AMC movie theatres to censor any movies that Congress doesn't like or promote any movies that Congress wanted," Francisco told the judges.

The judges signalled through their questions during the arguments that they were inclined to uphold the law, although some expressed serious concerns about its First Amendment implications.

TikTok is a platform used by about 170 million people in the United States, roughly half the country's population. Congress passed the measure last year with overwhelming bipartisan support, as lawmakers cited the risk of the Chinese government exploiting TikTok to spy on Americans and carry out covert influence operations.

Jeffrey Fisher, the lawyer representing TikTok content creators who also have challenged the law, noted during the Supreme Court arguments that Congress with this measure was focusing on TikTok and not major Chinese online retailers including Temu.

"Would a Congress that is really worried about these very dramatic

risks leave out an e-commerce site like Temu that has 70 million Americans using it?" Fisher asked.

"It's very curious why you just single out TikTok alone and not other companies with tens of millions of people having their own data taken, you know, in the process of engaging with those websites and equally, if not more, available to Chinese control."

Democratic President Joe Biden signed the measure into law and his administration is defending it in this case. The deadline for direct action is just one day before Republican Donald Trump, who opposes the ban, takes office as Biden's successor.

Foreign adversaries

Solicitor General Elizabeth Prelogar, arguing for the Biden administration in defending the law, said it was crucial that it take effect on Jan. 19, as scheduled, in order to force ByteDance to act on directives.

"Foreign adversaries do not willingly give up their control over this mass communications channel in the United States," Prelogar said.—Reuters

Trump's Ukraine envoy attends Iran opposition event

PARIS: US president-elect Donald Trump's incoming Ukraine envoy Keith Kellogg was in Paris on Saturday, attending the event of an Iranian opposition group National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), according to TV footage carried by the group.

Retired Lt Gen Kellogg, who is set to serve as Trump's special envoy for Ukraine and Russia, postponed a trip to European capitals earlier this month until after Trump's inauguration on Jan 20.

Kellogg was set to give a speech at the event later.

He has previously spoken at NCRI events, most recently in November, but his presence in Paris, even if in a personal capacity, suggests the group has the ear of the new US administration.

Incoming secretary of state Marco Rubio has also spoken at NCRI events in the past. The group has repeatedly called for the fall of the existing Iranian authorities, although it is unclear how much support it has within Iran.

Speaking on the start of the event at Avenue de l'Opéra, the group's headquarters on the outskirts of Paris, NCRI president-elect Maryam Rajvi said the regional balance of power had shifted against Iran's leadership with the fall of Syria's Bashar Al Assad.

"It is time for Western governments to abandon past policies and stand with the Iranian people this time," she said. Trump has vowed to impose maximum pressure on Iran in a bid to force the country to negotiate a deal on its nuclear programme, ballistic missile programme and regional activities.

It was unclear whether Kellogg would use his trip to Paris to meet French officials to discuss Ukraine.

The NCRI, the political arm of the People's Mojahedin Organisation of Iran (PMOI), has held frequent rallies in France, often attended by high profile former US, European and Arab officials critical of Tehran.—Reuters

Ukraine claims capturing two N. Korean soldiers

KYIV: Ukraine has captured two North Korean soldiers in Russia's Kursk region, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy claimed on Saturday.

North Korean regular troops entered the war on Russia's side in October. Kyiv and its western allies initially estimated their numbers at above 10,000.

In a post on X, Zelenskyy said that the soldiers had been brought to Kyiv and were communicating with the Ukrainian security service. "As with all prisoners of war, these two North Korean soldiers are receiving the necessary medical assistance," Zelenskyy said. He said that journalists would be given access to speak to them.

Kyiv says that North Korean troops are fighting in the Kursk region, where Ukraine launched an incursion in August. Kyiv says it still controls several hundred square kilometres of territory there.

Pyeongyang has also been supplying Moscow with vast quantities of artillery shells, according to Kyiv and its western allies.

Ukraine had previously claimed it captured North Korean soldiers in combat, but that they had been badly wounded and died shortly afterward.—Reuters

Denmark sent Trump team private messages on Greenland

COPENHAGEN: Denmark sent private messages to US president-elect Donald Trump's team expressing willingness to discuss boosting security in Greenland or increasing the US military presence there without claiming the island, Asoe reported on Saturday, citing two sources.

Trump has described US control of Greenland, a semi-autonomous Danish territory, as an "absolute necessity". He did not dismiss the potential use of military or economic means, including tariffs against Denmark.

Asoe said that the Danish government wanted to convey to Trump that his security concerns could be addressed without claiming Greenland.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said earlier this week that she had asked for a meeting with Trump, but did not expect it to happen before his inauguration. Greenland Prime Minister Morte Egede said he was ready to speak with Trump, but urged respect for the island's independence aspirations.

Denmark has previously said that Greenland is not for sale.—Reuters

Russia sets sights on Libya to replace Syria as Africa launchpad

PARIS: The fall of Russian ally Bashar Al Assad in Syria has disrupted the Kremlin's strategy not only for the Mediterranean but also for Africa, pushing it to focus on Libya as a potential launchpad, experts say.

Russia runs a military port and an air base on the Syrian coast, designed to facilitate its operations in the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and sub-Saharan Africa, especially the Sahel, Sudan, and the Central African Republic.

However, this model is in jeopardy with the abrupt departure of the Syrian ruler.

Although Syria's new leader, Ahmed Al Sharaa, has called Russia an "important country", saying "we do not want Russia to leave Syria in the way that some wish", the redrawing of cards in Syria is pushing Russia to seek a strategic return towards Libya.

In Libya, Russian supporters already support Khalifa Haftar, a field marshal controlling the east of the country, against the Tripoli-based "government of national unity" (GNU), which has UN recognition and is supported by Turkey.

"The goal is notably to preserve the ongoing Russian missions in

Africa," said Jalel Hachemati at the RUSI think tank in the UK.

"It's a self-preservation reflex" for Russia, which is anxious "to mitigate the deterioration of its position in Syria", he said.

In May, Swiss investigative consortium "All Eyes On Wagner" identified Russian activities at around 30 Libyan sites, including the port of Tobruk, where military equipment was delivered in February and April of last year.

There were around 800 Russian troops present in February and 1,400 in May.

On Dec 18 the Wall Street Journal,

citing Libyan and American officials, said there had been a transfer of Russian radar and defence systems from Syria to Libya, including S-300 and S-400 anti-aircraft batteries.

"Notable volume"

Since Assad's fall on Dec 8, "a notable volume of Russian military resources has been shipped to Libya from Belarus and Russia", said Hachemati, adding there had been troop transfers as well.

Ukrainian intelligence claimed on Jan 3 that Moscow planned "to use cargo ships to transport military

equipment and weapons" to Libya.

"Disrupt western interests"

According to RUSI, "Assad offered Moscow a foothold against Nato's eastern flank and a stage to test military capabilities".

Haftar, he said, presents a similar opportunity, "a means to disrupt western interests, exploit Libya's fractured politics, and extend Moscow's influence into Africa".

The Tripoli government and Italy, Libya's former colonial master, have expressed concern over Russian movements, closely observed by the European Union and Nato.

Several sources say the United States has tried to persuade Haftar to deny the Russians a permanent installation in the port of Tobruk that they have coveted since 2021.

It seems already clear the Kremlin will struggle to find the same level of ease in Libya that it had during Assad's reign.

"Syria was convenient," said Ulf Loebsing, the Bamako-based head of the Sahel programme at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

"It was this black box with no Western diplomats, no journalists. They could basically do what they wanted," he said.—AFP



CHESTER: Reform UK party leader Nigel Farage holds a microphone during a conference on Saturday.—Reuters



BERLIN: Manuela Schwesig, who heads the government of Germany's Mecklenburg-Vorpommern state, displays a scarf with a slogan as she addresses delegates during a congress of the ruling Social Democratic Party on Saturday.—AFP



N'DAMENA: Chad's Defence Minister Issakhia Matious Djermous (left) and Gen Pascal Imani, commander-in-chief of the French African command, sign an agreement marking the departure of French soldiers from Chad's military base in Abéché.—AFP

NEWSMAKERS



HOSSEIN Salami (standing left), the head of Iran's Revolutionary Guard, and Amir Ali Hajzadeh, head of the Guard's air force, visit an underground missile base in an undisclosed location in Iran on Friday.—AFP

Iran conducts air defence exercises

DURAI: Iran conducted air defence exercises on Saturday as the country braces for more friction with Israel and the United States under incoming US president Donald Trump.

The war games take place as Iranian leaders face the risk that Trump could empower Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to attack Iran's nuclear sites, while further tightening US sanctions on its oil industry through its "maximum pressure" policy.

"In these exercises, defence systems will practise the fight against air, missile and electronic warfare threats in real battlefield conditions... to protect the country's skies and sensitive and vital areas," Iranian state television said.

Saturday's drills are part of two-month-long exercises launched on Jan 4 which have already included war games in which the elite Revolutionary Guards defended key nuclear installations in Natanz against mock attacks by missiles

and drones, state media said.

Iran's military has said it was using new drones and missiles in the exercises and released footage of a new underground "missile city" being visited by Guards commander-in-chief Maj Gen Hossein Salami. Salami warned, in a speech carried by state TV, about a "false sense of delight" among Iran's enemies, saying Iran and particularly its missile forces were stronger than ever.

While Iranian officials have downplayed Iran's setbacks, an Iranian general, Behzad Eshari, who was reportedly based in Syria, said in a speech circulated on social media that Iran had "badly lost" in Syria.

Trump in 2018 withdrew from a deal struck by his predecessor Barack Obama in 2015 in which Iran agreed to curb uranium enrichment, which can yield material for nuclear weapons, in return for the relaxation of US and UN economic sanctions.—Reuters



CADIZ: Midshipmen attend a ceremony before leaving for a six-month training regime on board a Spanish Navy ship on Saturday.—AFP



AMRITSAR: Commuters ride bicycles along a road amid dense fog on a cold winter day on Saturday.—AFP

Four Israeli soldiers killed in Gaza

Netanyahu sends delegation to Qatar for talks on truce and prisoner release

JERUSALEM: The Israeli military said on Saturday that four soldiers had died in combat in the north of Gaza Strip.

The deaths brought to 493 the total number of soldiers killed in the Palestinian territory since Israel launched its ground offensive in retaliation for Hamas's Oct 7, 2023, raids in Israel.

An officer and a reservist soldier were "seriously wounded" during the same incident and were taken to hospital, the military said in a statement.

The Israeli military said on Saturday it had killed three Hamas fighters in a ground operation near Jabalia, in northern Gaza.

Delegation off to Qatar

Netanyahu sent a delegation of senior officials to Qatar on Saturday for negotiations on a prisoner release and Gaza ceasefire deal, his office said.

Netanyahu held a meeting in Jerusalem with US president-elect Donald Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, a representative of current US President Joe Biden and senior Israeli officials.

Following the meeting, Netanyahu instructed the heads of the Mossad spy agency and Shin Bet security agency as well as General Niram Alon and foreign policy adviser Ophir Falk "to depart for Doha in order to continue advancing a deal to release our hostages", the statement said.

The United States has for more than a year been mediating talks alongside Qatar and Egypt for an end to the Gaza fighting. Indirect negotiations between Israel and Hamas resumed last weekend in Qatar.—AFP



A PROTESTER argues with a soldier during a demonstration against the Israeli government.—Reuters

Biden describes Meta decision to do away with fact-checking as shameful

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden blasted Meta on Friday for scrapping fact-checking on Facebook and Instagram in the United States, calling the move "really shameful" after a global network worried of real-world harm if the tech giant expands its decision to other countries.

Meta chief executive Mark Zuckerberg triggered alarm Tuesday when he announced the Palo Alto company was ditching third-party fact-checking in the United States and turning over the task of debunking falsehoods to ordinary users under a model known as "Community Notes," popularized by X.

The decision was widely seen as an attempt to appease President-elect Donald Trump, whose conservative support base has long complained that fact-checking on tech platforms was a way to curtail free speech and censor right-wing content.

"I think it's really shameful," Biden told reporters at the White House when asked about the announcement.

"Telling the truth matters," he said, adding that the move was "completely contrary to everything America's about." The International Fact-Checking Network has warned of devastating consequences if Meta broadens its policy shift beyond US borders to the company's programs covering more than 100 countries.

"Some of these countries are highly vulnerable to misinformation that spurs political instability, election interference, mob violence and even genocide," IFCN, which includes dozens of news agencies as members, said in an open letter to Zuckerberg.

"If Meta decides to stop the program worldwide, it is almost certain to result in real-world harm in many places," it added.

Zuckerberg doubled down in an interview Friday with podcaster Joe Rogan, comparing the fact-checking programme with "something out of Orwell's dystopian novel."

He added that the programme, which began in 2016, was

"destroying so much trust, especially in the United States," Zuckerberg also expressed regret for giving "too much deference" to the traditional media, criticising it for pushing the narrative that social media misinformation had swung the 2016 election in favour of Trump.

'Consequences'

Zuckerberg stressed many when he said on Tuesday that fact-checkers were "too politically biased," and added that the program had led to "too much censorship." IFCN's letter rejected the claim as "false," insisting that Meta's fact-checking partners underwent "rigorous" verification to meet its strict transparency standards.

Far from questioning these standards, it added, Meta had "consistently praised their rigor and effectiveness."

The United Nations rights chief Valer Turk also insisted on Friday that regulating harmful content and hate speech online "is not censorship."—AFP

Pakistan, China commit to top-notch CPEC 2.0

Continued from Page 1

media, cultural exchanges and people-to-people linkages.

Bilateral ties

The two sides expressed satisfaction over the "positive trajectory" of bilateral relations and reaffirmed their commitment to further deepening their all-weather strategic cooperative partnership.

They also exchanged views on a range of regional and international issues and agreed to further enhance their mutual coordination and consultations, including through high-level exchanges and dialogic mechanisms.

Foreign Secretary Baloch described Pakistan-China relationship as "special and unique" and noted that the government and people of Pakistan deeply cherished this enduring friendship.

The meeting reviewed the entire spectrum of practical cooperation between the two countries.

The two sides underscored the need to strengthen their mutual coordination at the multilateral forums, including at the United Nations Security Council.

Later, the foreign secretary held a meeting with Executive Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhanyu.

They exchanged views on Pakistan-China relations as well as on regional and international issues of common interest.

Strategic cooperation

Separately, the ambassador of China to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong, said the Pakistan-China strategic cooperation will continue to deepen in the future.

Addressing a ceremony regarding the Chinese New Year 2025, the ambassador said that last month, Khawarizad Pass started year-round functioning and called it a "landmark progress".

He added that the Chashma Nuclear Power Plant Unit 3, which can create 40,000 direct and indirect jobs during the construction period, has officially started.

This project has huge potential for practical cooperation between the two countries, the ambassador said.

"We stand ready to continue to strengthen the development strategies with Pakistan, deepen mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation, forge an upgraded version of the CPEC construction, and accelerate the building of a closer China-Pakistan community of shared future in the new era."

He said President Xi Jinping maintained close communication with the president and prime minister of Pakistan recently and agreed to promote China-Pakistan strategic cooperation.

He said China was ready to provide rare opportunities for the world with the development of Chinese modernisation. The envoy thanked the president and prime minister for writing to President Xi on the earthquake in Xining earlier this month.

"We firmly believe that regardless of sudden natural disasters or complex and severe external environments, we can overcome difficulties and move forward courageously, and continuously push forward the great cause of building a strong country and achieving national rejuvenation."

He said China's economy has continued to stabilise and improve, with the total grain output reaching a record 1.4 trillion jin for the first time.—AFP

Shahrah-e-Bhutto

The Lifeline of Karachi, the Foundation of Development!

The 39-kilometer-long, 4-lane Shahrah-e-Bhutto Malir Expressway would ease Karachi's hectic lifestyle. It begins at the KPT Interchange and runs along the Malir River, passing through Qayyumabad to Shahrah-e-Faisal and ending near Kathore at the Karachi-Hyderabad Motorway



- The 4-lane expressway is the shortest alternative route from DHA Karachi to the M-9 Motorway.
- This project is designed to ensure fast and safe travel between urban areas of the city and nearby villages.
- The travel time from Korangi Creek Avenue (DHA) to the Super Highway (M-9) will be reduced to 25 minutes.
- It will significantly reduce traffic congestion and fuel wastage.

The Shahrah-e-Bhutto Malir Expressway is not just a road but a milestone in development for the people of Karachi. This project will support the city's growth, create employment opportunities, and provide safe travel facilities.



Government of Sindh
Leading in Development and Amenity

Phase -1 Qayyumabad to Shah Faisal
9.1 kilometers road has been inaugurated

Progress Accelerated, Prosperity Ahead
Shahrah-e-Bhutto

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Your Magazine, Your Business in
Pakistan's Largest and Most Influential
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Blame game begins as raging LA fire switches direction

Los Angeles fire chief says his department still understaffed, underfunded

LOS ANGELES: The largest of the raging wildfires that have devastated parts of Los Angeles was reported to have shifted direction on Saturday, triggering more evacuation orders and posing a new challenge to exhausted firefighters.

Six simultaneous blazes that have ripped across Los Angeles County neighborhoods since Tuesday have killed at least 11 people and damaged or destroyed 10,000 structures. The toll is expected to mount when firefighters are able to conduct house-to-house searches, an official re-examination began over responsibility for the disaster.

Though the fierce Santa Ana winds that fanned the infernos eased on Friday night, the Palmdale Fire on the city's western edge was heading in a new direction, prompting another evacuation order as it edged towards the Brentwood neighborhood and the San Fernando Valley foothills, the Los Angeles Times reported.

"The Palmdale fire has got a new significant flare-up on the eastern portion and continues to northeast," LA Fire Department Captain Erik Scott told local station KTLA, according to a report on the LA Times website.

The fire, the most destructive in the history of Los Angeles, has razed whole neighborhoods to the ground, leaving just the smoldering ruins of what had been people's homes and possessions.

Before the latest flare-up, firefighters had reported progress in subduing the Palmdale Fire and the Eaton Fire in the foothills east of the metropolis after it burned out of control for days. On Friday night, the Palmdale Fire was 8pc contained and the Eaton Fire 1pc, state agency Cal Fire said.

The two big fires combined had consumed 35,000 acres.

Some 151,000 people remained under evacuation orders and another 106,800

issued evacuation warnings with a curfew in place for all evacuation zones, Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna said.

Seven neighboring states, the federal government and Canada have rushed aid to California, bolstering aerial teams dropping water and fire retardant on the flaming hills and crevices on the ground attacking fire lines with hand tools and hoses.

Los Angeles fire chief Kristin Crowley blamed funding cuts to her department, telling Fox News affiliate KTTV. "We are still understaffed, we're still under-resourced, and we're still underfunded."

Meanwhile, emergency managers apologized after false evacuation alerts were erroneously sent to millions of mobile phones, sparking panic. "I can't express enough how sorry I am," said Kevin McClellan, the director of the Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management.

And aviation authorities were investigating who had piloted an illegal drone that struck a water-dropping aircraft, punching a fist-sized hole in the plane and taking it out of action.

President Biden also took a veiled swipe at president-elect Donald Trump, who has spread misinformation over the flames that has been amplified on social media. "You're going to have a lot of damage done out there trying to take advantage of it," Biden said of the fires.

While Angelenos grapple with the heart-rending ruin, anger has risen over officials' preparedness and response, particularly for a series of false evacuation alerts and after hydrants ran dry as firefighters battled the initial blazes.

Governor Gavin Newsom ordered a "full independent review" of the city's utilities, describing the lack of water supplies during the initial fires as "deeply troubling." "We need answers to how that happened," he wrote in an open letter.

President Joe Biden who declared the fires a major disaster said the US government would reimburse DMPC of the recovery for the next six months. —Agencies

Crucial 'black box' data before South Korean plane crash missing

SEOUL: The flight data and cockpit voice recorder on the Jais Air jet that crashed on Dec 29 stopped recording about four minutes before the airliner hit a concrete structure at South Korea's Muan airport, the transport ministry said on Saturday.

Authorities investigating the disaster that killed 179 people, the worst on South Korean soil, plan to analyse what caused the "black boxes" to stop recording, the ministry said.

The voice recorder was initially analysed in South Korea, and when data was found to be missing, sent to a US National Transportation Safety Board laboratory, the ministry said.

The damaged flight data recorder was taken to the United States for analysis in cooperation with the US safety regulator, the ministry has said.

Jais Air 7C2216, which departed for Busan in South Korea, belly-landed and overran the runway, exploding into flames after hitting an embankment.

Sim Jai-dong, a former transport ministry accident investigator, said the discovery of the missing data from the crashed final minutes was surprising and suggests all power, including backup, may have been cut, which is rare.

The transport ministry said other data available would be used in the investigation and that it would ensure the probe is transparent and that information is shared with the victims' families.

Some members of the victims' families have said the transport ministry should not be taking the lead in the investigation but that it should involve independent experts including those recommended by the families.

The investigation of the crash has a too focused on the embankment, which was designed to prop up the "localiser" system used to assist aircraft landing, including why it was built with such right



THE cockpit voice recorder retrieved from Jais Air flight 2024, which crashed killing 179 people, and the black boxes holding the flight data stopped recording four minutes before the disaster —AFP

material and so close to the end of the runway. It was reported earlier that the pilots told air traffic control the plane had suffered a bird strike and declared emergency minutes before it crashed into the embankment exploding in flames. Two injured crew members, sitting in the tail section, were rescued.

Two minutes before the Mayday emergency call, air traffic control gave caution for "bird activity". Declaring emergency, the pilots abandoned the landing attempt and initiated a go-around.

But instead of making a full go-around, the airline's Boeing 737-800 jet took a sharp turn and approached the airport's single runway from the opposite end, crash-landing. —Reuters

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Bangladesh eases visa process for Pakistanis

By Khalid Haasain

LAHORE: Bangladesh has simplified visa process for Pakistanis, with an objective to further strengthen trade and economic relations.

While speaking to business community here at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry on Saturday, High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Pakistan Iqbal Haasain has said the present government in Bangladesh has removed the need for clearance from Dhaka for Pakistani heads of missions while issuing visas.

He said that increasing trade and investment between the two countries must be a top priority to move forward. He stressed collaboration with LCCI to achieve this goal.

Mr Haasain stated Bangladesh's government is eager to improve relations with Pakistan, which had been less than satisfactory over the past decade. He said Bangladesh, with its population of 180 million, represents a significant consumer market that Pakistan has the potential to tap. The diplomat said the trade potential between the two countries remains largely untapped, and Pakistan has the capacity to capitalise on it.

He also mentioned the efforts of Dr Mohammad Yunus, the chief advisor to Bangladesh's interim government, for regional cooperation, for regional cooperation. He called for greater collaboration between South Asian countries and stressed the importance of revitalising the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) to enhance regional trade and cooperation. Despite growing regional coop-

eration globally, South Asia still faces challenges which require collective efforts to overcome.

The High Commissioner said that it is responsibility of both countries to create opportunities for the current generation and remove obstacles to mutual trade and cooperation. He said LCCI has an influential role in fostering increased trade and investment between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

He also reflected on the lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic and how it underscored the importance of international cooperation, stating, "It is essential to recognise that nations must collaborate in times of crisis to keep trade flowing smoothly," he added.

LCCI President Mian Abuzar Shad shared data indicating that two-way trade between Pakistan

and Bangladesh amounted to \$718 million during the fiscal year 2023-24.

"Pakistan's exports to Bangladesh were valued at \$46 bn, while imports from Bangladesh stood at \$53 bn. The first five months of the 2024 fiscal year (July-November) saw exports to Bangladesh increase to \$314m, while imports from Bangladesh remained low at \$51m," he explained.

The LCCI president expressed a strong desire to boost the volume of two-way trade to at least \$2 billion in the near future. He urged both governments and the private sector to take decisive actions to achieve this goal. He said that the sectors including information technology, pharmaceuticals, rice, surgical instruments, processed foods, automotive parts and sports goods can play an important role in this regard.

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Sabalenka and Sinner target back-to-back Australian Open glory

MELBOURNE: Janik Sinner will try to put a doping scandal behind him when he kicks off his Australian Open defence against Nicolas Pietrangeli, while Aryna Sabalenka's bid for a hat-trick of titles starts on Sunday against Sloane Stephens.

The first Grand Slam of the year gets under way at Melbourne Park as a 15-day event for the second year running, aimed at cutting down on late-night finishes.

Italian world number one Sinner is hot favourite after a breakthrough 2024 built on the back of his comeback from the final victory over Daniil Medvedev in last year's final.

It was his maiden Slam crown and he went on to add the US Open, with his overwhelming dominance illustrated by being more than 4,000 ranking points clear of world number two Alexander Zverev.

He has played Chile's Jarry twice before, winning their last clash in Beijing in September. But he needed to rally from a set down.

"Let's see what I can do this year," said the 23-year-old. "It's a question that I think none of us can answer. But it's good to be back here, and we'll see what the tournament is going to say."

He begins his defence under a cloud after twice testing positive for traces of the steroid clenbuterol in March. While exonerated by the International Tennis Integrity Agency, the World Anti-Doping Agency appealed and his case which will be heard by the Court of Arbitration for Sport on April 16-17.

Should he get past Jarry, the top seed could meet Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas or Australian Alex de Minaur in the quarter-finals.

Medvedev — who has made three of the last four Australian Open finals — is a potential semi-final opponent with the Russian opening his account against Thai wildcard Kasidil Samree.

Carlos Alcaraz and 10-time champion Novak Djokovic are on the other side of the draw, with the



SERBIA'S Novak Djokovic (front) serves as his coach Andy Murray looks on during a practice session on Saturday.—AFP

heavyweight duo on a last-night collision course.

Spain's Alcaraz is bidding to complete a career Grand Slam of all four majors aged just 21 and begins against Indian Kasidil Alexander Shrivastava.

The four-time major winner Alcaraz has never gone past the quarter-finals in Melbourne.

"Main thing for me is Grand Slams, try to win as many Grand Slams as I can. That's my main goal," he said.

Despite being 37 and coming off a mediocre season by his standards, how will he be battling against Djokovic on the blue hardcourts where he has tasted his biggest successes.

Gearing for an 11th title, he would surpass Margaret Court as the outright Slam leader on 25 should he win, with former rival Andy Murray now coaching him.

He meets American teenager Nicholas Pietrangeli in the first.

"To be honest, I don't know much about him," said the Serb. "I saw that he's very quick. He's very talented player. I have to obviously approach that match very seriously, like any other, and do my best to get a win."

Second seed Zverev plays the men's night match on Rod Laver Arena Sunday against France's Lucas Pouille, with sixth seed Casper Ruud also in action.

Zverev will be on court after Sabalenka, who kicks off her title defence against American former US Open winner Stephens.

The Belarusian top seed is looking to become the first woman since Martina Hingis (1997-99) to win three consecutive titles.

Should she do so, Sabalenka will join a select group that also includes Margaret Court, Evonne Coolidge, Steffi Graf and Monica Seles.

"I know that I have the possibility of joining legends by winning three titles in a row," she said. "But I don't want to overthink about that. I just want to do my job."

World number three Coco Gauff also faces a tricky start, with 2020 Australian Open winner Sofia Kenin awaiting her.

But second seed Iga Swiatek has an easier assignment against Czech doubles specialist Katerina Siniakova, ranked 46.

However, the Polish five-time Grand Slam winner, who served a one-month sanction for doping last year, has sixth seed Elena Rybakina and eighth seed Emma Navarro in her half of the draw.—AFP



OVERDRIVE Racing's Youssef Al-Rajhi and Timo Gottschalk in action during the sixth stage of the Dakar Rally, from Hail to Al Duwadimi, on Saturday.—Reuters

Imam returns as Pakistan announce squad for WI Tests

By Our Sports Reporter

LAHORE: Openers Imam-ul-Haq and Mohammad Haseem have been called back into the Pakistan Test squad for the upcoming two-match series against the West Indies coming to follow opener Salim Ayub's injury and Abdullah Shafique's slipping form.

The 15-member squad, announced by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Saturday, also includes two uncapped players in pacer Kasidil Ali and wicket-keeper-batter Rohail Nazir.

Seemless fast bowler Shabeen Shah Afridi also remained out of Test reckoning after missing the preceding series against South Africa.

The 29-year-old Imam's last Test outing was against Australia in the second of Pakistan's three-match series Down Under in December 2023. He was dropped for his

defensive batting approach as skipper Shan Masood looked to influence a shift of mindset within the Pakistan dressing room.

But Imam will have another shot at solidifying what used to be a permanent spot in the team, thanks to Salim's — who had become his replacement — ankle injury the weeklong picked in the recent series against South Africa.

Imam and Salim's opening partner Abdullah has also been sidelined, possibly for a long run, after the right-hander failed to make an impact at the top of the order in Pakistan's ongoing World Test Championship cycle, which ends with the West Indies series.

Kasidil and Rohail have been awarded for their impressive performances in the domestic circuit across the last couple of years. Right-arm Kasidil took seven wickets in two matches of the recently-concluded Quaid-e-Azam Trophy. He also

impressed with figures of 5-33 and 2-79 in the first of the two four-day matches against Sri Lanka 'A' in November.

Rohail, meanwhile, has been a regular feature in domestic cricket since the past few years, making him one of the most experienced wicket-keepers in the Pakistan talent pool. And with fellow glovemen Haseebullah Khan — who was also a part of the squad against South Africa — injured, Rohail is expected to be the second-choice keeper after mainstay Mohammad Rizwan for the West Indies Tests.

Pakistan have kept their squad spin heavy with off-spinner Sajid Khan, who wasn't preferred for the South Africa tour, returning, following his series-winning show against England in October.

In the series, which Pakistan won 2-1, left-arm spinner Noman Ali was Sajid's partner in crime — taking 39 wickets together — and he will be

expected to carry out the same role against the West Indies as well as he retains his spot.

The spin attack is further bolstered by the return of so-called "mystery" spinner Abrar Ali, who last featured in the Test whites in Pakistan's 2-0 whitewash by Bangladesh at home in November last year.

Pakistan will host the visitors for the first time in 19 years, with both Tests held in Multan, starting from January 17 and January 25.

Shan is retained as skipper despite Pakistan losing both the Tests in South Africa last week.

Besides Shan, Saad Shakoof, Babar Azam, Kamran Ghulam, Khuram Shahzad, Mohammad Rizwan, Noman Ali, and Salman Ali Agha kept their places from the South Africa series.

Spain's Shabeen Afridi, head coach, announced that the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has named the 15-member squad for the upcoming two-match series against the West Indies coming to follow opener Salim Ayub's injury and Abdullah Shafique's slipping form.

Shaheens struggle against West Indies despite Huraira fifty

ISLAMABAD: Opening batter Mohammad Huraira hit a fluent half-century against West Indies as Shaheens closed the day two with 212-9 on the board at the Islamabad Club here on Saturday. Huraira top-scored for Shaheens hitting 13 fours in his 73-ball 74.

After West Indies completed their first innings for 346-8 in 90 overs, Shaheens slipped to 41-2 losing Omais his Younis and skipper Imam-ul-Haq.

Mohammad Sulaiman joined forces with Huraira to stitch a 78-run second-wicket partnership. Sulaiman was pinned leg-before by Godakrish Mole for 45 off 79 balls with the help of seven fours, while Huraira fell to Kevin Sinclair, initiating a batting collapse that costed the Shaheens seven wickets for 92 runs.

Rohail Nazir was the other batter who crossed 20-run mark as he returned for a 36-ball 21 striking three fours.

For West Indies, Sinclair picked up three wickets, while Mollie and Jayden Seales dis-

missed two batters each. Kemar Roach and Josel Warricans accounted for one wicket each as well.

Earlier in the day, West Indies resumed batting from their overnight score of 273-7 to score 346-8 as Amir Jangoo (63 not out off 92, eight fours and a six) went onto score an unbeaten half-century.

Sinclair remained unbeaten for 28 off 36 balls as the duo put on a 50-run unassisted partnership before the innings came to close with completion of 90 overs.

The only West Indies wicket to fall on day two was Joshua De Silva who was run out by Kasidil Ali for 23 off 38 balls with the help of two boundaries.

Scores in brief: WEST INDIES 346-8 in 90 overs (Alik Alhanaro 99, Amir Jangoo 63, Kraigg Brathwaite 44, Mohammad Ramzan Jnr 3-64, Ahmed Safi Abdullah 2-95); PAKISTAN SHAHEENS 212-9 in 38 overs (Mohammad Huraira 74, Mohammad Sulaiman 45, Kevin Sinclair 3-50, Jayden Seales 2-16).—SportsReporter



PAKISTAN Shaheens batter Mohammad Huraira plays a shot during the four-day tour match against West Indies at the Islamabad Club on Saturday.—Tasneem Shahzad/White Star

De Mevius, Brabec, take Dakar sixth stage honours

AL DUWADIMI: Belgian Guillaume de Mevius claimed stage six behind the wheel of a Mini as the Dakar Rally resumed on Saturday after a rest day.

Defending bike champion Ricky Brabec took the honours on two wheels, the Honda rider coming in ahead of Adrian Van Beveren and Jose Ignacio Cornejo after the 405km special from Hail to Al Duwadimi.

It was a good day for the Mini team with De Mevius followed home by his Portuguese teammate Joao Ferreira, with five-time champion Nasser Al-Attiyah in third.

"We had a good stage, finally! Our goal was to close back some time and pick up points for the championship, so we gave it everything we had," said De Mevius. "My car still bears a few scars from last week and today we did a bit of flying, but thankfully we didn't hit anything."

South African Hank Lategan crossed in seventh to maintain his position at the top of the car standings by four minutes from local Saudi driver Youssef Al-Rajhi.

Al-Attiyah is placed fourth, 16 minutes adrift.

Among the bikes, this was American Brabec's 15th Dakar career stage win.

"Yeah, the first day on the second week is a long day. They like to make you get a little bit of rest and then put you right back into it," Brabec said.

Overall bike leader Daniel Sanders kept his powder dry on Saturday, crossing the line in ninth as he aims to put his foot down on Sunday's seventh stage.

"I got off to a bit of a rough start, getting a little bit lost at the beginning and just trying to get back into the rhythm after the rest day," he reported.

"Well, yeah, it was important not to go too good today because I think tomorrow's a difficult stage, so I didn't want to push and get up the front. No, hopefully we're in a good starting position for tomorrow and, yeah, we'll be back in the rhythm."

Sanders leads the bike standings by almost a dozen minutes from Spain's Toshi Scharnina with Brabec fourth, over 23 minutes adrift.

One of the favourites for the bike title, Ross Branch from Botswana, suffered a heavy fall early in the day and was forced to withdraw.—AFP

Tamim retires from international cricket

DHAKA: Former Bangladesh one-day captain Tamim Iqbal has announced his retirement from international cricket, saying he did not wish to be a distraction for the team ahead of the Champions Trophy.

Tamim made his international debut in a 2007 One-day International (ODI) against Zimbabwe in Barisal. He played 243 ODIs, 79 Tests and 78 Twenty20 internationals (T20Is).

Tamim previously retired from international cricket a few months before the 50-overs World Cup in India in 2023, but reversed that decision in a day. He then missed out on the World Cup due to a back injury.

The 35-year-old scored over 15,000 runs across all formats and hit 25 centuries — the most by any Bangladesh batter. He last played for Bangladesh in their 2-0 ODI series defeat at home against New Zealand in September 2023.

"I have been away from international cricket for a long time. That distance will remain. My chapter in international cricket is over," he wrote in a post on social media. "I have been thinking about this for a long time. Now that a big event like the Champions Trophy is coming up, I do not want to be the focus of anyone's attention, which could lead to the team losing their focus."

The Champions Trophy will take place in Pakistan from Feb. 19-March 10. Bangladesh are in Group 'A', alongside hosts and defending champions Pakistan, New Zealand and India.

"Captain Najmul Hossain Shanto sincerely asked me to return to the team (for the Champions Trophy)," Tamim added. "There were discussions with the selection committee too. I am grateful to them for still considering me in the team. However, I have listened to my own heart."—Reuters

Sri Lanka bowlers skittle NZ in 140-run victory

AUCKLAND: Sri Lanka routed New Zealand's top-order Saturday to comfortably win the third one-day international in Auckland by 140 runs and salvage a lone victory in the series.

The home side's hopes of chasing down Sri Lanka's 290-8 needed when they crumpled to 21-5 at Eden Park, before being dismissed for 150 off 29.4 overs.

Sri Lanka rebounded after suffering heavy defeats in the first two games to code the three-match series.

It mirrored the pattern of the preceding T20 series, which New Zealand also won 2-1.

Sri Lanka captain Charith Asalanka played his side could show what they are capable of.

"I think it's always great to make comeback like this but unfortunately, we lost



New Zealand players pose with the series trophy after beating Sri Lanka in the third One-day International at Eden Park on Saturday.—AFP

first two of both series," he said. "But today, this was a pleasure to watch." The

visitors were led by some lethal seam bowling from Asitha Fernando and Eshan

Malinga, who claimed three wickets each, as did spinner

Theekshana.

Fernando (3-26) was the chief destroyer with the new ball as New Zealand's first five wickets tumbled inside the first seven overs.

The victory margin would have been greater, were it not for Mark Chapman's 51 off 41 balls, the number three New Zealand batsman the last out when he was bowled by Theekshana (3-35).

No other New Zealander reached 20, with five of the top six dismissed for two runs or less. Earlier, injured opener Pathum Nissanka top-scored for Sri Lanka with 66 off 42 balls.

Nissanka, was on 50 off 11 balls when he retired hurt after suffering an apparent hip injury, having got his team off to a flying start at 66 without loss in 10 overs.

He recovered and returned in the 34th over to

add a further 16 runs, hitting six fours and five sixes in total. There were half-centuries from Kusal Mendis (54 off 48) and Janith Liyanage (53 off 52) in a vastly improved Sri Lanka batting effort.

New Zealand seamer Matt Henry continued a fine series, claiming 4-55 to lift him to 150 ODI wickets, while captain, Mitchell Santner took 2-55 with his spin.

Santner said the target of 291 was "about par" at Eden Park but the game was ripped away from them by Sri Lanka's bowlers.

"Asitha got the ball swinging, they took their catches and made it challenging for us," Santner said. "We'll take it on the chin. A little disappointing, probably not the way we wanted to finish the series after playing quite well."—AFP

Scoreboard	
SRI LANKA	
P. Nissanka c Smith b Santner	66
A. Fernando c Chapman b Henry	17
K.D. Mendis c Santner b Henry	54
K.D. Mendis c Liyanage b Henry	48
C. Asalanka c Henry b Theekshana	19
A. Liyanage c Theekshana b Henry	53
C. Wickramaratne c Smith b Henry	18
W. Theekshana b Henry	35
M. Chapman not out	11
P. Malinga not out	5
EXTRAS (D.R.A. 19-4)	8
TOTAL (140-5 in 29.4 overs)	150
FALL OF WICKETS : 1-48 (A. Fernando), 2-106 (K.D. Mendis), 3-151 (Asalanka), 4-183 (P. Liyanage), 5-204 (Theekshana), 6-248 (Wickramaratne), 7-250 (Theekshana), 8-255 (Liyanage)	
DO NOT BAY : A.M. Fernando	
SCORING : Batting 10-0-0-0, Offbowler 10-0-0-0 (2nd), Bowler 0-0-0-1, Seamer 10-0-0-0 (2nd), Bowler 0-0-0-1, Phipps 0-0-0-0	
NEW ZEALAND	
W. Young c A. Fernando b Theekshana	1
A. Fernando c A.M. Fernando	1
A. Chapman c Theekshana	1
C. Smith c Liyanage b Malinga	1
C. Liyanage c Theekshana b A.M. Fernando	1
C. Phipps c K.D. Mendis b A.M. Fernando	1
A. Liyanage c R.D. Mendis b Liyanage	1
A. Liyanage c R.D. Mendis b Theekshana	1
A. Smith c K.D. Mendis b Malinga	1
M. Henry b Malinga	1
A. Liyanage not out	1
EXTRAS (D.R.A. 10-4, N.D. 10-4)	20
TOTAL (not out, 29.4 overs)	291
FALL OF WICKETS : 1-0 (Young), 2-0 (Theekshana), 3-0 (Asalanka), 4-21 (Phipps), 5-21 (Theekshana), 6-21 (Theekshana), 7-21 (Theekshana), 8-21 (Theekshana), 9-21 (Theekshana), 10-21 (Theekshana)	
BOWLING : A.M. Fernando 7-0-0-0 (2nd), Theekshana 7-0-0-0 (2nd), C. Smith 1-0-0-0 (2nd), Malinga 3-1-0-0 (2nd), Liyanage 3-0-0-1, Wickramaratne 3-0-0-0, Theekshana 7-0-0-0 (2nd)	
REMARKS : Sri Lanka won by 140 runs	

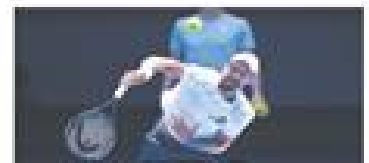
KARACHI

Sunset 05:03 pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 07:18 am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 13°C
Maximum 28°C
Humidity 57%
Outlook Sunny

METRO South



Sabalenka and Sinner target back-to-back Australian Open glory
Pg. 18 SPORT

Manhole cover missing? Call 1334

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: In view of the growing incidents of falling and drowning in open manholes, the Karachi Water and Sewerage Corporation has implemented a procedure to install covers within 12 to 24 hours.

A spokesman for the utility said that new Standard Operational Procedures (SOPs) had been implemented to address public complaints promptly on the directives of Mayor Musarrat Wahab.

He said that the people could report issues related to open manholes or damaged ring shafts through the helpline number 1334 or by contacting the relevant division.

According to the spokesman, the concerned executive engineer was required to provide and install manhole covers within 12 to 24 hours after receiving a complaint under the new procedures.

Furthermore, he said, the engineer must submit a report on the installation of manhole cover to the superintendent and chief engineer and also update the helpline staff on the status of the resolution of the complaint.

The spokesman said that executive engineer who failed to comply with these SOPs without valid reasons would be made accountable.

He said that the SOPs had been introduced to prioritise and resolve public complaints effectively, enhancing the service system's overall efficiency.

Bilawal slams 'discriminatory attitude' of Centre towards Sindh

• Opens first segment of Malir Expressway • Declares Karachi's advancement vital for nation's progress, prosperity • Project renamed as Shahrah-e-Shahheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto

By Tahir Siddiqui

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Saturday criticised what he called the discriminatory attitude of the federal government towards Sindh, likening it to stepmotherly treatment.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the first segment of the Malir Expressway project here, he said that the federation deprived Sindh of its due resources through various schemes, which create numerous problems. "The Pakistan Peoples Party does not want to engage in extremist or retaliatory politics," he declared.

Accompanied by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and other senior party leaders, the PPP chairman celebrated the opening ceremony by driving his vehicle on the 5.1-km section of the six-lane 29-km-long Malir Expressway project, which has been renamed as Shahrah-e-Shahheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

Addressing the opening ceremony, Mr. Bhutto-Zardari took pride in introducing and completing several development projects on a public-private partnership basis, saying the model was adopted "because the federal government, under various pretences, failed to allocate resources to Sindh".

He shed light on the positive outcomes of the public-private partnership model, saying it yielded excellent results in sectors like education, healthcare, and power infrastructure. "Water issues in Sindh will also be resolved through this model, and energy parks should be established under public-private partnership," he said.

He further emphasised that projects under the public-private partnership model are not only successful but also exemplify good governance in Pakistan. While other provinces and the federal government failed in



PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari speaks at the inauguration ceremony of Malir Expressway, on Saturday. —APP

implementing public-private partnerships effectively, Sindh's success had earned international acclaim, he noted.

The PPP chairman urged the business community across Karachi and the country to participate in Sindh government's public-private partnership projects. He also urged the federal government to follow Sindh's example and introduce attractive development initiatives to involve the national business community.

Praises contribution of PPP to city uplif

He praised the enduring contributions of the PPP and his family's three generations to the development of the city and said that the city's advancement was vital for the nation's overall progress and prosperity.

He highlighted the achievements of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who initiated big projects such as Sharaan Faisal and Pakistan Steel Mills during his tenure.

The PPP chairman said that Benazir Bhutto, despite facing

two dictatorial regimes, prioritised infrastructure, employment opportunities, and essential facilities for the people.

"During her government, Shehbaz Muhammad Benazir Bhutto paid special attention to Karachi, striving for peace and employment for the city's residents," he said, adding that his mission was also to ensure public progress and carry forward her vision.

He also praised President Asif Zardari's initiatives for Karachi, saying, "As a former Mayor Mustafa Kamal, and he will confirm that President Asif Ali Zardari provided the most funds for Sindh".

He said that the Shahheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Expressway project would not only connect the city and the province to the rest of the country but also create employment opportunities for the residents.

Speaking on the occasion, the chief minister described the Malir Expressway as the largest public-private partnership infrastructure project in the province and the country.

He explained that the project's total cost is approximately Rs55 billion, with the Sindh government contributing around Rs12bn. Commercial banks, development finance institutions, and the public-private partnership had jointly funded the remaining Rs43bn.

CM Shah further emphasised that once the expressway is fully operational by June 2025, it would provide faster and more efficient access to industrial areas, and boost the economic activity in the region.

After completion, the Malir Expressway will serve as an alternative route to Sharaan Faisal and link to the Karachi-Hyderabad Motorway (M9) near Kuthree, significantly reducing the traffic burden on Karachi's congested urban roads.

The event was attended among others by PPP-Sindh President Nisar Ahmed Khudho, former CM Syed Qaim Ali Shah, Mayor Musarrat Wahab, business leaders Arif Habib, Asghar Karim Bhudhi, M. Ali Tabbas, Zubair Motiwala, Javed Bahmani and others.

Crypto trader picks out two alleged abductors before magistrate

By Sumair Abdullah

KARACHI: A crypto trader, who was kidnapped and released after paying around \$340,000 worth of digital coins, rightly picked out two men as those who had abducted him during an identification parade conducted by a judicial magistrate on Saturday.

Investigating officer Makhdoom Mohiuddin brought the two suspects — Mohammed Fuzwan Shah and Tariq Hassan Shah — said to be private persons, before Judicial Magistrate (West) Hameed Gul, who conducted the identification parade after completing legal formalities.

The suspects were lined up along with dummies and the complainant rightly picked them out.

He assigned Fuzwan's role and said that he had threatened him with dire consequences. The victim also picked out Tariq Shah and told the magistrate that he had interrogated him during captivity.

A couple of days ago, two constables of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) among eight suspects were booked and arrested for their alleged involvement in the kidnapping of the trader and releasing him after he transferred the ransom into their digital wallets.

Earlier, an anti-terrorism court (ATC) had remanded the eight suspects in police custody as the IC informed the court that their absconding accomplices — Hameed, Zaman, Muzamir, Ali Haza, Faisal Lodhi, and others — had yet to be arrested.

A case was registered at the Minghpora police station against eight suspects under Sections 365-A (kidnapping or abducting for extorting property, valuable security) and 34 (common intention) of the Pakistan Penal Code read with Section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997.

Man held for murdering pregnant wife

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: A woman, who was full-term pregnant, was shot dead allegedly by her husband in Baldia Town on Saturday, police said.

They said that her husband, Muhammad Hussain, was arrested and booked for murder.

The police said that 25-year-old Mehrun Nisa was shot and killed by her husband, in their home after the couple quarrelled with each other over some issue.

Her family informed the police, who reached the scene and shifted the body to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre for medico-legal formalities.

Baldia Town SHO Imran Saad said the couple had tied the knot of their own free will.

He said that victim's brother Zubair Hanif lodged an FIR under Section 302 (premeditated murder) of the Pakistan Penal Code against his brother-in-law.

Khuhro dismisses federal minister's remarks on Sindh's protest over canals' project

PPP-Sindh president asks Centre to explain where the water to fill controversial canals is; advises Punjab to tap its groundwater sources to irrigate its land

By Our Correspondent

LARKANA: Pakistan Peoples Party Sindh president Nisar Ahmed Khuhro has dismissed Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal's remarks calling Sindh's protest over construction of six canals on the Indus River a 'baseless debate' and

advised the federal government to listen to Sindh's objections and roll back the controversial project.

In a press statement issued here on Saturday, Mr. Khuhro advised Punjab to tap its groundwater sources to irrigate its land and termed the federal minister's statement a "weaker stance" by the federal government over the canals' issue.

He questioned whether Punjab had surplus water available to fill Cholistan Canal which had 8,152 acres capacity and asked the federal government to clarify from where it would get additional water to fill new canals.

He said that after remedelling of Qadirabad, Sukkur and Rasool Barrage, water from Jhelum River would be released into Cholistan Canal, and then, he expressed the fear, Tarra and

Panjab canals would flow throughout the season. Although it was a fact that Cholistan-Jhelum Link Canal and Tarra-Panjab Canals were 'flood canals', he said.

Therefore, he said, Sindh had strong reservations that water from the 'flood canals' would be taken and released uninterrupted into Cholistan Canal and other controversial canals.

He said that federal minister was talking about 1990's water accord and just share of water to the provinces. The water accord was not implemented in its true spirit, he claimed.

He said that federal government should come out with crystal clear stand that when Sindh objected over 'three state' formula of water distribution then why not water distribution was being

done on the basis of para 2 of the accord.

Brushing aside the federal minister's contention that no any province would get more than its settled share of water, Mr. Khuhro said how by installing pumping machines from Tarra to Gudu Barrage, Sindh's share was being stolen.

Touching on MINA Khaddi Mag's report on water theft from Tarra to Gudu Barrage, Mr. Khuhro said why not the recommendations made in the report were implemented.

He also put a question mark over delay in installing telemetry system, when the federal government was stuck to its stand that water distribution was being carried out fairly.

"When we have forum of Council of

Continued on Page 14

Exquisite handicraft on display at Sartyoon Sang Crafts Exhibition

Artisans deal directly with customers to get an idea of the market

By Shazia Hasan

KARACHI: The 15th edition of the four-day Sartyoon Sang Crafts Exhibition at the Ocean Mall given visitors the chance to look and admire exquisite handicrafts of Sindh.

Held annually, the exhibition promotes rural crafts of mostly women artisans.

There were silk, silk, unbordered chadars and shirts with mirror work, Sindhi caps and purses, along with so many decorative pieces, handwoven baskets, framed crafts, and other works.

Some of the artisans directly involved in producing the crafts were also present at the stalls, taking pride in their handwork as customers appreciated and bought the items.

Speaking to Dawn, Shahida Baloch from Sukkur, said that even though she is now an SRSG employee, she was an artisan initially and that there is nothing at the SRSG stall which she cannot make herself. "I didn't learn the handicrafts from any school or institute. My mother's and grandmother's

lap was my first learning institute," she said.

"When SRSG came to our village, they also visited my home and saw the handicrafts I was producing. They gave me some orders. After that they took me on as a trainee," she said, while informing that she has also been to India in 2009 under a South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) association for home-based workers called Sabah Pakistan.

"I visited Ahmedabad in India for one month, where there is a similar organisation called Self-Employed Women's Association or SEWA. Besides learning stitching and more crafts there, we also attended sessions on community management, running of small businesses, etc.," she said.

Fahmida Jatoi of Agha Ali Jatoi village in District Khairpur said that she also learned Sindhi embroidery from her family. "Our crafts are handed down to us through generations," she said. "I learned from my mother and older sisters. Earlier, we used to do embroidery on shirts only. Then SRSG trained us in other handicrafts, too. Now we produce keychains, jewellery, bags, baskets, etc. I'm now an entrepreneur. My company is called Agha Handicraft Centre. Some of the items on sale here are from my company," she said proudly.

SRSG's Assistant Manager, Craft Enterprise Development, Maira Sultan

Raig, told Dawn that many women in Sindh's rural areas have skill but no resources.

"The artisans working with us represent around 15 districts of Sindh, including Thatta, Kashmore, Badin, Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, Khairpur, Sukkur, Larkana, Qambar Shahdadkot, Jacobabad, Ghotki, Hala, Matari, etc. Each product mentions which district it belongs to. We help them polish their crafts while also teaching them to produce items according to the demands of the urbanised markets," he said.

"We also display their handicrafts at this exhibition. As it is, due to the industrial revolution, our handmade products have taken a hit. We want to create space for them in the market again," he said.

He also said that the artisans have already been paid for their labour by SRSG, which is up to 40 per cent of the cost of an item. The amount is more than what is paid to the labour in the market normally. Some 10 to 15 per cent of the profit from the sales also goes to them. "We bring several of the artisans here to the exhibition so they can deal directly with customers to also get an idea of their demands, specifications, needs, quality, etc. After gathering feedback from them they return home with a better idea of the market," he said.

The exhibition concludes on Sunday (today).



VISITORS look at the craftwork displayed at the exhibition. — Fahim Siddiqi / White Star

07864-44-8207

She confessed that on the night of the incident, she mixed the pills into her husband's glass of rice. She also told a neighbour, who called her a doctor, who arrived at the house and used a wire to close his nostrils and straighten him.

According to state prosecutor Syed Ahsan Hussain, the complainant informed the police that on November 5, 2019, he received a call from his cousin, who told him that Shah Zamran had died of an electric shock and that his body was being taken to Jacobabad.

However, upon inspecting the body, the complainant noticed scars on the wrist, chest, foot, ankles, and neck of the deceased. He then decided to shift the body to Karachi for a post-mortem at the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital. The post-mortem report confirmed that the deceased had died due to "strangulation and electric shock".

Common Interest (CICI) with us to decide about previous objections regarding water distribution, why the federal government is avoiding attending its meeting," he said adding that by skipping to call meeting of CICI as per the constitutional requirements, federal government was continuously violating the constitution.

Responding to Akhtar Iqbal's statement, Khurshid said it was matter of fact that he was Munir Sharif who had announced constructing Kalabagh Dam and later in the wake of strong reaction of Sindhi the PM-14 government had backed out from the project.

He said that listening to Sindhi's reaction over the construction of six controversial canals from Indus River, federal govern-

ment called on centre to implement on the 1970's water accord and withdraw from the canal projects as people of Sindhi had strong reservations and anguish over it.

He urged the federal government to stop calling Sindhi's voice over the controversial canal project "biased and deflated."

"Sindhi will not allow anyone to rob away Sindhi's water," he said and added already due to shortage of water thousands of acres of land had turned barren and again the six canal project would further render Sindhi's land infertile.

Mr Khurshid advised the federal government to listen to the constitutional objections of Sindhi at constitutional forum and null back the plan of digging out six controversial canals from the River Indus.

KARACHI: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has expressed great concern over the worsening law and order situation in the metropolis.

In a statement issued here on Saturday, the opposition party blamed the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) led Sheikh government responsible for the chaos.

It said that between Jan 1 and Jan 8, 15 individuals have lost their lives to gun violence, while over 25 others were injured, indicating a surge in incidents of street crime, including vehicle and mobile phone snatching.

While criticising the provincial government, the PTI accused the PPP of abhorring the citizens of Karachi, noting that many areas lack access to clean drinking water.—PTI



UNIVERSITY OF KARACHI

EXAMINATIONS DEPARTMENT

JANUARY 10, 2025

NOTIFICATION

It is notified for the information of all concerned that the **ADMISSIONS** to **ASSOCIATE DEGREE Program in Arts, Science and Commerce (ADA, ADS, ADC) FIRST YEAR CLASSES** for the Year 2025 (Biannual System) in affiliated Colleges shall commence as per **Schedule** given below:

Issuance of Admission Forms:	JAN 13, 2025
Last Date for Submission of Admission Forms & Fee Payment:	JAN 31, 2025
CLASSES:	
Commencement of Classes:	FEB 01, 2025
ENROLMENT:	
Last Date for Submission of Enrolment Form and Fee:	FEB 20, 2025

NOTES:
ENROLMENT FORMS are available at the University of Karachi, Branches of **BANK ALFALAH, UBL, NBP and SINDH BANK**.
 Those Students who have passed an Examination equivalent to Intermediate / HSc must submit the **Equivalence Certificate** issued by the **Intermediate Board Committee of Chairmen (IBCC)**.

Controller of Examinations

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION WASHINGTON, D. C. 20535	
TO : DIRECTOR, FBI (100-440000) FROM : SAC, NEW YORK (100-100000) SUBJECT : [REDACTED]	DATE : 10/10/68 TIME : 10:00 AM
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Five die, seven hurt in three accidents on Thatta roads

By Our Correspondent

THATTA: Five people were killed and seven were injured in three accidents on National Highway and Mapur Bathoro-Dero link road early on Saturday morning.

In the first incident near Ghara water pump, a Mazda mini-truck collided head-on with a parked truck, killing Abdul Ghani, driver, and Saleem Hashimoon, cleaner, and injuring a passenger, Waqas, who was rushed to a nearby hospital.

In the second accident, two young men, Naeesh Memon and Nouman Memon, lost their lives when their car rammed into main gate of a rice mill.

The vehicle reportedly hit a road breaker before veering off the course and turning into the mill's gate. The victims were going to Dero from Mapur Bathoro.

The accident took place on the National Highway when seven people injured after a Suzuki van carrying passengers overturned. Two of the injured, who had sustained critical injuries, and were shifted to a nearby medical facility, could not be identified.

Police authorities are investigating the causes behind these accidents, while rescue teams and locals worked tirelessly to provide aid to victims.

Save Indus Movement's leaders accuse PPP of hypocrisy over canals project

By Our Staff Correspondent

HYDERABAD: Leaders of Save Indus River Movement have accused Pakistan Peoples Party's top leadership of acting hypocritically over six canals project and said on the one hand President Asif Zardari approves the project and on the other hand his party's Sindh government is opposing it before public.

They rejected Mr Zardari's speech in Garhi Khuda Bakhs on Dec 22, 2024, and said he had already approved the Green Pakistan Initiative while chairing a meeting at President House on July 8, 2024.

They said that creation of a new command area for six canals on Indus River would seriously affect Sindh's demography.

The leaders, Syed Zain Shah, Dr Sadfar Abbas, Ayaz Latif Paljo and others, were speaking to journalists before leading 'Wadari march' from Hyderabad to Mirpurkhas against the six canals near

Jhakra Phatak on the outskirts of the city on Saturday.

Zain Shah, convenor of the movement, told journalists that no amendment to Irrigation Act 1952 was acceptable to people in Sindh remained at receiving end in terms of water shortage and often ended up facing more shortage than other provinces.

He said that agricultural productivity had dropped in Sindh over the years and if new commands for canals were created then Sindh would be completely destroyed. The Green Pakistan Initiative was aimed at creating new command areas, he said and urged the federal and provincial governments to cancel the decisions.

He said that the canal command area project was part of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) therefore this 'initiative' should be shelved immediately.

Agreeing with Zain Shah, Grand Democratic Alliance secretary general Dr Sadfar Abbas asked the president to contradict Sindh government's view-



LEADERS and activists of Save Indus River Movement begin 'Wadari march' towards Mirpurkhas from Hadi Bypass on the outskirts of Hyderabad on Saturday.—Photo by Umar Ak

point on the six canals if such decisions for the approval of canals had been taken by him.

He wondered how would people of Hyderabad who were dependent on Induslink Canal's water and people of Karachi dependent on KIV would get water if the six canals were built.

He recalled that Water Apportionment Accord 1991 was accepted with reservations as flows' statistics showed out of 33 years Sindh faced water shortage in 25 years. The canals project was unstable even from agricultural point of view, he said.

According to PPP of acting

hypocritically on the canals project and said on the one hand President Zardari approved the project and on his party's government in Sindh was opposing it. "Why don't you leave the federal government propped up on PPP's crutches," he said.

Zain Shah outrightly rejected president's speech made in Garhi Khuda Bakhs on Dec 22 last year, saying his statement did not have any legal value because he had himself approved the project in July 8, 2024 meeting.

He said that he had taken this decision uncon-

stitutionally because he

should rather resign from presidency. Zain Shah said that Z.A. Bhutto, who was considered a powerful prime minister, had also given such a statement on Chashma-Jhakra link canal but he could not get this implemented. "C-J link canal is flowing regularly. Rather, perennial canal system has been developed out of C-J (link canal)," he deplored.

He said that two canals were to be taken out from Kalabagh Dam, which was resisted but now six canals were being built on Indus. These canals would irrigate around 8m acres of land through short and

long term projects, he said. He urged Sindh government to take a clear position in CJI on the canals project and get the canals shelved.

Earlier, Quami Awami Tehreek leader Ayaz Latif Paljo said while speaking to media persons at Hadi Bypass that federal minister Ahsan Ishaq had sought to downplay protests against canals in Sindh.

He said that Ishaq knew Sindh's existing canals were not getting adequate water. "Mr Zardari got power under a precondition that he will hand over Sindh's coal, gas, petrol, land and water because Zardari wants to see his men become prime-ministers," he said.

He said that Bilawal would tell all deputy commissioners to surrender Sindh's land. "Bilawal said Sindh is paying the price for your wish to become premier," he said.

He warned PPP, powers that be, Punjab's people and parliament of serious consequences if better sense did not prevail. Otherwise, all the highways would be blocked by people of Sindh, he warned. Pakistan needed a leadership that united people while these rulers were dividing the masses, he said.

SOYEM

Our beloved mother
KHALIDA SALAHUDDIN

passed away peacefully on Jan 10 at 6am.
Dua for her will be held on
Sunday, Jan 12, 2025

between ASR and Maghrib (4:30-6:30).
Address: 92/1, 9th Street between
Khay-e-Seher and Rahat, Phase 6,
DHA, Karachi.

Nuchhi Rahim Currier
Khalid Mansoor (late) & Sabiha
Tahir Masood & Khadija
Asad Mahmood & Farwa
Grandchildren & great grandchildren

FIRST BARS!



First death anniversary of
Shahla Ali Khan

who left us on January 12, 2024. Her last journey
was to America where she was laid to rest on
February 10, 2024, at Lakewood Cemetery in
Minneapolis, MN, under an old tree

Khalid, Faezab, Nadia, Naveed

'No delays in cane crushing'

KARACHI: The Sindh Agriculture Department has claimed that there are no delays in sugar cane crushing and reduction in cane procurement price by sugar mills for 2024-25 season and said the mills are operating at full capacity.

A spokesperson for the department said in a statement that mills in the southern region, particularly in areas affected by rains, including Thatta, Badin and Sanghar, faced shortage of cane and therefore topped price over and above Rs450 per 40 kg to attract cane growers from other areas, said the official.—Dawn Report

IN PROFOUND REMEMBRANCE

and fond memory of our father
PROFESSOR AHMED ALI
July 1, 1908 — January 14, 1994



But what did I have
For the happenings of the earth and pride
That lead but to the mountain side
And empty waters of the Yellow Springs?

— Ahmed Ali

ERAM, OROOJ, DEED & SHAHANA
REYAN: Great Grandchildren: Catherine & Rafael Ahmed Ali

DUA

DUA-E-MAGHFIAT FOR OUR BELOVED

FAZILA HALIM DADA

(D/O KASSIM DADA)

WILL BE HELD ON SUNDAY 12TH
JANUARY 2025 BETWEEN MAGHRIB & ISHA

FOR LADIES AT OUR RESIDENCE B-80/2, KDA SCHEME
NO.1-A EXT. OFF KARSAZ ROAD, KARACHI

FOR GENTS AT MEMON MASJID, HUSSAINI SOCIETY
(PAHARI WALI MASJID), OFF SHAHEED-E-MILLAT ROAD
NEAR NATIONAL COLLEGE, KARACHI

BEREAVED

HALIM DADA
SAMAD & ALIA DADA
MARYAM & FAISAL GULAHMED
AMBER & AHMED MOTIWALA

SIKANDER DADA
ZOHRA RADOF
RATIQA HABIB
KISHWAR ALLAWALA

GRANDCHILDREN

FAHD & EMAAN, MUSTAFA & ROHAIL, AAMIR & ALISA

SINDH INSTITUTE OF PHYSICAL MEDICINE AND REHABILITATION



ADMISSION
POSTGRADUATE SESSION JANUARY 2025



Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation FCPS-II (Fellowship from CPSP, Pakistan)

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Candidates who have passed FCPS Part-I in General Medicine / General Surgery are also eligible to apply in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation.
- Certificate of Passing FCPS Part-I
- MBBS Degree + 1 year House Job
- Valid PMC / PMDC Registration

Domiciles of all Provinces

NOTE:

- Application form can be downloaded from SIPM&R Website: www.sipmr.edu.pk and must be submitted at Department of Postgraduate Studies, Additional Executive Director Office along with all required Documents of Eligibility and Pay Order of Rs. 2000/- only in favor of Fees Collection SIPMR, National Bank of Pakistan, Income Tax Building Branch, Karachi.
- Last date for submission of application form is **Wednesday, 22nd January, 2025.**
- Interview will be held at **11:30am Saturday, 25th January, 2025** at Sindh Institute of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Opposite SIUT, Chand Bibi Road near Mujahid Masjid, Karachi.
- Successful short listed candidates will be called for the interview.
- Candidates in Government service should apply through proper channel with an advance copy to Administration, SIPM&R with NOC from Government.
- Neither TA/DA will be paid nor accommodation will be provided to any candidate.
- The applications received after the last date will NOT be consider.
- Administrative and Monitoring fee Rs. 30,000/- per year shall be charged for FCPS Program in favor of Fees Collection SIPMR, National Bank of Pakistan, Income Tax Building Branch, Karachi, Sindh.
- For further queries contact on email: sipmr.govt@gmail.com pmr@sipmr.edu.pk
- Phone +92-21-99216213-14.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SINDH INSTITUTE OF PHYSICAL MEDICINE &
REHABILITATION CHAND BIBI ROAD, KARACHI

DAWN 1001 No. 102125

پروفیشنل سائنس دان کی طرف سے تصدیق شدہ



Pakistan Global Robotic Surgery Symposium

Joint Meeting of Society of Robotic Surgery (SRS) & Pakistan Society of Robotic Surgeons (PSRS)

14 - 15 February 2025

Join us for an unparalleled international conference featuring world-renowned speakers in Urology, General Surgery, Gynecology and Cardiothoracic Surgery. Explore cutting-edge technology in sessions on AI in Robotic Surgery, hands-on workshop of Robotic exercises on biological tissue models, teaching and training of medics and paramedics.

International Guest Faculty

Adel S Khan
Aimal Khan
Bader Mian
C Mallikarjuna
David Alkhalaf
Ghulam Abbas
Husam H Bakhay
Imran Ahmed
Khurshad Gera
Mansoor Memon
Pranjal Modi
Rashid Mazhar
Vijay Patel

Highlights

- Robotics in Urology, Cardiothoracic, Gynecology and General Surgery
- Robotic Transplantation
- Data Science and AI
- Teaching and Training in Robotic Surgery
- Tele / Cyber Robotic Surgery
- Future of Robotic Surgery

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ISLAMABAD

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Sunrise (Tomorrow) 07:09am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 08°C
Maximum 18°C
Outlook Cloudy

METRO
North

Sabalenka and Sinner target back-to-back Australian Open glory
Pg.20 SPORT



AN artist gives a dance performance at an event held on Saturday in connection with Chinese new year celebrations in Islamabad. — APP

Several FDE colleges face teachers' shortage

Years on, five model colleges await regular teaching staff

By Kashif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: Several colleges run by the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) are facing a shortage of teachers while five model colleges in the federal capital were functioning without a regular teaching staff.

Sources said the girls' college in Bhara Kalu, and the boys' colleges in Humak, Sector I-14, and Sector I-8/3 are without adequate teaching staff. Meanwhile, the model colleges in Mira Bagwal, Pakistan Town, Sector G-13, and Sector G-15 did not have regular teaching staff even though they started functioning a few years ago. According to an FDE official, "The education ministry should look into this issue and all posts should be

filled with regular staff in the greater interest of students."

An education official, however, said that only the Bhara Kalu college was facing a shortage of teachers. Except for this college, no other colleges were facing an immediate shortage of teachers. The official said six new teachers recently joined the FDE and a majority of them would be posted to this college.

Speaking about the regular staff for model colleges, the official said that the FDE had moved a summary in this regard.

"The FDE has moved PC-4 (for regular posts) of four colleges to the education ministry to get approval for regular posts. Once these posts are approved, we will request the FPSC [Federal Public Service Commission] for appointments," he said, adding that PC-4 for the Mira Bagwal college would be sent to the education ministry soon.

In reply to a question about the shortage of college teachers in other colleges, he said the FDE in September had forwarded their case to the FPSC for the

recruitment of 10 associate professors (two male and eight female) and 31 assistant professors (18 male and 13 female), 98 female lecturers, and 33 male lecturers. Once the recruitment process is finished, the department will have 159 new teachers.

At present, the department introduced a rationalisation policy under which surplus teaching staff was transferred to other colleges to meet the shortage of teachers. Under this policy, after the input from the principals concerned, some male teachers were assigned to girls' colleges, and some female teachers were assigned to boys' colleges.

On the other hand, an FDE official criticised the education ministry and the directorate for a delay in recruitment for the model colleges. He said these colleges took several years to build and the government could have hired teachers in the meantime, but that did not happen.

"This is unfortunate that five model colleges, which started operations a couple

of years ago, still don't have sanctioned posts. Similarly, some other colleges, like the one in Bhara Kalu, started classes many years ago, but are still facing a shortage of teachers," he said.

FDE is the supervisory body of 431 schools and colleges in Islamabad. Besides, around three hundred schools, there are 13 FC colleges and 26 model colleges under its supervision.

Interestingly, like its colleges, the FDE itself is struggling as it is being run through ad-hoc arrangements since July last year. The post fell vacant in July, when the education ministry abruptly got then-DC Dr Ibrahim Ali Malik removed. Since then, the ministry is running the FDE without a regular head.

When contacted, a senior official at the education ministry said there was no delay on part of the education ministry. "We have moved a summary carrying names of three shortlisted candidates to the federal government," he said, hoping a name for the post would be approved soon.

Pakistan tops world in hepatitis C cases: PM's aide

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Health Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmad Bhatti on Saturday said Pakistan has the largest number of hepatitis C patients in the world, with 10 million of the global 60 million cases.

"This places us at the heart of the global effort to eliminate this disease," he said while addressing participants of a seminar organised by the Health Foundation on hepatitis elimination.

He also stressed the urgent need for collective action to combat Hepatitis C, a significant public health challenge facing Pakistan.

He further highlighted its dire consequences saying, "If we do not act, Pakistan will face over 11 million HCV cases by 2035, leading to 500,000 plus liver cirrhosis cases, over 100,000 cases of liver cancer and 100,000 HCV-related deaths."

This economic impact would be a loss of over \$285 million annually, he said.

Dr Bhatti pointed out that as of 2021, only 16 per cent of Hepatitis C cases in the country had received treatment. With testing and treatment access being the key challenges.

According to a statement, the federal government, in collaboration with provincial governments, has launched the Prime Minister's Programme for the Elimination of c(HCV) infection to address these challenges with a plan to allocate Rs34.15 billion over the next three years.

In addition, provincial governments will contribute Rs35.61 billion, bringing the total funding for the initiative to Rs70 billion.

"Pakistan has made significant strides toward hepatitis elimination," Dr Bhatti said. This includes establishing a National Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for hepatitis control, developing national and provincial strategic frameworks, ensuring the availability of affordable generic Direct-Acting Antivirals (DAAs) and advocating for nationwide scaling up of vaccination, screening, testing and treatment efforts, he added.

However, he stressed that further support and technical assistance were needed to scale up efforts.

"We seek support in developing detailed plans for hepatitis elimination, strengthening monitoring and healthcare systems, training healthcare workers and expanding national software and logistics. We also call for international collaboration to help us achieve our targets," he added. The PM's aide said the programme aimed to reach 50 per cent of the eligible population for screening, testing and treatment within three years.

Dr Bhatti urged international partners to help Pakistan achieve 100 per cent coverage to ensure that the country meets the global HCV elimination targets before 2030.

Gas cylinder explosion leaves 13 injured in Rawalpindi

By Mohammad Asghar

RAWALPINDI: At least 13 people including women and children were injured in a gas cylinder explosion in Faisal Colony in Airport police area in Rawalpindi, police said on Saturday.

According to initial reports, the incident occurred late on Friday night around 10:30 pm when the residents were busy shifting the house.

Locals said the police couldn't reach the site of the explosion for almost half an hour and neighbours shifted the injured to the hospital on a

self-help basis.

Initially, the injured were shifted to the Benazir Bhutto Hospital (BBH) and subsequently, they were transferred to the Holy Family Hospital as the BBH did not have a burn unit.

Later, the critically injured were shifted to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Hospital in Islamabad, but later they were brought back to BBH, they said.

A member of the family told the police in her statement that the incident occurred when they were busy shifting the household items to a nearby house.

She said that her father in a rush to shift the gas cylinder, apparently to check a leak, ignited a powerful explosion, shattering windows and doors of the house and causing a fire.

She further said that her father was critically burnt, while her mother, cousins, her younger sister and three friends of her brother who were there to help them with the shifting also sustained burn injuries.

Following the explosion, panic and fear gripped the area and residents came out of their homes.

A local told Dawn that the explosion was so enormous that

it destroyed doors, windows and household items.

The police, apparently remained unaware of the incident and the scene of the explosion for more than half an hour despite receiving emergency calls, locals said.

When the relevant station house officer (SHO) and Reserve 1122 personnel reached the explosion site, the injured had already been shifted to the hospital.

Meanwhile, the Sui Northern Gas Pipeline (SNGPL) has issued an advisory requesting that consumers take special precautions while using fuel gas — especially in the winter

season.

Rawalpindi SNGPL General Manager Umar Hayat said carelessness in the winter season may lead to fatal accidents.

"Therefore, consumers should never use rubber pipes with gas heaters and stoves. Proper ventilation should be ensured in the rooms and kitchens and consumers should ensure that all gas-powered appliances, including stoves, geysers and heaters are turned off properly."

He urged citizens to contact the nearest office of the gas utility by dialling emergency number 1199 in case of gas leakage.

Teachers transferred under rationalisation policy

The teachers, transferred under the rationalisation policy, find themselves dispensable as some of the subject specialists have been transferred in educational institutions which lack their subjects or already surplus teachers.

The recent mid-year transfers of college professors, under the guise of rationalisation, seemed to be a positive development as objective was ensuring a fair distribution of teachers across various colleges.

— Detailed story on Page 15.

Punjab transport department asks CDA to clear metro subsidy amount

Official says Rs6 billion owed besides Rs900 million needed to start repairs on Islamabad metro track

By Asrar Yasin

RAWALPINDI: The Punjab Transport and Mass Transit Department has asked the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to clear the outstanding amount of Rs6 billion in terms of subsidy provided to passengers who use the metro bus service.

In addition to this Rs6 billion, the Punjab transport department has also asked the Islamabad civil body to coordinate with the Punjab Mass Transit Authority to provide Rs900 million for the rehabilitation of the metro track in the federal capital.

A senior official of the Punjab transport department told Dawn that the department wrote a letter to the CDA, but has yet to receive a response. He said that the Punjab Mass Transit Authority highlighted its concerns over the CDA response to the deteriorated condition of the metro corridor in the capital. He said the CDA should provide its share of funds so the repair work could start in its jurisdiction.

About the Rawalpindi metro track repairs, the official said that 97 per cent work had been completed and the remaining work would be completed within two more weeks. It may be mentioned that the rehabilitation work that started in July 2024 was supposed to be completed by December 31. Now it's likely to end by January 31.

According to a 2016 agreement, the CDA is supposed to maintain the metro track in its jurisdiction. He said that the PMA has already transferred Rs18.54 million to the Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) for the maintenance of the corridor from Suddar in Faisalabad. "...the CDA has neither provided Rs943.54 million

for the maintenance...nor taken up such works on its own." He said the CDA had not provided an amount of Rs14 million to engage a consultant for leakages/seepage issues at Chaman and Ibr-e-Sina, Parade Ground, Pak Secretariat metro stations.

Similarly, the CDA did not contribute to the subsidy and owed almost Rs6 billion accumulated over the past few years.

According to the official, clause 5 of the contract agreement dated December 15, 2016, which delineates the responsibility of each party, requires the CDA to ensure timely advance payments for meeting the revenue and expenditure gap/subsidy of the metro bus service. The official said the CDA

had not been making these payments in advance and owed Rs5.3 billion.

The official said the CDA had made certain modifications at Fati Ahmed Fata Metro Station, which seemed to be a safety hazard. The temporary setup of platform screen doors (PSDs) implemented by the CDA reportedly malfunctioned, and these were removed from the site. He said that this modification had left the boarding area exposed, significantly compromising passengers' safety.

Punjab Mass Transit Authority General Manager Operations Usair Shah told Dawn that the CDA had been contacted many times to repair the track from Faisalabad to Pakistan Secretariat,

but no response was received.

He said that CDA had to clear its share of over Rs6 billion, which had been pending for the last few years. He said that in the past, the CDA had given Rs2 billion and then Rs1 billion. But since then, the agency has not made any payments.

In response to a question regarding the subsidy, CDA spokesperson Shahid Kiani said, "As of now, Rs6.94 billion is required from the Ministry of Finance to settle the federal government's liabilities. For the fiscal year 2024-2025, an allocation of Rs3 billion has been included in the federal PSBP. This amount will be disbursed to the PMA once it is released by the federal government."

PRAYER	
Fajr	05:48
Zuhar	12:30
Asr	03:43
Maghrib	06:21
Isha	06:49
Starting time in Islamabad	

REFLECTIONS

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— HAFIZAT ALI (A.S.)

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DAWN
the complete
newspaper

World delegates cherish Gandhara heritage during Taxila visit

By Our Correspondent

TAXILA: An international delegation comprising academics and religious figures explored the rich heritage of the Gandhara civilisation during their visit to ancient sites and the Taxila Museum on Saturday.

The tour was part of the "International Conference on Buddhism in Pakistan", which was organised by the Taxila Institute of Asian Civilisations at Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) Islamabad. Visitors from 14 different countries, including the United States and China immersed themselves into what they called the "rich heritage of Buddhism in Pakistan".

Prominent among them were Dr. Yifa from Harvard University, Dr. Stefan Baum from the Institute for Indian and Tibetan Studies, Munich, and Dr. Dima Yonhara from the Museum of Fine Arts,



A PARTICIPANT scholar being presented a brochure about Buddhist sites in Pakistan during her visit to Taxila Museum on Saturday. — Dawn

Boston, the UK. The tourists explored ancient Buddhist monasteries, stupas and archaeological landmarks in Taxila. Upon arrival, the scholars and dignitaries were received by Directorate General of

Archaeology Deputy Director Shah Barna and Taxila Museum Curator Humera Maz.

The foreigners were briefed on artifacts featured at the Taxila Museum. They informed the participants that there were 4,000 objects

made of stone, silver, gold, iron and semi-precious stones.

The visitors were also briefed on the history of the Gandhara civilisation, various stupas, statues and other artifacts.

The participants of the seminar were taken to the main hall which exhibits more than 70 stories on the life of Buddha, starting from the time of his birth till his death.

They were informed that hundreds of monasteries and stupas were built during the Greek and Kushan eras such as Nirkaj and Sirkaj.

Mainly, the display consists of objects from 600 BC to 500 AD. Director Shah Barna said. She added that Gandhara was the second holy site of Buddhism and it was the place from where the religion spread to other parts of the world.

"Historians believe that the first statue of Buddha was created in Taxila. Archaeological sites located in cities

including Taxila, Peshawar, Mardan, and Swat are considered sacred among followers of Buddhism and have the potential to attract international tourists from Thailand and other countries."

Speaking on this occasion, Taxila Institute of Asian Civilisations Director Professor Ghaniur Rahman said the seminar was designed to showcase Pakistan's Buddhist Heritage.

"It aimed to engage a wide range of stakeholders including scholars, faith leaders, tour operators, youth and communities in knowledge development and conservation discourse to preserve and promote the Buddhist Heritage of Pakistan."

Educational session held for PAF hospital's pathology team

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: An educational session titled "Beyond the Blood Draw: Tackling Pre-Analytical Errors in Clinical Labs" was conducted for the pathology team of Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Hospital Islamabad.

The event was a collaborative effort by Shifa International Hospital, Shifa Center for Professional Excellence (SCOPE) and Shifa Home Health Services, aimed at enhancing awareness and practices in clinical laboratories.

It brought together medical professionals, laboratory experts, and healthcare leaders to address the critical issue of pre-analytical errors in laboratory diagnostics.

Section Head of Chemical Pathology, Dr. Ghazal Abbas, was the keynote speaker at the event. He provided insights into the technical and operational challenges faced in clinical labs.

Medical Director Dr. Sara Maroof emphasized the significance of minimising pre-analytical errors and the strategies that can be implemented to achieve the goal.

She extended her gratitude to the PAF team for their collaborative and sustained efforts over the years in advancing clinical excellence and ensuring accurate patient diagnosis, which are critical for effective management and care.

ردیف	نام	مبلغ	تاریخ	ملاحظات
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19	علی احمد	50,000	12/01/2025	بابت کرایہ
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ردیف	نام	مبلغ	تاریخ	ملاحظات
1	محمد علی	100,000	12/01/2025	بابت کرایہ
2	علی احمد	50,000	12/01/2025	بابت کرایہ
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Zakat dept disbursed Rs30 million among students in AJK

MUZAFFARABAD: The Zakat and Ushr Department in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has disbursed scholarship amounts amounting to Rs30 million during the first half of the current financial year to 4,500 extremely underprivileged students, including 1,194 females, enrolled in religious institutions across the 10 districts of the state.

A spokesperson for the department said in a press release on Friday that this step had been taken in light of the "priorities and directives" of Prime Minister Chaudhary Anwarul Haq.

The payments were made to the heads of the respective institutions through crossed cheques, he added.

Providing a breakdown of the disbursement, the spokesperson said that Rs8,983,800 had been given for 1,050 male and 336 female students in Muzaffarabad district, Rs 2,135,700 for 244 male and 95 female students in Neelum Valley district, Rs 1,020,600 for 142 male and 20 female students in Detham Valley district, Rs 5,298,300 for 573 male and 268 female students in Bagh district, Rs 651,300 for 97 male students in Harvi district, Rs 3,754,800 for 486 male and 110 female students in Poonch district, Rs 1,310,400 for 138 male and 70 female students in Southwast district, Rs 1,184,400 for 128 male and 60 female students in Koth district, Rs 5,754,300 for 738 male and 176 female students in Mirpur district, and Rs 371,700 for 59 female students in Bumbal district.

"The Department of Zakat and Ushr is providing financial support to impoverished and needy students in line with the government's priorities and available funds," the spokesperson said.

He urged wealthy people in the state to channel their Zakat, alms, and other donations through the Zakat and Ushr Department to enable it to extend greater financial assistance to underprivileged students. — Tariq Nadeem

Commission sought for release of children trapped in blasphemy cases

ISLAMABAD: Human rights activists have demanded of the government to form an independent investigation commission to get children trapped in blasphemy cases released.

The demand came from lawyer Usman Warrach, Bara Abdul Hameed Advocate and Imam Manzoor Advocate and the parents of the affected children at a news conference here at the National Press Club.

Lawyer Usman Warrach said that according to a report by the Special Branch last year, a suspicious religious extremist group is trapping Muslim boys and girls into sharing blasphemous content online under specific plans.

So far, more than 450 Muslim youth have been victims of false cases, including more than 150 in Attala Jail, more than 120 in Lahore Camp Office Jail and Kori Lakhpet Jail and 55 youths in the cell cells of Korachi Central Jail.

He said that a group has recruited young boys and girls for trapping innocent who believed innocent youths on social media and lure them by pretending to be in love with them.

Under various pretexts including friendship, job, date or spending the night, they go to the Safe House located in G-6 area of Islamabad. They call where the members of this group brutally torture these boys, which includes hanging them upside down and beating them with sticks, making them videos, etc.

The number of people associated with this group is 25 to 30 who become plaintiffs after trapping young people from all over Pakistan, and each plaintiff is involved in trapping more than 20 young people. These plaintiffs also write their incorrect addresses in the FIR.

The lawyers have demanded that until a commission is formed in this regard proceedings over such cases should be stopped and minor children should be released.

— Staff Reporter

SHUT BIUT

Beneath Institute of Uro

PML-N leader urges AJK president to ensure impartial Election Commission

By Tariq Aliqash

MUZAFFARABAD Former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Raja Farooq Haider has urged President Barrister Sultan Mahmood to intervene and address concerns regarding the appointment of members to the AJK Election Commission.

Mr Haider made this demand during a meeting with the President on Saturday, a day after raising the issue in a written letter.

The AJK Election Commission consists of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), who serves as chairman, and two members. Both member positions are currently vacant, and the CEC is set to retire on January 13, potentially rendering the commission non-functional.

Under the AJK Constitution, the CEC is appointed by the President on the advice of the Chairman of the AJK Council—the Prime Minister of Pakistan—based on nominees proposed by the AJK Prime Minister in consultation with the Leader of the Opposition.

Members, however, are appointed by the President solely on the advice of the AJK Prime Minister.

According to the Constitution, no person can be appointed as CEC or a member unless he has served as a judge of the AJK superior courts or as a civil servant of JP8-21 and above in the AJK government.

Mr Haider's concerns arose from reports suggesting that Prime Minister Chaudhary Anwarul Haq had proposed the name of a retired district judge from the Pakistan-based Kashmiri refugee community.

He was of the view that a district judge did not qualify as a civil servant under the constitutional criteria.

In his communication with the President, Mr Haider stressed the importance of preventing any unconstitutional actions.

"Holding free and fair elections will not be possible with a controversial Election Commission. Such a move would undermine the credibility of the entire electoral process," he warned.

He maintained that a non-partisan Election Commission could only be constituted through a consensus among all parliamentary parties in AJK.

He alleged that the government was attempting to control the commission by appointing members of its choice.

An official from the presidency confirmed that Mr Haider had raised these concerns during his meeting with President Mahmood but did not disclose the president's response.

However, Mr Haider's press secretary Raja Wasim claimed that the president assured him no unconstitutional steps would be taken.

Reports were also doing the rounds on Saturday that Prime Minister Haq had nominated a former AJK government secretary, whose basic appointment was not as a civil servant, for one of the vacant positions.

However, the government had yet to officially confirm either of the nominations.

Meanwhile, also on Saturday, Prime Minister Haq and Leader of the Opposition Khawaja Farooq Ahmed held an initial round of consultations regarding the appointment of the CEC under Article 50(4) of the AJK Constitution.

According to a statement from the prime minister's office, both leaders agreed to broaden the scope of consultations to ensure that the appointment remained non-controversial.



WORKERS install cat's eye reflectors on Islamabad Expressway near PWD interchange on Saturday. — Photo by Tarveer Shehzad

Teachers transferred under rationalisation policy find themselves dispensable

By Iqram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD The teachers, transferred under the rationalisation policy, find themselves dispensable as some of the subject specialists have been transferred in educational institutions which lack their subjects or already surplus teachers.

The recent mid-year transfers of college professors, under the guise of rationalisation, seemed to be a positive development as objective was ensuring a fair distribution of teachers across various colleges.

However, instead of addressing the academic needs of institutions, it seemed the transfers of teachers has led to mismatched assignments and underutilisation of teaching resources, raising concerns about the effectiveness of the rationalisation committee's decisions.

Mr Tariq Iqbal, an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Islamabad Model College for Boys (IMCB) 18-5, who was transferred to Islamabad College for Boys (ICB) 6-6/3, said, "I am a professor of Political Science, but my expertise remains utilised as I was directed to teach Pakistan Studies, a subject outside my specialisation."

Similarly, Mr Arifullah Rahman, an Assistant Professor of Economics from ICB College, who was transferred to ICB 42-6/3, expressed his dissatisfaction: "Instead of teaching Economics, I have no workload here. My duty in this college is to engage my class where teacher is on leave. I recently engaged a class of the biology, a subject unrelated to my field. All other times, I sit idle."

Another example of mismanagement is the case of Mr Iqbal

Haider, a biology teacher transferred from IMCB 1-10/4 to IMCB 1-8/3. The college already had three biology teachers, one of whom was surplus. Despite this, Mr Haider was transferred there, leaving him with no classes to teach and remaining idle, further worsening the universities.

Similarly, Mr Nazir Ahmed Bhatti, a lecturer in Islamic Studies, was transferred from ICB College to IMCB 1-8/3. He said, "I was taking three classes at ICB College, but here at IMCB 1-8/3, there is no workload as the college already has a teacher covering the subject." He further added, "IMCB 1-8/3 actually needed teachers in physics, chemistry and mathematics, but instead, the college was given teachers in biology, civics, Islamic studies and Arabic, which the college does not need."

Similarly, Mr Ali Raza, a Political Science lecturer, was transferred from ICB College to IMCB 1-8/3. As his new posting, he teaches only a 40-minute class daily and spends the rest of his day sitting idle.

This inefficient use of his time and expertise highlights the flawed execution of the policy.

The Vice Principal of IMCB Sialkot, Professor Farhan Anam, said, "We have lost two critical faculty members, a lecturer in Urdu and another in computer science, who were transferred to IMCB Sialkot. IMCB Sialkot, which urgently needed their services, is now forced to rely on daily-wage teachers to fill the gaps. As IMCB Sialkot is situated in a rural area of Islamabad, it should be given priority as it serves the poor population of the area. We need more teachers."

A former office bearer of Federal Government College Teachers Association emphasised that the rationalisation committee should have considered the actual requirements of colleges. "Instead of addressing teacher shortages in specific subjects, the committee's abrupt and arbitrary decisions have resulted in a waste of human resources and disrupted the education system."

Federal Secretary Education Mubayyidin Ahmad Wani could not be contacted. A text message was sent to him but reply could not be received till filing of this news.

However, a senior official of Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), wishing not to be quoted, said that the faculty members and principals of colleges have also informed about the issue and FDE was looking into it.

FIRST BARS!.



First death anniversary of
Shahla Ali Khan

who left us on January 12, 2024. Her last journey was to America where she was laid to rest on February 10, 2024, at Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis, MN, under an old tree

Khalid, Faezeh, Nadia, Naveed

Housing societies asked to submit compliance reports

RAWALPINDI The Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) has asked private housing societies to submit reports on compliance with rules and regulations promptly; this request was made during a meeting held on Saturday.

It was informed in the meeting to review compliance of private housing schemes with applicable regulations with Additional Director General Awan Manzoor Tarek. The RDA officials of various branches including Engineering, Estate Management, Planning and Building Control attended the meeting.

The meeting focused on ensuring that housing schemes adhere to the Private Housing Scheme (PHS) Rules and approved Layout Plans (LOPs). The meeting also reviewed the deposit of applicable fees, levies, and fines, as well as the completion of mandatory plot mortgages and the transfer of ownership plots in favour of the RDA.

Mr. Tarek emphasised the importance of regulatory compliance and the timely payment of dues, reiterating RDA's commitment to maintaining transparency and upholding legal and environmental standards.

The authority vowed to take swift action to streamline processes and ensuring strict compliance with all regulations. — Staff Reporter



GOVERNMENT OF GILGIT-BALTISTAN OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR WATER MANAGEMENT & IRRIGATION DISTRICT HUNZA

No.DOWM-HN-ADP-Accts-2(I)2024

Dated: 10th January, 2025

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR WATER MANAGEMENT AND IRRIGATION DISTRICT HUNZA invites sealed tenders on single-stage two envelopes (sate) procedure (comprising a single package containing two separate envelopes marked as technical & financial proposal) for the following work from the eligible firm / contractors licensed by Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in the appropriate category / code mentioned below, valid up to 30th June 2025.

S. #	Name of Work	Required Category & Code	TB Cost (Millions)	3% E-Money	Cost of Bidding Document	Closing Date & Time
1	Rehabilitation of Irrigation Channel Fozok from Sakharobut from Brumun Ali Hunza	C-4 or above CF-04(V)	21.23/-	637,032/-	10000/-	29th January 2025 at 2:00 PM

Note: Tender shall be opened after 30 minutes of closing time.

2. The interested prospective eligible bidders can obtain a complete set of Bidding documents from the office of the Deputy Director Water Management & Irrigation District Hunza, Near the Bank of Punjab Alibad Hunza on submission of a written application and production of the following original documents personally duly deposited the cost of bidding documents as mentioned above against each work, immediately after the advertisement published in the newspapers & PPRA Website:

- PEC valid registration 2025 and Code.
- Renewal Fee CFY 2024-25.
- CNIC of the prospective bidder.
- Bid security in the shape of CDR from the scheduled bank of Pakistan.
- No sick scheme and no litigation certificates.

3. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security as indicated above against work, and in case of rates quoted below 10% of estimated cost, shall be required to provide along with the bid an additional performance guarantee of 50% of the differential amount (between estimated cost & bid cost) in the shape of CDR from any schedule Bank clearly mentioning the name of the firm in favour of Deputy Director Water Management & Irrigation District Hunza. The sealed bids must be delivered on the due date & time as mentioned above, which will be opened on the same day in the office of Deputy Director Water Management & Irrigation District Hunza, Near the Bank of Punjab Alibad Hunza in the presence of bidders who choose to attend at the same address. No NIT will be issued on the date of bid opening.

OTHER TERMS & CONDITIONS

- All bid securities / CDRs will be retained till acceptance of tender / bid and will be refunded after acceptance of tenders / bids.
- The information provided by the bidders if found ambiguous will be verified and in case of a fake one, the tender of the firm will be cancelled and take immediate / appropriate penal action as per Rules / Laws.
- Late receipt of bids from the SCHEDULED TIME will not be accepted / entertained.
- GB WMAID authorities reserve the right to reject any or all the bids or proposals at any time prior to acceptance of a bid or proposal under GB PPRA Rules.
- Overwriting on bidding documents is not allowed and in case of any overwriting / omission is found the bid shall be rejected.
- Conditional Tender will not be Accepted / Entertained.
- In case of any public / local holiday or surprise engagement of the undersigned, the same will be opened on the next working day.

(Engr. Sher Jahan)
Director
Water Management and Irrigation
Gilgit-Baltistan.
Ph: # 0581 1920604-05

EX-25-04-25



Pakistan Global Robotic Surgery Symposium

Joint Meeting of Society of Robotic Surgery (SRS) & Pakistan Society of Robotic Surgeons (PSRS)

14-15 February 2025

Join us for an unparalleled international conference featuring world-renowned speakers in Urology, General Surgery, Gynecology and Cardiothoracic Surgery. Explore cutting-edge technology in sessions on AI in Robotic Surgery, hands-on workshop of Robotic exercises on biologic tissue models, teaching and training of medics and paramedics.

International Guest Faculty

Adel S Khan
Amal Khan
Bader Mian
C Mallikarjuna
David Alcala
Ghulam Abbas
Husam H Balkhy
Imran Ahmed
Khurshid Gera
Mami Memon
Pranjal Modi
Rashid Misher
Vipul Patel

Highlights

1. Robotics in Urology, Cardiothoracic, Gynecology and General Surgery
2. Robotic Transplantation
3. Data Science and AI
4. Teaching and Training in Robotic Surgery
5. Tele / Cyber Robotic Surgery
6. Future of Robotic Surgery

Registration is free but mandatory

Secure your spot for this milestone event shaping the future of surgical innovation. Stay Ahead.

Register Today: www.siut.org

Venue: Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT), Karachi, Pakistan.

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e-mail: info@siut.org

LAHORE

Sunset 05:21 pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 07:01 am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 09.0°C
Maximum 18.0°C
Outlook Partly Cloudy

AQI

Maximum (Yesterday) 150

METRO Central



Sabalenka and Sinner target back-to-back Australian Open glory
Pg. 20 SPORT



A RICKSHAW driver risks his life to push up dangling electricity wires in Anarkali as traffic wardens look on instead of warning motorists to be careful. — White Star / Murtaza Ali

Imran moves LHC for post-arrest bail in eight May 9 riots cases

By Waqar Ahmad Sheikh

LAHORE: Pakistan Television chief executive Imran Khan on Saturday approached the Lahore High Court (LHC) seeking post-arrest bail in eight cases of May 9 riots including an attack on the corps commandant's residence.

Eight separate bail petitions have been filed before the LHC in as many cases through barrister Nadeem Siddiqui.

A two-judge bench comprising Chief Justice Aalia Noor and Justice Asad Javed Chaudhry will take up the petitions on Monday.

An anti-terrorism court had on Nov 27 denied bail to the former

prime minister in these cases.

The petitions mainly argued that the prosecution failed to establish the petitioner's association with the unfortunate occurrences narrated in the FIRs.

They said the petitioner has been implicated in the May 9 cases as a result of a well-orchestrated plan merely to harass and humiliate him for political reasons even though allegedly he was in the custody of the NAB.

The arrest of the petitioner was never required in the cases, which was evident from the fact that police remained reluctant to secure his arrest during five months and 12 days after the dismissal of his pre-arrest bail by the trial court.

The petitions alleged that the indifferent behaviour of police

and lack of effort in securing the arrest of the petitioner at a time when he was detained at Adiala Jail, supplemented the argument that arrest of the petitioner was not required in the cases.

The sole allegation against the petitioner in the cases is of "abetment", which has been supplemented by the prosecution with most vaguely, the pleas added.

They argued that the trial judge overlooked the fact that frivolous and baseless allegations related to the May 9 events have already been rejected due to inconsistencies in the story of the investigating agency.

Moreover, the trial judge also passed a lengthy order by ignoring the basic principle of the law of bail, laid down by the superior

courts that "deeper appreciation of evidence should not be done at bail stage and only tentative assessment should be done."

The petitions argued that Imran Khan has been facing an unprecedented political victimisation for two years. The May 9 cases are yet another effort by the state police to implicate the petitioner in a criminal matter under the sole allegation of abetment, they added.

The petitions ask the LHC to set aside the trial court's decision and grant bail to the former prime minister in the eight FIRs.

Denying bail to the PTI founding chairman, the ATC had declared that the charges of abetting and conspiring with the perpetrators of the May 9

riots against the petitioner were not ordinary in nature.

"The offences fall within the prohibitory clause of section 497 of CrPc. Petitioner was found guilty," ATC-I Judge Munir Ali Gill had observed in his order.

The judge had 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 occurrences.

Therefore, he said, the argument of the petitioner's counsel that his client was behind the bar at the time of offence had no weight.

The judge had also rejected

PTI-backed candidate wins LBA election

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: PTI-supported Mohamud Rehman Chaudhry of Hamid Khan-led Professional Group was elected president of the Lahore Bar Association (LBA) for 2024-25 in the election held on Saturday.

Mohamud, who was a unanimous candidate of the local Lawyers Forum (LLF), bagged 2,400 votes, enabling his group to reclaim the bar after a gap of a year.

Supporters of the winning president celebrated the victory with slogans and festivities, dancing to the drums. They also chanted slogans in support of incarcerated PTI founding chairman Imran Khan. Some supporters of the winning candidate also resorted to

verbal firing on Jinnah Road near the Lahore High Court.

Adnan Aslam Bhinder, an independent candidate, once again stood runner-up with 2,088 votes.

He came second in the last year's election as well when Khuram Shad of the Professional Group could secure third position.

Interestingly, this year the presidential candidate of Aasma Jehangir Group, Mian Fiaz Ali, stood third with 1,887 votes, while another independent candidate Irfan Hayat Bajwa bagged 1,708 votes.

Mian Shaujeel and Saif Khokhar were elected as vice presidents.

Waqar Aslam Khatun was the vice president for Model Town and Allama Iqbal Khokhar notched the

Continued on Page 15

Families demand action against human traffickers

By Our Correspondent

GUJRAT: Families and children of dozens of missing people from the June 2023 Lohari Coast boat capsizing tragedy staged a protest after receiving phone calls from alleged human traffickers in Libya, demanding additional money.

The demonstrators from Gujrat, Gujaratwala, Mandi Bahaudin, Sheikhupura and Rawalpindi district of And Kashmir gathered at Kutchery Chowk. Their rally culminated at Gujrat Press Club, carrying banners and placards demanding that the government take immediate



action for the recovery of their loved ones, dead or alive.

The families claimed at least 75 Pakistanis were among those missing in the 2023 tragedy.

They chanted slogans against human traffickers

and criticised the authorities for failing to meet their expectations.

Protesters alleged that hundreds of people were stranded in safe houses controlled by

Continued on Page 15

JIT to probe into forged pics of CM, UAE head

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) cyber crime wing has expanded scope of the probe against those involved in editing and spreading doctored images/videos of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and United Arab Emirates (UAE) President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on social media and formed a Joint Investigation Team (JIT).

The FIA Lahore on Saturday arrested five persons from different areas of Punjab for allegedly uploading fake images/videos of the foreign dignitary and CM Punjab and also making objectionable comments and booked them under PECA.

The JIT comprises the deputy directors from Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Multan and Lahore. The JIT will be headed by FIA Lahore Additional Director Chaudhry Sarfraz. The FIA scrutinised a number of suspected accounts on social media and registered cases against five culprits.

According to the FIA, preliminary findings showed that 20 social media accounts were involved in uploading the manipulated images and videos of the UAE president and the Punjab CM. The identified accounts were reportedly used to spread false visuals and create a negative impression among social media users. More arrests are expected in coming days, the FIA said.

The UAE president had arrived at the Faisalabad Airport on Sunday last, where Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif welcomed him. Maryam Nawaz was also present there and greeted the visiting dignitary with a handshake. However, Ms Nawaz faced criticism from some quarters that termed her handshake with the UAE president inappropriate.

Later, AI-generated videos and pictures of her interaction with the UAE president were also widely circulated online. CM Maryam reportedly was annoyed over this social media campaign against her and directed the authorities concerned for strict action against those involved in it. Subsequently, the FIA cyber crime wing, Lahore, became complainant in this matter and launched the inquiry.

Fog forces closure of key motorway sections in Punjab

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The National Highways & Motorways Police (NHMP) on Saturday announced the closure of multiple motorway sections in Punjab due to severe fog. The affected routes include: M1 - from Kala Shah Kaku to Kot Momin Interchange and Kot Momin Interchange to Salam Interchange; M2 - from Kala Shah Kaku to Kot Sarwar Interchange, and M3 - from Abdul Hakeem Interchange to Darkhana.

Visibility in these areas has plummeted to as low as 50-60 meters, rendering driving conditions extremely hazardous. The closures have been implemented to safeguard motorists.

Authorities have enforced all necessary safety measures and alerted relevant agencies to ensure public safety. Travelers are urged to stay updated on traffic and weather conditions and exercise extreme caution while traveling.

Mira Nair traces her connection with Lahore

ThinkFest starts with discussion on *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

By Irfan Aslam

LAHORE: The eighth edition of Afkara-Tane ThinkFest opened here on Saturday with a session with renowned filmmaker Mira Nair and novelist Mohsin Hamid who spoke about their collaboration for making *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, based on Hamid's novel in the post-9/11 world.

In the session moderated by Bilal Tanweer, Nair traced her connection with Lahore. "My father came from Lahore. My mother was from America. I grew up in Orissa, in the east of India where he was a civil

servant but we grew up with the poems of Faiz and Iqbal. He only spoke Urdu and Persian and my mother spoke Punjabi and Hindi. I lived in those words, lyrics and dreams of home (Lahore). It was always a desire to come here but was almost impossible until 2005/06 when Ali Sethi, Jagmeo and Najam Sethi invited Mahmood (her husband) and I to speak about *Mossmoon* Wedding and my films."

She said she felt she had come into the embrace of a bosomy Punjabi Auntie Ji and it was amazing. She said she felt that I had come to a place that was her own and she was deeply inspired by music, people and art and how deeply different was the actual experience of being in Pakistan compared to what the newspapers said.

"I wanted to tell this tale of not just my experience but this absolute schism between what one part of the world thinks about the other

and like Mohsin I also knew the West. I have lived there since I was 18. I know there was just a monologue. I did not know what to do about it until Ali Sethi came with an unpublished manuscript of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*. When I read it, I just said 'this is it' as I understood *Changar* and being in love with America and, as *Changar* says, and being betrayed by it."

After reading the manuscript, Mira quickly got the rights to make the film of the novel.

"This book is a very difficult book to make into a film because it's a monologue and monologues don't make films. Once we had the rights, very quickly we invited Mohsin to work with us on the screenplay. The process of adaptation took three years." She said for creating the character of Rihay (the American), she learnt on Mohsin to ensure that she and her team did not invent something utterly separate from the

fabric of the book.

"We created Rihay together and we needed that thriller to keep the audience in any part of the world hooked to the story."

Mira Nair said the people were terrified by the title and were asking her to change it but she just laughed as it was the title that grabbed her in the first place, setting a mystery in it. "It was an international movie that had to be made in Pakistan, India, Turkey and America and it needed money. We got two investors but one of them disappeared two weeks before the start of filming."

Mira had to request the other investor to make the film with half the budget. I got help from an Indian friend director who turned out to be an editor and offered to edit the film that saved her a couple of millions of dollars.

She said all scenes of Pakistan, Turkey, and Malaysia were filmed



BILAL Tanweer, Mira Nair and Mohsin Hamid in the inaugural session. — White Star

in India except two days of outdoor shooting in Lahore because there was no insurance to bring actors in. Two days of exterior shooting was

done in Turkey. She said her next movie would be on Amina Shergil

Continued on Page 15

PRAYER

Fajr	5.38
Zuhr	1.00
Asr	3.44
Maghrib	5.21
Isha	6.45

(According to the Islamic calendar)

REFLECTIONS

“OPPRESSION AND TYRANNY ARE THE WORSE COMPANIONS FOR THE BELIEVER.”
— HAZRAT ALI (A.S.)
(79AH/627)

Marriages held under Dhi Rani plan

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz says marriage is an emotional moment for children and their parents and grays for their joy and happiness.

She was speaking at the “Punjab Dhi Rani Programme” under which 50 couples were wedded held here on Saturday.

“As much as your parents and you are happy, I am also your mother and very happy too. May Allah Almighty give the daughters and sons a happy and peaceful life,” she said.

The newlyweds also included five Christian brides and grooms. She congratulated all the newlyweds. She gave them gifts of mattresses, cooking utensils, dinner sets and other essential items. The CM also launched “Dhi Rani Programme Greeting Card”.

Two women die by suicide

LAHORE: Two women reportedly died by suicide in separate incidents on Saturday.

In the first case, Shaima, 25, of Nishat Colony, committed suicide following family disputes. She was rushed to the hospital but succumbed to her injuries.

In the second case, Shaima, 30, of Shahdadi, reportedly jumped from the second floor of her house after conflicts with her family. She was critically injured and later died at a nearby hospital.

Police have shifted both bodies to the morgue for autopsy. — Staff Reporter

Car lifted

LAHORE: A car was stolen from Gulgahe area in Multan on Saturday.

Ms. Noorun parked her vehicle (Mahara AUV-654) outside Varyam Bazaar House in Bachi villa phase-II and when she returned after shopping, she found the vehicle missing.

She lodged a complaint with the Gulgahe police which registered a case.

Multan City Police Officer (CPO) Nadeem Ali Durrani said officers had been constituted to trace the vehicle. — Staff Reporter

HARKING BACK

There is more to Ichhra than mere *halwa puri*

By Majid Sheikh

ONCE while having *halwa puri* inside Lahori Gate in the famous Haji shop, out of sheer curiosity I asked just which was the best *halwa puri* shop in Lahore. Prompt came the answer: “Go to Ichhra Bazaar even though that is strictly not in Lahore”.

The answer got me thinking, for I had heard from a friend that the *halwa puri* of Ichhra, and this made me try it a few weeks later, and it was amazing. But as I had in an earlier piece written about the history of Ichhra, it also got me exploring the main Setasagar Street and found the best *halwa puri*. In 1947, the majority population of Ichhra were Hindus and Sikhs, with Muslims being less than 12 per cent as official statistics tell us.

It reminded me of a letter — a “friend” — that lies in the Lahore Museum sent by an Indian trader from Surat which says, “Lahore near Ichhra”. So, the feeling that Lahore and Ichhra were two different towns comes to the fore. The present population of Ichhra still strongly consider themselves as not part of Lahore, even though — officially — Lahore has engulfed them and moved miles ahead in every direction.

The origin of the two names

need to be understood, and once mention is made of them then the creation of these two towns need to be clearly described. Both ‘Ichhra’ and ‘Lahore’ formed a few thousand years ago, both on meadows, to prevent the monsoon floods destroying them. Both took their names based on the beliefs that prevailed then. These beliefs respected deities that are still respected in the Hindu faith.

Just as in Islam there is a central all-encompassing Allah, with a devil — Shaitan — as opposing His will yet subservient to Allah, in the Hindu faith there is an ‘Atm’ with the deities Shiva and Vishnu with a third Brahma flowing from them. From them flow other ‘Mahadevs’ with attributes than just individual performances. Complex as it sounds, converging on beliefs has its own problems.

According to the book *Hindu Rites and Rituals* by KV Singh, the names ‘Lahore’ and ‘Ichhra’ are opposite attributes of two different traditions. It is no surprise that in this age of reason, if that can be said to be true these days, even the matter of age of these two towns are disputed.

We all know that Ichhra has a famous temple called Bhawan Ka Anthon and then there was

the temple of ‘Chandest’, which are now the names of ‘mohallahs’ (greenbelts) there. Trust our priority lot to try to rename them, just as they have mixed up the names in the old walled city of Lahore. The deity ‘Ichhra’ is an avatar of Shiva, and Bhawan represents one aspect of the avatar, a major contributor to the ‘trinity’. In the Bhagavata-Purana the word ‘IchhaRa’ in Sanskrit means ‘not the edge of evil’. Surely, this can be misinterpreted.

Amazingly in Jewish scriptures it means ‘the edge where goodness starts’. I looked up a Sanskrit dictionary and found that there was an Aryan Ithi deity by the name of ‘Ra’, hence it could also mean the ‘dwelling of Ra’. But then words can be misleading.

In the days before 1947 when Hindus were in a majority, they always — allegedly — considered themselves superior to the followers of ‘Lah’, the deity son of Rama, an ‘avatar’ of Vishnu. This ‘avatar’ is a major character in the ‘Mahabharata’ epic. So it was good against the evil of Shiva and his avatars. But from the priestly Brahmins of the walled city who claimed superiority in terms of caste.

The excellent book by Trilochan Nautiyal titled *The*

Essentials of Hinduism terms this clash of castes as a ‘never-ending course’ of wars. But then priests in every faith tend to set up their own sects, and the collapse of Hinduism is a good example.

Now on to a bit of history. Archaeological samples from the Lahore Fort clearly show habitation carbon-dated at 4,200 years ago people living on the meadow there. Similar samples from Mohallah Maslhan are dated at 3,500 years plus. From the small mound where Ichhra exists no such samples have been taken. But then Lahore has many more mounds than the three of Ichhra. The extent of monsoon flooding determined the use of these mounds, both of Lahore and Ichhra.

But then why this dispute over which town is older? Lahore’s Lahori Gate, which is the oldest of the city, faces Ichhra. This has been used as an excuse to think that Ichhra was Lahore. ‘Lahori Darwaza’ is the gateway of the ‘Lahori’, the immigrants. Inside this gateway existed till very recently a lot of iron furnaces which supplied iron and special metals for military and other uses, just as did the metal of the famous Zamzama cannon come from. But then one just cannot dispute that

Ichhra is an ancient Hindu village, a time when Muslims or Sikhs did not exist.

A British Gazetteer of Lahore claims that two of the oldest Hindu temples in Western India exist in Ichhra, they are Bhawan Ka Anthon and Chand Raat temple. According to Mahatma Near Ahmad Chaudhry’s famous book *Tehsil-e-Chandhi*, there once lived a man called Gadar during the tenure of Shah Jahan, who handled the accounts for Prince Dara Shikoh. On an allegation that he was stealing from Mughal accounts, he was sentenced to death.

The story goes that as Gadar was waiting to go to the gallows, a man appeared before him. This man asked him to close his eyes. When he opened his eyes, he found himself at the exact location where today the tall, cone-shaped temple stands. He asked the man who was he? The man replied: “Bhawan”. When Gadar winked again, the man was gone. The Sanskrit word for Bhawan means beggymen. Bhawan is an incarnation of the Lord Shiva-Rudra the Hindu deity of destruction.

Gadar in his search settled in Shahdadi area of Lahore, where he started living near the Puri Mahal. After adjoining in the new city, he one day

gathered a few Hindus and took them to the spot. There he narrated to them the story of Bhawan, after which the spot became known as Bhawan Ka Anthon.

Another story needs narration. In the days of Ranjit Singh, the mother of his concubine Moran once fell sick. She was diagnosed as having dizziness in ‘her’. Moran was informed that one of the descendants of Gadar practiced magic, and he would be able to rid the body of the intruders. According to tradition, she summoned him, and he was able to cure her mother. As a reward for his services, Moran ordered all the villages that were granted to her to bring in a cart of bricks each for the construction of a proper temple at the Anthon of Bhawan.

During the riots following the Bahri massacre incident in Ayodhya, like other temples in Lahore, people tried to bring this temple down too, but since it was made of strong material, it survived. Maybe Bhawan was still at work... why did the children of the leader of the rioters catch fire? Nothing like a myth.

But today there is no doubt that Ichhra provides an excellent market for jewellery and clothes and lost we forget, excellent *halwa puri*.

Call for resistance to uphold rights of people

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: PFI leader

Barrett Ali Zafar has raised the issue of social polarisation, pointing out how the establishment’s influence on political parties has intensified divisions.

He criticised the use of ‘state terrorism’ to maintain control and stressed the need for resistance to uphold the rights of the common people. Citing his political leader Imran Khan’s vision, Zafar called for legal and political action to achieve unity and economic justice for the citizens of Pakistan.

He was speaking in a session, Politics in Polarised Times, at the Aftab-e-Tan. ThinkFest on Saturday. Journalist Mehtab Sarfraz moderated the session, according to a press release.

Muhammad Nawaz Khokhar of the PFP highlighted the core contradiction in Pakistan’s political landscape, asking whether the real stakeholders were the establishment or the politicians. He emphasised that even in today’s modern era, safety remained a concern in several areas of Pakistan, with people unable to step outside their homes.

Muhammad Sarfraz then turned the discussion to media censorship, asking Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Ahmad

Khan about its impact and the unspoken political-military partnerships behind the scenes. Malik responded by referencing Francis Fukuyama’s book, *The End of History and the Birth of Democracy*, arguing that those who undermined the state dignity should not hold political influence. He called for mutual dialogue with respect and underscored that polarisation was often created by political parties seeking personal gain.

The session concluded with a discussion on accepting the past mistakes by the establishment and political leaders. Mr Khokhar addressed issues in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, attributing them to the establishment’s interference. He urged adherence to the “Charter of Democracy” signed nearly two decades ago.

Barrett Ali Zafar agreed with him, advocating for fighting darkness with light and maintaining integrity in the pursuit of political and legal rights. Malik Ahmad Khan stressed the need for political parties to address persecution faced by marginalised communities, calling out the existing censorship within political groups themselves.

Remembering Lahore of Bapsi Sidhwa

LAHORE: Perin Raga, a former professor of the Miranda College, speaking about Lahore on a written sheet by Bapsi Sidhwa said she remembered Alhamra as an old colonial building surrounded by a huge compound that was known as Bhutan Nagar.

“There was Nelson’s Hotel with its beautiful terrace, a little further was Charing Cross, the Chota Baga, and then close by was the Queen’s Statue which figures so much in the Ice Candy Man surrounded by a green patch of grass,” she said while speaking at a session, Remembering Lahore’s Bapsi at Aftab-e-Tan ThinkFest here on Saturday.

Ms Raga went on to say that near the Charing Cross there was the Civil and Military Gazette office where Richard Kipling worked. “On the opposite side of the road was the motor company where Noor Siddiqui, Bapsi’s second husband, worked. Moving on, there was the Standard Restaurant and the Cathedral and high court” beautiful building that you can’t see now due to the high walls. There was the YMCA and then you come to the Commercial Building.

Along with it, there were some Parsi families who lived upstairs who figure in *The Crow Eaters* and then you get to the corner of the Commercial Building, there was DP Adani’s Company owned by Bapsi’s father while her grandmother lived upstairs. Bapsi must have lived there as a small child.”

Ms Raga said Bapsi’s father was Peshwan. Bhandari who owned this workshop in the Commercial Building. She said Noor lived with her father, marking the start of the family friendship which continued to this day. She said Peshwan was a daily visitor to their home when they shifted to the Warris Road.

“Peshwan would come wheeling, not cycling, his bicycle, pick up my father and they would walk to Commercial Building. My father would sit in the Pak Tea House which was then called the Coffee House while Peshwan would do

his work at his shop. By midday, they would come to our home where my mother used to make salad. Peshwan would drink his bottle of beer and go home for lunch. In the meantime, Bapsi was growing up but unfortunately, she was struck by polio and it was her mother who really persisted with massage advised by a Paris doctor. That’s when she read voraciously.”

According to Perin Raga, Bapsi got over her polio but not completely as she was in constant discomfort though she managed to even her walk despite a slight limp.



She remembered Bapsi as an attractive woman with a warm beautiful smile. “She was very outgoing and made a host of friends, went to Kinsaid and had a host of friends over there too, some of them kept in touch with her. It was Lahore which was very much fun place with parties. Bapsi loved parties and meeting people. I remember very gay dance parties, which was where her courtship began with her second husband, Noor Siddiqui. She continued to live a very joyful life,” Bapsi remembered.

Prof Shaima Sirajuddin pointed out standout houses in Sidhwa’s works. She termed reading Bapsi, particularly the *Ice Candy Man*, a respite as it had a lot of names of places that the younger generation might not have the same resonance or interest with that.

Ms Sirajuddin referred to names like Warris Road, Harwood Road, Queen’s Road, Jail Road and Louis Barrington School, Malka Ka Bar that feature in Bapsi’s novels. “Simply reading these place names evoked a Lahore which is no more. And a Lahore which also was also colonial which disappeared soon after the Partition when the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs had finished slaughtering each other.”

Ms Sirajuddin spoke of the colours in Bapsi’s novels at different levels, not just visual but psycho-

logical and cultural.

She said Bapsi wrote about Lahore with immense that’s quite unique, asking how many writers could write that way. “At the crack of dawn, Lahore, the city known as the garden of Moghals turns into a riot,” she gives this quote as a reference.

Ms Sirajuddin talked about Leena in the *Ice Candy Man* going with a Muslim servant to a village characterized by defecating bottoms but nothing repellent or mocking. She pointed out the sense of darkening as the novel progressed with Shahdadi and Bharti burning.

“How long did Lahore burn is one of the questions asked by Bapsi and how long did Muzung burn, days or weeks?” says Shaima Sirajuddin.

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Export facilitation policy being exploited, says FBR chief

By Faisal Iqbal

LAHORE: A talk that was supposed to be pedantic given its scope that involved the complex issue of taxation in a country like Pakistan with massive tax evasion and a crumbling and corrupt tax collection mechanism, both the moderate, former finance minister Miftah Ismail and the guest, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman Rashid Langrial, shed light on the issue in a way that was both entertaining and enlightening.

The session titled “Why Does The Tax Us No Much?”, opened with FBR head saying that being a poor country 65 per cent households don’t have taxable income of Rs50,000. He said that of the country’s 60.7m workforce, the top 1pc have 1.7 trillion tax liability, while its total tax ap in around two trillion.

Mr Langrial said that unfortunately the whole taxation system has been designed to facilitate five percent of the people, who further exploit the loopholes in it to evade their liabilities. For example, he said, the export facilitation policy that allows five-year tax relaxation was being misused.

As Miftah satirically asked whether only the taxpayers are to be blamed, Langrial frankly admitted the issues with regard to the FBR’s capacity, which he said is

being improved through a host of measures being currently taken.

To a question by the moderator, that FBR is going to take away roughly 12.5pc of every body’s income, which even includes alms, and what people would be getting in return, in some service delivery by the state, Langrial said, it is a wider debate that whether Pakistan is an over-taxed country? “No, it is not the case,” he said.

Admitting that in some areas, including the tax rate for the salaried class and the GST rate, improvements need to be made, he said among the comparable countries, tax-to-GDP ratio in Pakistan, that is 9pc, is not high. Similarly, he said, Pakistan’s expenditure-to-GDP ratio was also high, saying that it was 24pc in India while in Pakistan it was 19pc. “The problem is that we are able to collect 100 billion tax,” the FBR chief admitted.

When again probed by Miftah about what people are getting for paying taxes, FBR chief said that though they are not spending as much on health and education as we should, there are also issues with the way the allocation is used.

In this regard he cited the example of the country’s school education system which, he said, was mainly focused on years of education than the educational outcome, because of its flawed design. “So, neither we are paying taxes as we should, nor we are getting the ser-

vices delivery as we should get.”

To Miftah pointing out the exorbitant tax rate for the salaried class and professionals, reaching up to 40pc in some cases, including on the income of doctors doing private practice, FBR chief said his organisation is cognizant of the issue but unless there is compliance on part of tax collection from traders and others, there can’t be space for such relaxations.

Mr Langrial said that FBR was focusing on implementation and has taken measures to make it difficult for people to spend money on real estate, vehicles and foreign travel if they have not filed their last tax returns.

To a question about physical resistance by traders to the field tax officials, FBR chief said his organisation avoids strong-arm measures and treats the issue as a civil matter.

As Mr Miftah asked if any more areas are about with regard to bringing down government expenditures, Langrial explained that a right-sizing committee was working under the finance minister has already decided to close down at least two federal ministries and multiple attached departments.

Closing the session, Mr Miftah appreciated Mr Langrial for taking effective steps to curb spend money, especially in Customs by introducing a new mechanism for appraisers in Karachi, that would be ultimately expanded to the entire country.

Four cops injured during raid in Kasur

By Our Correspondent

KASUR: Four police officials were injured when the family members of a suspect attacked them during a police raid on Saturday in the Kot Ali Garh locality in the jurisdiction of B-Division police.

According to police, the B-Division police conducted a raid without warrants at a house in Kot Ali Garh to arrest Muhammad Nadeem, who is wanted in a criminal case. The family members and neighbours confronted the police, leading to an argument that escalated into a physical altercation.

As a result, four police officers — Asghar Ali, Rashid Ali, Khayar Hayat and Muhammad Ashraf — sustained injuries, while Waqar Ahmed

from the accused's side was also injured.

The injured people were hospitalized and the police have registered a criminal case against the attackers. Three suspects were arrested.

WEDDING VIOLENCE: A youth was killed due to jubilation firing during a wedding on Saturday in village Mega in the limits of Peshawar police.

Police reported that unidentified guests at the wedding of Muhammad Arif, 22, a close relative of the groom, sustained a bullet injury during the firing. The injured youth was rushed to the TRQ Hospital but was referred to Lahore due to his critical condition.

Police are investigating the incident.

Doctor among three booked for rape of hospital guard

By Our Correspondent

TOKA, TEX SINGH: Faisalabad women police station on Saturday registered a case against a children hospital doctor, a security supervisor and an accomplice of the supervisor for allegedly raping a lady security guard in the hospital.

Reports said complainant 'N' alleged in the first information report registered under section 375-A of Pakistan Penal Code that doctor 'M' departed her in his dental ward and started teasing her. On Dec 23, he called her in his office, raped her and made an explicit video.

She alleged that security supervisor also overpowered her in his office and he along with his accomplice gangraped

her on Jan 8.

She said she filed an application to police for registration of a case against the suspects but when it delayed she attempted suicide by cutting her throat the other day and now she was under treatment at Allied Hospital.

Police are looking into the matter.

PROTEST: Scores of shopkeepers and vendors of eight bazaars at Clock Tower took out on Saturday a rally against the anti-encroachment drive started by Faisalabad MC.

Addressing the participants, a PTI-N leader, chairman supreme council of Anjuman Tajir and former deputy mayor Amir Butt, said all participants in rally were carrying PTI-N flags as they were not against this government, but

they were just demanding that the administration hold talks with shopkeepers and vendors and accept their 'just' demands.

He urged Commissioner Maryam Khan to resolve the issue just like she did as commissioner in Multan.

INJURED: Robbers shot at and injured a man and his nephew on Saturday when they did not stop their motorcycle near Chak 297 JB located on Toba Road at Gujra.

Both Manzoor Ahmad and Muhammad Subul of Chak 297 JB were admitted to Gujra THQ hospital and later referred to Faisalabad Allied hospital due to their critical condition.

FIRE: A bag of a running goods train laden with coal burst for Khewra from

Karachi suddenly caught fire at Toba near Chhattisgarh railway station located on Toba-Shorkot Cantonment track on Saturday.

Rescue 1122 firefighters controlled the flames and reported that the fire seemingly erupted due to some fault in the wheels of bogie. The bogie contained 90 tonnes of coal and timely action saved at least 88 tonnes from burning.

Meanwhile, a fire broke out in upper story of a commission agent's shop in Toba grain market due to electric short circuit on Saturday as a result empty gunny bags worth more than Rs400,000 reduced to ash and the roof of the shop also started in fire. Rescue firefighters extinguished the fire and claimed that at least Rs5 million worth of bags were saved from burning.

POET: Faisalabad DC Nadeem Nauri has set an example by patronising a Punjabi poet. He announced on Saturday the recruitment of two sons of the Punjabi poet of Jaranwala and writer of five Punjabi poetry books, Munawar Shakeri.

An official said the DC learnt that Munawar Shakeri was facing financial constraints and he called the poet to his office. He presented the poet with a cash prize and a commemorative shield of the DC and announced providing jobs to his two sons.

Meanwhile, Director Punjab Council of Arts Faisalabad Muhammad Awan Aird in recognition of the services of Munawar Shakeri announced organising a "mashaira" to raise funds for him.

'Imran wants NRO'

LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Aroon Bokhari said on Saturday that PTI banner leader Imran Khan did everything to isolate Pakistan but failed.

"Whenever a leader from a friendly country visits, these people start mischievous to spoil Pakistan's relations," she told a press conference here. She said Imran Khan wanted NRO (don't). "When someone visits him in jail, he (Imran) asks him to get him released through NRO," she said.

Bokhari alleged the entire KP government was involved in corruption. "The incompetent government, in power for 12 years, has only increased the people's suffering. The public needs to

be told what special ability Ghazdarpur possesses for which he was made the Chief Minister of KP," she said.

She said Shahbaz Sharif had given Pakistan a new identity.

"No one attended the phone call of Imran Khan during his government. When the founder of PTI made his final call from Atika Jail, it turned out to be a missed call. Despite the call for civil disobedience, remittances saw a record surge, with overseas Pakistanis sending \$3.1 billion to Pakistan. Efforts were made to turn Pakistan through the civil disobedience movement of PTI, but no friendly nation paid any attention to the PTI policies," she said. — Staff Reporter

Rs5.7m corruption scam Inquiry initiated against former education CEO

By Our Correspondent

SAHIWAL: An inquiry involving Rs5.7 million in corruption charges against Dr Muhammad Arshad, former chief executive officer of the Sahiwal District Education Authority, has been initiated under the Punjab Employees Efficiency, Discipline, and Accountability (PEDA) Act of 2006.

The inquiry was ordered by the Sahiwal Education Department (SED).

The chief minister's office directed Waqar Azim, managing director of the Punjab Procurement Regulatory

Authority, to complete the inquiry within 60 days under section 5(3) of the PEDA Act. The order further specifies that Muhammad Arshad, who was an assistant and head clerk under the CEO (education) at the time, will also face the same inquiry.

Currently, Dr Arshad is serving under the School Education Department in Lahore. The inquiry order was issued by Khalid Nadeem Wattoo, Secretary of SED on Jan 8.

The allegations include withdrawal of Rs5.55 million without documentation, Rs557,000 from the SED account on three occasions for awards under "Sham-ul-Musalla

Rahmatullah Alameen" and Rs99,999 and Rs65,000 from the SED account for purchasing items without proper sanction.

Interestingly, Dr Arshad had previously been implicated in a Rs225 million corruption case by the Anti-Corruption Establishment, following a report from Muhammad Akram, of Gharan Road, Sahiwal, on Aug 13, 2024.

At that time, he was booked under sections 471, 468, 420 and 409 of the PPC and section 5(2) of the PCA, along with his accomplices. Despite these charges, no judicial action was taken against Dr Arshad.

PTI-backed candidate...

Continued from Page 13

vice president position for Cantonment. For two positions of the secretary, Nadeem Bhatta of professional group and Malik Sharjeel Khokhar of Arma Jahangir Group emerged victorious.

Shujaat Ali Khan won the joint secretary seat and Ejaz Gujjar was elected as finance secretary, while Samina Khokhar secured the librarian position.

Prof Atiqe Ahmad Khan was the seat of auditor.

MULAN: Malik Javed Dogar was elected president of the District Bar

Association Multan for 2025-26.

Interestingly, Mr Javed was not only supported by the lawyer wings of the PTI but also the PML-N and the PPP besides various other factions.

Malik Javed is a brother-in-law of PTI MNA and Chief Whip of the National Assembly Malik Amir Dogar, who remained present at the bar during the whole election activity on Saturday.

Malik Javed secured 1,896 votes against his main rival Syeda Bushra Nagvi who bagged 819 votes. Malik Adnan clinched the position of general secretary and Khalid Khan Baloch was elected vice president.

Imran moves LHC...

Continued from Page 13

another stance by the counsel that the petitioner's post-arrest bail in so many other cases had already been allowed by different courts.

"This court also is of the view that it is not an ordinary case of abetment, instigation or conspiracy," the trial judge had remarked in his order.

He had observed that being the found-

ing chairman of PTI, the petitioner's speeches and directions were strictly followed by his workers and supporters.

Separately, ATC III Judge Arshad Javed had on Nov 8, 2024 granted post-arrest bail to Imran Khan in four other cases, including turning the PML-N office in Model Town, a container near Rafana Chowk, police vehicles in Gulberg, and violence at Shergarh Bridge during the May 9 riots.

FIRST BARS!



First death anniversary of Shahla Ali Khan

who left us on January 12, 2024. Her last journey was to America where she was laid to rest on February 10, 2024, at Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis, MN, under an old tree

Khalid, Faheeh, Nadia, Naveed

Continued from Page 13

who lived and died in Lahore.

Mohsin Hamid said after publishing his debut novel Moh Sinke he wanted to write a very different book. "Moh Sinke was a novel about Lahore written by someone who had spent half of their life outside Pakistan so it was not an insider's account of a particular slice of Lahore life. The Reluctant Fundamentalist was the opposite of Moh Sinke. It was an account of life in the US by someone who lived half of his life outside the US."

He said the novel began the year before 2001. "As we all know Sept 11, 2001, there was a massive terrorist attack which set the motion in

the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq and so much else that followed."

Before that happened, he said, he was working on a novel about a guy who had a corporate job in New York, feeling that he was in service of the financial empire that he did not to serve, quite his job and moved back to Lahore. Mohsin narrated the incident how his agent had rejected it, terming it very quiet. "A couple of months later, 9/11 happened and the agent asked about the book about the Muslim guy who wanted to go back."

Mohsin said he never wanted to write a novel about 9/11 and a quiet love story of loveless. "For a year, I was stuck and then I tried to revise

the novel but I kept setting it before 9/11 so that it would not be about 9/11. Years later, it occurred to me that I need to take the 9/11 reality but I also wanted the novel to be simultaneously set in Pakistan and America, so this notion of a frame of a Pakistani movie, an American man meeting in the bazaar is set in the structure of the book."

According to Mohsin, the novel tried to reject this post-9/11 binary and the idea of forcing the reader to the uncomfortable position of trying to judge something without knowing the truth.

The session followed the welcome address by Dr Yaseen Bangash, the organizer of the ThinkFest.

Families...

Continued from Page 13

international human trafficking media in Lahore.

Several protesters shared accounts of receiving phone calls from traffickers previously used by their missing relatives. The callers, allegedly traffickers, demanded additional ransom for either returning the bodies of the deceased or arranging phone conversations with the missing individuals. Despite sharing this information with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), no action has been taken, they said.

One protester emphasised that beyond the 75 missing Pakistanis from the 2023 tragedy, hundreds have been detained for traffickers for years. The capture reportedly demand large sums for their release, exacerbating the families' suffering.

The protesters urged Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif to intervene for the safe recovery of those held captive in Libya's safe houses and to ensure the return of the deceased victims' bodies.

Gujjar and Gujjarwala FIA circles have registered dozens of cases against human traffickers linked to the incident, claiming to have arrested several suspects in crackdowns. However, the victims' families expressed dissatisfaction with the progress and demanded stricter actions to ensure the recovery of the missing persons.

Basmah Institute of Urology & Transplantation (BIUT), & Smith Institute of Urology & Transplantation (SIUT), on Shaheed Benazirabad (Nawabshah), is a 300 bedded, tertiary healthcare hospital. Established with a mission to provide best-of-kind medical cover to the patients with acute & related diseases.

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Sr. Lecturer / Assistant Professor / Consultant / Specialist

- Clinical Pathology
- Microbiology
- Medical Physics/MCPS/DCP in respective disciplines.
- Qualification, Experience & Publications of faculty positions are as per PMDC requirements.
- For Consultant/Specialist posts 02 years' experience is required.

Senior Lecturer/ Assistant Professor

- Paeds Urology
- Paeds Nephrology
- Nephrology
- Qualification, Experience & Publications of faculty positions are as per PMDC requirements.

Consultant/Specialist Radiology

- FCPS/MCPS/CDMP in Radiology with relevant experience.

Resident Medical Officer (Shift Duties)

- Urology
- Anaesthesia
- Nephrology
- Emergency
- ICU
- MBBS with one year house job completed

Nursing Supervisor

- B.ScN or 03-year diploma of General Nursing with valid PNC registration. Candidates must have 07 years post-qualification experience out of which 03 years in Supervisory role in a tertiary care hospital.

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- Graduate preferably in Social work / Sociology / Public Health from recognized institution with 02-03 years relevant experience in a hospital set up.

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JCO/NGO (Retired) from Armed Forces with 03-05 years' experience in Fire & Safety Trade.

LITHOTRIPSY TECHNICIAN

Certification / Training of Lithotripsy Technician from recognized institution with 02-03 years working experience in relevant field.

URODYNAMIC TECHNOLOGIST

Certification / Training of Urodynamic Technology from recognized institution with 02-03 years working experience in relevant field.

LABORATORY TECHNICIAN

Intermediate (Science) with diploma of Lab Technician recognized from Sindh Medical Faculty or BS Medical Technology with 02-03 years working experience in Laboratory services department.

DIALYSIS TECHNICIAN

Intermediate (Science) with diploma of Dialysis Technician recognized from Sindh Medical Faculty or BS Medical Technology with 02-03 years working experience in Dialysis Unit.

SECURITY GUARD (FEMALE)

Matriculation with working experience of 02-03 years in a hospital set up.

COOK

Matric / Matric pass with relevant experience.

Centre of Excellence In Solid State Physics

University of the Punjab, QAC, Lahore-54590, Pakistan
Tel: +92-42-9923 3133-5 Fax: +92-42-9923 3139
Email: director.ceps@pu.edu.pk

TENDER NOTICE
(Laboratory Equipment & Research Materials)

Sealed proposals on Single Stage Single Envelope basis are hereby invited from the Manufacturers / Authorized Dealers having GST, Sales Tax Number, for the supply and installation of the following items on FOC basis as per specifications detailed in the tender documents.

1. HEC Approved Double Entry Financial Software System

2. Raman Spectrophotometer (complete with cables power source etc.)

Specifications:

- Detector cooled down to -35°C
- Spectral range (at least) 200 – 3700 cm⁻¹
- Spectral resolution (at least) 8.5 – 16 cm⁻¹
- Laser 532nm regulated up to 200mW

3. Bridgman Crystal Growth Apparatus (complete with Rotary Pump and cables)

Specifications:

- Tube length 250mm
- Maximum Temperature 1800°C
- Variable pulling speed
- Vertical design with furnace at the top
- Vacuum tight flanges
- Water cooled shaft for pulling

4. Hyperthermia Measurement System

Specifications:

- Magnetic field should be tunable (0 – 400 Oer)
- Frequency should be variable or schedulable (200, 300 and 400MHz)
- Should be water cooled
- Temperature readout should be included

5. Tube Furnaces

Specifications:

- Tube of 3-inch diameter
- Maximum temperature of 2000°C
- Tube length – 3 feet

6. Multichannel Gas Flow Controllers

Specifications:

- Gas flow range 0 – 100 SCCM
- Gas flow range 0 – 200 SCCM
- Control range 0 – 500 SCCM

7. Target Materials

Specifications:

- 2 inch and 3-inch diameter of the following materials: NiTi (99.9999%), ZnS (99.99%), ZnS:Fe (99.99%), Ni₂Fe (99.99%), MgO (99.99%), Mg (99.99%), CoFe (99.99%), TiO (99.99%), Ta₂O₅ (99.99%), VBCO 123 (99.99%), ZnO (99.99%), V₂O₅ (99.99%), SiO₂ (99.99%), Cu (99.99%), Cr (99.99%), ZnS:Fe (99.99%), ZnO (99.99%)

8. Evaporation Materials (wires or chunks)

Specifications:

- High purity materials (CoS, CdTe, Al, Cu, Zn, Sn, In, Au, Ag, Se, Zr, Ga, CaS, CaSe, Cs, Pt, etc.)

9. Substrates

ITO coated Glass, FTO coated glass, sapphire, alumina, silica, copper, silver, titanium

10. Evaporation Filaments / sheets

Tungsten, Molybdenum, Tantalum

11. Single Crystal Wafers

Specifications:

- 3 inch dia. silicon p-type 100-oriented, resistivity 1-10 ohm-cm, single side polished
- 3 inch dia. silicon n-type 111-oriented, resistivity 1-10 ohm-cm, single side polished

12. Undergraduate Laboratory Equipment

Specifications:

- Related to Mechanics
- Related to Waves & Optics
- Related to Heat & Thermodynamics
- Related to Electricity & Magnetism

Bids only through E-Pak Acquisition and disposal system (EPADS) will be entertained. No bid other than EPADS will be accepted. Bid security will be submitted before closing of tender physically in the Director's office, Quaid-e-Azam Campus, Lahore, (Tel: 042-99233133). Bidder will also upload the complete scanned copy of their bid in EPADS.

Bidding documents, containing detailed terms and conditions can be downloaded from the website of PPRA or Punjab University (www.pu.edu.pk). In case of any query, guidance can be sought from the director's office.

The bids prepared in accordance with the instructions contained in the bidding documents must be submitted on EPADS by 28-01-2025 till 11:00 (a.m.), which will be opened on the same date at 11:30 (a.m.). If there is a public holiday announced by the Government on the tender opening date, then the tender will be opened on the next working day.

PID/L/1954/24

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COE in Solid State Physics
University of the Punjab, Lahore

PESHAWAR

Sunset 05:27pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 07:11am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 04°C
Maximum 19°C
Outlook Sunny

METRO
North

Sabalenka and Sinner target back-to-back Australian Open glory
Pg.20 SPORT



CHILDREN play near the broken embankment of the Yakaboot Canal in Peshawar on Saturday. — White Star

Nine killed, 12 injured as trailer falls over passenger coach in Karak

CM, governor condole deaths, order best possible care for injured

By Ghulam Mursalin Marwat

LAKKI MARWAT: Nine people lost their lives and a dozen sustained injuries in a tragic road accident in Karak district on Saturday.

Police and Rescue 1122 officials said that a trailer fell over a passenger coach when its driver lost control of the vehicle due to brake failure near Ambori Kallay area. They said that the container also damaged other vehicles parked there.

Rescue officials said that eight persons died on the spot, while 12 others were injured, who were provided first aid by the rescuers and later shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital, Karak. They said eight rescue service's ambulances and recovery vehicles took part in the relief efforts after the accident.

The officials said the mishap



— Dawn

occurred on the busy Peshawar-Karachi Highway in the limits of Yagob-Khan Shalweed police station.

A police official said that a contingent along with the traffic wardens reached the venue immediately and launched a rescue operation. He said that the injured persons were retrieved from the coach and other vehicles and shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital.

The police official said eight injured, including a minor girl, succumbed at the hospital.

A rescue official, however, said that nine people perished in the accident.

The deceased were identified as Mohammad Inayat, 59, a resident of Karak, Awan Khan, 45, resident of Tirockhel area of Lakki Marwat, Anna, 24, resident of Mardikhel, Nalla, 3, Qaiser Khan, 30, Sharafat Ali and Salim Khan, 65, residents of Tirockhel, and Qadir, 56, a resident of Kari Dhand. One of the deceased persons could not be identified immediately.

The injured included Ejan, 39,

resident of Takht Nurani Karak, Naimullah, 41, resident of Lakki Marwat, Mir Shahbaz Shab Zaman, 45, resident of Sirajkhel, Karol, 31, resident of Garhi Barak, Mohammad Latif, 50, resident of Moshaki, Harufullah, 49, resident of Alqah Karak, Ali Abbas, 50, resident of Chokara Karak, Azeema, 4, Zairah Bibi, 30, and Khadija, 2, residents of Tanzeem, Agla, 24, residents of Tirockhel, and Allah Bakhs, 71, resident of Tanzeem Shari (Punjab). The police official said that they had arrested the trailer driver,

Saimullah, a resident of Lakki Marwat, in injured condition and shifted him to the hospital.

He said that the highway had been closed for vehicular traffic.

Meanwhile, in a statement issued in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur expressed his sorrow over the deaths of nine people in the traffic accident. The statement said that the chief minister also extended his sympathies to the families of those who lost their lives and those who were injured.

Mr Gandapur directed the health authorities to provide the best possible medical facilities to those who were injured in the traffic accident.

Another statement said KP

Governor Farid Karim Kundi took notice of the traffic mishap and directed the relevant authorities to furnish details about it. He also directed the health authorities to provide all possible assistance to the injured during their treatment. He also directed the Pakistan Red Crescent Society to carry out relief activities and asked the party workers to donate blood for the victims of traffic mishap.

PTI leader Bangash indicted for firing on police

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: An anti-terrorism court on Saturday indicted Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader and former provincial minister Kamran Khan Bangash for allegedly firing gunshots on police and sheltering absconding former federal minister Muneer Saeed.

Mr Bangash pleaded not guilty to the charge and decided to stand trial.

Judge Asad Khin fixed Jan 20 for next hearing and also summoned prosecution witnesses on that date.

The FIR of the occurrence was registered on Oct 20, 2023, at Chumkani police station under different provisions of the Pakistan Penal Code and Anti-Terrorism Act.

A big contingent of police had raided the residence and hq of Mr Bangash and had taken him into custody.

The police alleged that they had information about presence of an absconder Muneer Saeed at the place.

It was alleged that when the raiding team visited the hq of Mr Bangash some armed men also fired at them resulting into injuries to two cops, identified as Hashid and Kabeem.

Mr Bangash was subsequently granted bail by an ATC on Oct 30, 2023. He had denied the charges and stated that the CCTV footage of the police raid didn't show any attack on police personnel.

He claimed that neither the police recovered any weapon from his possession nor were any evidence or marks of fired bullet available on record.

He stated that the case was politically motivated aimed at victimising him.

Four miners laid to rest in Shangla

SHANGLA: Bodies of four young mineworkers, who died in a mine accident in Balochistan, were brought here and laid to rest in their ancestral graveyards on Saturday.

According to locals, over a dozen miners got stranded in the coal mine when a portion of it collapsed due to an explosion on Thursday.

They said that a rescue operation was still continuing and four bodies had been recovered so far and shifted to Alport.

They said the miners were under 20 years of age. They were laid to rest in their ancestral graveyards in Basi and Pir Abad areas of Alport tehsil. — Correspondent

VC for Chitral varsity demanded

CHITRAL: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's Chitral Information secretary and human rights activist Niaz A Niaz Advocate has demanded of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to fill the post of vice-chancellor of the University of Chitral, which has been lying vacant for the last one-and-half year, affecting this nascent institution.

Talking to reporters here on Saturday, he said that all the three key administrative positions of registrar, controller of examinations and treasurer were also lying vacant.

He said that the university had no academic staff above BPS-18 and positions of associate professor (BPS-20) and professor (BPS-21) were vacant.

Mr Niaz said that the PTI government should give up its 'obnoxious policy of politicising the universities', which must be treated only as the high seats of learning.

Mr Niaz regretted that the dual charge of the university had been given to the vice-chancellor of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University, Sheringal Upper Dir, which was not possible for the incumbent to look after its affairs. — Correspondent

Committee formed for campaign against KP-Fata merger

KHYBER: The Fata Qasmi Jirga (FQJ) on Saturday announced the formation of a 48-member committee to bolster their campaign against the 2018 Fata-Khyber Pakhtunkhwa merger in all seven tribal districts and six former Frontier Regions.

The development came during a FQJ meeting held in the Jamrud area here with Malik Samiullah Khan in the chair. Elders from tribal districts and Frontier Regions showed up in large numbers.

Mr Samiullah said that people in tribal districts knew of the failure of the move to merge Fata with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2018 and that they're upset by the federal government's failure to fulfil its commitments regarding the tribal region's development.

He insisted that while the federal government failed to execute major development projects in any of tribal districts through the timely provision of promised funds, the region had plunged into complete administrative chaos amid worsening law and order situation.

"People of the tribal region have realised that the merger plan was ill-conceived, while most stakeholders weren't taken into confidence by authorities at the time of the passage of 25th Constitutional Amendment, leaving the region with a plethora of legal, security and political issues," he said.

The FQJ leader said that the newly-formed committee consisting of three

representatives from every tribal district would make frequent contacts with all stakeholders in the region and provide impetus to the anti-merger campaign among disheartened tribesmen.

He said that the FQJ was the main motivating force behind keeping the anti-merger campaign alive on both political and legal fronts as they had also challenged the 25th Constitutional Amendment in the Supreme Court.

OATH-TAKING CEREMONY: Adviser to the chief minister on communication and development Nohail Afridi has said that journalists in Khyber tribal districts have successfully highlighted the region's issues despite facing a very hostile and challenging environment.

During the oath-taking ceremony for the newly-elected cabinet of Jamrud Press Club the other day, Mr Afridi said that corruption and other ills could be wiped out from the region if journalists performed their responsibilities honestly and professionally.

He said that honest and sincere journalists could play the role of a bridge between the government and ordinary citizens.

The aide to the CM announced a donation of Rs200,000 for the press club. The ceremony was attended by local elders, members of the local traders association and civil society, political activists, and members of the newly-elected cabinet. — Correspondent

KP govt pours Rs100bn into free healthcare since 2016

Scope of Sehat Card beneficiaries are women, says health dept report

By Ashfaq Yasinzai

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa health department has spent around Rs100 billion on the provision of free healthcare under the Sehat Card Plus programme to 3.89 million patients since its launch in 2016.

Beneficiaries of the health insurance scheme included 2.09 million (53.07pc) women,

1.79 million (46.03pc) men and 12 transgender persons, according to an official report. According to it, private hospitals earned Rs54.42 billion and public hospitals Rs44.66 billion from the SCP, with the former receiving 2.05 million patients and the latter 4.12 million.

Under the programme, 0.26 million (6.69pc of the total) patients aged 1-10 years, 0.34 million (8.73pc) aged 10-20 years, 0.64 million (16.4pc) from 30 to 36, 0.68 million (17.4pc) aged 30-40 years, 0.53 million (13.5pc) aged 40-50, 0.54 million (13.9pc) aged 50-60 years, 0.5 million (12.8pc) aged 60-70 years, 0.31 million (8pc) aged 70-80, 71,930 (1.8pc) aged 80-90 years and 9,609 (0.2pc)

aged 90 and above.

The report said the cost of treatment for women was recorded at Rs50.06 billion (5pc of the total), slightly more than men's Rs48.92 billion (4.9pc).

The report said the Lady Reading Hospital, Peshawar treated 186,657 patients (4.8pc of the total) and earned Rs6.71 billion (6.8pc), while the Peshawar Institute of Cardiology offered treatment to 55,629 patients (1.4pc) and generated Rs6.023 billion (6.1pc).

The Hayatabad Medical Complex received 0.12 million patients (3pc of the total) and earned Rs5.19 billion (5.2pc). Institute of Radiotherapy and Nuclear Medicine 81,607

patients (2.1pc) and Rs3.36 billion revenue (3.4pc). Ayub Teaching Hospital Abbottabad treated 371,680 patients (9.4pc) and Rs3.1 billion income (3.1pc), and Khyber Teaching Hospital 111,088 patients (2.9pc) and Rs2.49 billion revenue (2.5pc).

The report also revealed that Rs22.65 billion was spent on 192,089 cardiology patients, Rs11.77 billion on 557,551 general patients, Rs20.65 billion on medical cases, Rs6.57 billion on oncology patients, Rs4.94 billion on orthopaedic cases and Rs4.35 billion on 49,567 neuro-surgery patients.

Most patients (410,471) were treated in Peshawar's public and private hospitals. They

made up 10.55pc of the total patients treated under the SCP programme since its launch by the PTI government in 2016, according to the report.

All districts, except a few without well-equipped hospitals, received more than 0.1 million patients.

The report revealed that private hospitals, which had attracted bulk of the amount from the health insurance programme since 2016, recorded a decline last year as the government restricted them from carrying out most common procedures to benefit public hospitals.

It added that patients continued to visit government hospitals for appendectomy,

cholecystectomy, caesarean delivery, tonsillectomy, cataract, angiography and septoplasty and MR after restriction by government on private hospitals.

The restriction was meant to check misuse of the programme by private hospitals, which were found to be performing unnecessary procedures to increase earnings.

The government encouraged its hospitals to implement a revenue-sharing formula and thus, encouraging staff members to take a greater interest in SCP patients.

Now, the Lady Reading Hospital, the largest public sector health centre in the province, is admitting all SCP

patients to generate better revenue, while the district level hospitals are upgrading their services to attract more visitors and generate income to benefit employees and patients. The patients receive free services, while hospital doctors, nurses and paramedics get share in the income from SCP cases.

The report said of the total 68767 million patients in 2016, 74pc in 2017, 65pc in 2018, 72pc in 2019, 81pc in 2020, 68pc in 2021, 60pc in 2022 and 52pc in 2023.

The women were transported to Harman and Adill of Dacha Kali area. The bodies were shifted to a hospital.

Downloaded from www.pakistan-newspaper-pdf.com



TWO boys sell balloons in Hashnagri, Peshawar, on Saturday. — White Star

Elders, authorities accelerate efforts for safe release of PAEC workers

In video, abductees urge govt to accept demands of captors

By Our Correspondent

LAKKI MARWAT: Local elders and authorities have accelerated efforts to secure the safe release of kidnapped Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission workers from terrorists.

In a video that surfaced on Saturday, the abductees asked the government to accept the demands of captors for their freedom. Elders of Akia Shikrokhel Jirga also raised the issue with

authorities all through the day. It was their second meeting in the last two days with the local administration and security officials at the deputy commissioner's office in the District Headquarters Complex Tajana.

Relatives of the kidnapped workers as well as chiefs of other clans and members of the Marwat Quami Jirga also participated, according to an elder.

The elder said the meeting lasted until

evening, with both sides agreeing on several important points which would pave the way to free abductees and take captors to task.

In the video clip, which went viral on social media, an abductee, accompanied by others, shared demands of the kidnappers.

"Today is our third day in captivity. The news of our release is not true as 10 workers are still in custody," he said.

The worker said the captors wanted the government to release "mujahideen" and their family members, including children, and avoid demolishing their houses and disrespecting the bodies.

He added that the kid-

nappers demanded compensation by the government for their damaged houses.

The abductee urged authorities to accept these demands for the sake of their safe release.

Armed assailants had kidnapped 16 private PAEC employees from the Lakki Marwa Tang Road on Thursday as the latter were on the way to the project site in the Qaboolkhel area in a private coach. The kidnappers burnt the coach in a forest area along the Kurram River.

A few hours later, the security and police personnel rescued eight workers, including three injured, in a joint operation.

Siraj regrets IMF fixing utility, food prices in Pakistan

By Our Correspondent

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-e-Islami former chief Sirajul Haq has said that terrorists are strong for reasons of Islam, where scholars fail to fill the duty of preaching the teachings of the Holy Quran and Islam to the young generation.

He was addressing a certificate

distribution ceremony at Jamia Darul Salam in Quah on Saturday.

Mr Haq said that Pakistanis gained freedom from what he said the East India Company but "incompetent" rulers made them 'slaves' of IMF and World Bank.

The JI leader said that how unfortunate it was that IMF was determining the prices of electricity, oil, gas and food items in Pakistan. "The educational curriculum will also be at the discretion of IMF and other external institutions," he said, and added that the decision on the value of the currency was also 'entrusted' to these institutions.

He said the World Trade Organisation would decide which countries and on what terms they had to trade with others.

The JI former chief was of the view that the decision on the import of medicines was also at

the discretion of the World Health Organisation. He insisted that rulers in Pakistan were also chosen by international lobbyists. "In such a situation, if we are not slaves, then what will we be called?" he questioned.

Mr Haq said that Europe and America were afraid of the dominance of Islam as they had no issue with prayers and individual worship in their own countries.

He said that it was their collective responsibility to bring "God's system" on the earth through unity. Jamia Darul Salam head Maulana Shah Khalid and Maulana Hafiz Noor Ahmad Dini also addressed the ceremony, while the JI former telethoner Saharwal Var Advocate, JI Adharani emir Dr Bashir Mohammad, Mushafiq Rehman and Jehan Rahadon, along with other local leaders, were also present on the occasion.

Certificates were also given away to students, who completed memorizing the Holy Quran from Jamia Darul Salam.

YOUTH DIES BY SUICIDE: A teenager, identified as Ahsan, 17, a resident of Sherat Alam Bala, died by suicide over unknown reasons here on Saturday.

He shot himself dead, the Quah police said.

The youth was taken to the Chakdara Tehsil Headquarters Hospital, where the doctors pronounced him dead.

The Quah police registered a case and started further investigations.

Residents demand construction of bypass to ease traffic mess in Battagram city

They also call for crackdown on illegal parking, structures

By Hamayoun Haider Younsuzai

BATTAGRAM: Residents on Saturday urged the government to construct a bypass to alleviate persistent traffic congestion on the main road through the Battagram city that has become a daily nuisance for commuters and pedestrians.

The current narrow road, exacerbated by illegal car parking and encroachments, has resulted in chronic traffic jams that not only frustrate commuters but also pose risk to motorists who have been hit by vehicles on several occasions.

The main bazaar's single road is woefully inadequate, serving as the primary route for accessing markets, DHO and private hospitals, banks, police lines, city police station, government offices, district administration and judiciary.

Residents and traders urged the government to expand the existing road and construct a bypass to minimise traffic flow. This would not only ease congestion but also provide a safe passage for tourists

and commuters traveling to Gilgit, Skardu and other areas.

The residents said it had become almost impossible for women and children to walk in the main bazaar, causing them inconvenience.

Shakeel Hayat, Chapagram village council chairman, pointed out that the situation was previously manageable, but the increased number of vehicles exacerbated the problem. "As the road has not been expanded, people are regularly stuck in the main bazaar, causing them inconvenience."

Imtiaz Khan, a resident of Battagram village, criticised the authorities for lacking a comprehensive development plan for the district. "Politicians and administrators act according to the mood of the hour, without considering the long-term consequences."

"Whenever there is an emergency situation it becomes almost impossible for Rescue 1122 officials to move their heavy machinery for firefighting or dragging out vehicles from deep ravines," the villager said.

Hashim Khan, a resident of Ajmera village, deplored the apathy of political leaders and local administration, stating that the main Karakoram Highway was the only route for light and heavy traffic to commute through the main

bazaar. "Heavy-loaded trucks, buses and other vehicles pass through the bazaar all day and night, causing severe traffic congestion, even ambulances while carrying serious patients get stuck in traffic. If the government constructs another road outside the bazaar, it will significantly minimise traffic rush through the bazaar."

Amir Khan of Battagram union council noted that there was no space for pedestrians to walk along the roadside. "Traders have also occupied the front spaces of their shops, displaying their items and contributing to the traffic jam. The government needs to take action against encroachers and clear the road for smooth traffic. Otherwise, this is not a permanent solution, and the government must construct a bypass."

Resident Javed Iqbal Khan said roads were a sign of a country's development and discipline. "The chaotic traffic situation portrays a bad image of Pakistan in front of foreigners, who use the main Karakoram Highway to travel to Gilgit, Skardu and other areas. Many times, the severe traffic congestion disappoints tourists and makes their journey unpleasant. The government should construct a bypass to facilitate tourists and commuters."

KMU institute to 'reform' public health programme

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Medical University (KMU) Institute of Public Health and Social Sciences (IPH&SS) has announced comprehensive reforms to the structure of its Master of Public Health (MPH) programme.

This decision, finalised after extensive consultations involving faculty members, postgraduate students and university leadership, is meant to offer flexibility and convenience to students, said a press release issued here on Saturday.

The new modular format will now include options for morning, evening and online classes, aligning with international educational standards including those in the UK. This development positions KMU as a leading institution in public health education in Pakistan.

The decision was made in a pivotal meeting chaired by KMU Vice-Chancellor Prof Ziaul Haq with participation from Dr Khalid Rehman, Prof Zahir Huma, Dr Shabana Rasool, Dr Maria Inayat Khattak, Dr Shamsa Farid

and other faculty members and students.

The new MPH programme structure, featuring morning, evening and online class options will provide greater accessibility and flexibility, particularly for working professionals and students from diverse backgrounds.

The modular format follows global academic standards, emphasising a balanced approach between theoretical knowledge and practical application through comprehensive and dynamic educational sessions. This design will cater to students' evolving needs while enhancing their ability to balance academic, professional and personal responsibilities.

Praising the initiative, Prof Ziaul Haq stated that the introduction of modular contact sessions and flexible learning options was a key step towards aligning with international standards, offering students enhanced convenience and a better learning experience.

The reformed MPH programme will be implemented from the next academic session, reflecting KMU's commitment to innovative education and its resolve to uphold excellence in public health education in Pakistan.

FIRST BARS!



First death anniversary of Shahla Ali Khan

who left us on January 12, 2024. Her last journey was to America where she was laid to rest on February 10, 2024, at Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis, MN, under an old tree

Khalid, Fareeh, Nadia, Naveed

distribution ceremony at Jamia Darul Salam in Quah on Saturday.

Mr Haq said that Pakistanis gained freedom from what he said the East India Company but "incompetent" rulers made them 'slaves' of IMF and World Bank.

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- 7s. Robotics in Urology, Cardiothoracic, Gynecology and General Surgery
- 7s. Robotic Transplantation
- 7s. Data Science and AI
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GOVERNMENT OF GILGIT-BALTISTAN

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR

WATER MANAGEMENT & IRRIGATION DISTRICT HUNZA

No.DOWM-HN-ADP-Accts-2(I)2024 Dated: 10th January, 2025

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR WATER MANAGEMENT AND IRRIGATION DISTRICT HUNZA invites sealed tenders on single-stage two envelopes (sate) procedure (comprising a single package containing two separate envelopes marked as technical & financial proposal) for the following work from the eligible firm / contractors licensed by Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in the appropriate category / code mentioned below, valid up to 30th June 2025.

S. #	Name of Work	Required Category & Code	TB Cost (Millions)	3% EMoney	Cost of Bidding Document	Closing Date & Time
1	Rehabilitation of Irrigation Channel Fojok from Sakarotub from Brumun Alit Hunza	C-4 or above CE-04(V)	21.23/-	637,032/-	10000/-	29th January 2025 at 2:00 PM

Note: Tender shall be opened after 30 minutes of closing time.

2. The interested prospective eligible bidders can obtain a complete set of Bidding documents from the office of the Deputy Director Water Management & Irrigation District Hunza, Near the Bank of Punjab Alibad Hunza on submission of a written application and production of the following original documents personally duly deposited the cost of bidding documents as mentioned above against each work, immediately after the advertisement published in the newspapers & PPRA Website:

- PEC valid registration 2025 and Code.
- Renewal Fee CFY 2024-25.
- CNIC of the prospective bidder.
- Bid security in the shape of CDR from the scheduled bank of Pakistan.
- No sick scheme and no litigation certificates.

3. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security as indicated above against work, and in case of rates quoted below 10% of estimated cost, shall be required to provide along with the bid an additional performance guarantee of 50% of the differential amount (between estimated cost & bid cost) in the shape of CDR from any schedule Bank clearly mentioning the name of the firm in favour of Deputy Director Water Management & Irrigation District Hunza. The sealed bids must be delivered on the due date & time as mentioned above, which will be opened on the same day in the office of Deputy Director Water Management & Irrigation District Hunza, Near the Bank of Punjab Alibad Hunza in the presence of bidders who choose to attend at the same address. No NIT will be issued on the date of bid opening.

OTHER TERMS & CONDITIONS

- All bid securities / CDRs will be retained till acceptance of tender / bid and will be refunded after acceptance of tenders / bids.
- The information provided by the bidders if found ambiguous will be verified and in case of a fake one, the tender of the firm will be cancelled and take immediate / appropriate penal action as per Rules / Laws.
- Late receipt of bids from the SCHEDULED TIME will not be accepted / entertained.
- GB WMAID authorities reserve the right to reject any or all the bids or proposals at any time prior to acceptance of a bid or proposal under GB PPRA Rules.
- Overwriting on bidding documents is not allowed and in case of any overwriting / omission is found the bid shall be rejected.
- Conditional Tender will not be Accepted / Entertained.
- In case of any public / local holiday or surprise engagement of the undersigned, the same will be opened on the next working day.

(Engr. Sher Jahan)
Director
Water Management and Irrigation
Gilgit-Baltistan.
Ph: # 0581 1920604-05



THE GOLDEN
VOICE OF FILMS

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SUNDAY JANUARY 12, 2025

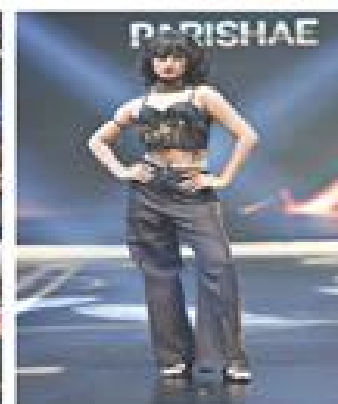
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STYLE

What ails local fashion? Why have innovative ideas been replaced by a glut of celebrities on catwalks, indistinguishable bridal bling and television-friendly visual entertainment? And is there any hope?

THE DEATH OF PAK FASHION?

By Maliha Rehman



“Have you shot any fashion campaigns lately?” I asked a photographer recently, well-known for his magical way with lighting and composition, hoping that he would open up his cellphone and show me some of his most recent, best work.

He nodded grudgingly. “Some, but mostly corporate work. Have you seen fashion these days?”

He shrugged. I shrugged. Tragic. Heartbreaking. Distressing. These are adjectives in the lexicon that I have been using with increasing frequency as I write about Pakistani fashion. I do not do so with relish.

And it makes one wonder: if I, as a journalist, who has dedicated years of her life to critiquing Pakistani fashion and has cheered for it as it reached new heights, can feel so demoralised by its current state, how must the veteran designers feel when they see what the industry has become now?

How must the pioneers, who once laid the foundation blocks of the fashion industry, creating councils, curating collections,

What can be done, then? Will Pakistani fashion, the way it was, simply die away, replaced by a generic fast-fashion beast? Will creative couture go extinct with bling-infested, similar-looking bridals taking over? Will fashion weeks, the way they were, the way they should be, never return?

guiding younger designers and setting fashion weeks in motion, feel? Not too great, for sure. Pakistani fashion, once a glittering unicorn, splashing its wings and aiming for the sky, has of late been flailing, drowning in a sea of mediocrity. Fashion weeks have bitten the dust and creative design is rare. The makers once famed for their inventive, artisanal designs have either stepped away from the spotlight, opting to quietly cater to their niche clientele, or have jumped on to the commercial bandwagons, turning their heads towards affordable but not too memorable fast fashion, profitable bridals and the lucrative domain of unstitched lawn.

The sparks of originality that once created a frenzy on the catwalk and landed in sales from avid aficionados, are rare. They have been replaced by unabashed celebri-

fication, where profits get generated when a popular ‘it’ celebrity is seen wearing clothes by a design house. Even when the clothes are downright ugly.

And when a fashion show does take place, the clothes are dismal. Even the brands once known for their stand-out shows, seem to shrug their shoulders distractedly and roll out a generic mish-mash on to the ramp. And all you can say is that, at least, in these dark times, there is a catwalk. At least someone is making an effort. At least one deep-pocketed sponsor has heeded its attention away from celebrities and invested instead in a fashion show. At least one designer has decided to create a collection for the catwalk, even if it’s a mundane one. At least the clothes aren’t ghastly, even though

they are uninspiring and forgettable.

At least — because beggars can’t be choosers.

It wasn’t always like this.

In pre-Covid-19 times, there would be multiple fashion shows throughout the year and two fashion councils — one based in Karachi and the other in Lahore — would plan out regular fashion weeks, featuring the work of established labels as well as promising new names.

Great prestige would be attached to being singled out as one of the best at the event and amplifying this would be the Lux Style Awards (LSA) — the country’s longest standing awards ceremony dedicated to fashion — where outstanding work through the year would be acknowledged.

The present-day LSAs, in sharp contrast,

only give a fleeting nod to accomplishments in fashion, with the aid of a handful of categories. Similarly, sponsors — once eager to be associated with the exclusive world of fashion — now prefer the razzle-dazzle of celebrity. The coronavirus pandemic, in its wake, managed to wipe out the vivacity and excitement which was one tribute to Pakistani fashion.

What can be done, then? Will Pakistani fashion, the way it was, simply die away, replaced by a generic fast-fashion beast? Will creative couture go extinct with bling-infested, similar-looking bridals taking over? Will fashion weeks, the way they were, the way they should be, never return?

It all depends on the fashion industry itself. Sure, sponsors may have become waylaid by celebrities but have fashion’s so-called torchbearers also lost interest?

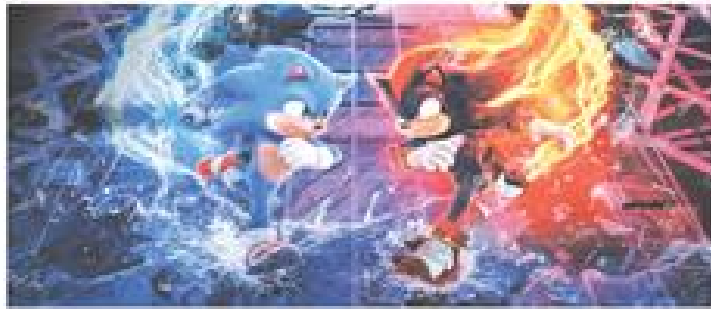
A NEED FOR CURATION

For instance, Hum Network’s Bridal Couture Week (BCW) took place in December last year, standing out as the only platform consciently investing time, effort

DEATH OF FASHION?, PAGE 3

ICON

CINEMASCOPE



HEDGEHOG HIJINKS

Sonic the Hedgehog 3 is a fun adventure that one enjoys despite the predictability of the premise

By Mohammad Kamran Jawaid

Even at the regular length of an hour and 40 minutes, *Sonic the Hedgehog 3* is fast, which would be the point of making a film based on an iconic character whose primary trait is that he runs lightning-fast.

The blue-furred hedgehog (voiced by Ben Schwartz, whom people from the '90s remember as videogame company Sega's mascot, has friends: a two-tailed fox, Miles "Tails" Prower (Colleen O'Quinn), and an echidna with big massive hands called Knuckles (Idris Elba). One is a genius inventor-robot support, the other is simple and likes to smash things, for comedic relief of course.

All three are fast and, as sequels go, Knuckles was the huckle who turned good in the last part. And as trends and clichés continue, part three introduces another powerhouse villain, Shadow (Keanu Reeves) who, any viewer would know, will develop a conscience by the big climax.

By the way, the climax really is big, given that this is primarily a kiddie movie, though one that also banks on nostalgia for the adults to drive its business (the film had been beating *Madison* at the US box-office for two weeks solid).

The story returns to Sonic and company's happy family, Tom and Maddie Wachowski (James Marsden, Tika Sumpter) — a local sheriff of a small town named Green Hills (Sonic fans will catch that reference) and his veterinarian wife — when disaster strikes. The special military unit GUN

(Guardian Unit of Nations, silly name, really) reaches out to Sonic and his friends to contain Shadow who trashed Tokyo Square. Shadow had been kept in suspended animation since 1974, and is now out for revenge.

The revenge angle hardly holds up its credibility, especially when the film enters its climax, which — did I mention? — is quite big.

The characters are a hoec, and it feels like Jim Carrey is enjoying playing Sonic's regular villain, Dr. Ivo Robotnik, and his very similar-looking evil-genius grandfather, Professor Gerald Robotnik. The latter is helping Shadow with his ultimate revenge and the grandson agrees to team-up with Sonic to foil his apparent doppelgänger.

The characters are well laid out — that is, as much as they can be, given the plot-versus-character development constraints of routine big-budget filmmaking. The voice-work is fine — with exception to the near-lifeless, un-luxury voice work of Keanu Reeves, though I think that was a deliberate call. And the film, overall, really is a fun adventure that one may enjoy, despite the predictability of the premise.

Director Jeff Fowler (a VFX-company maven-turned-director with the *Sonic* films), and his writers Pat Casey, Josh Miller and John Whittington, should put their backs for a good show. Now, on to the next instalment in 2027.

Released by Paramount Pictures, in association with HMC (for Pathways), Sonic the Hedgehog 3 is rated PG and has nothing apart from a few on-screen deaths that may not sit well with kids or adults.



WIDE ANGLE

You'd never know it wasn't Peter Sallis in *Vengeance Most Fowl* thanks to Ben Whitehead's expert vocal mimicry in the new Wallace and Gromit film

WALLACE AND WHITEHEAD

By Jenny Chantelle Tullett

The release of a new Wallace and Gromit film has always been much anticipated in our house, and last year was no different.

Like many others, we struggled under the blankets after a full Christmas day (in every sense), ready for the release of *Vengeance Most Fowl* (2024). Four years in the making, it was produced by Aardman Animations and the BBC, in association with Netflix, and was Wallace and Gromit's sixth film, and second feature-length film after *The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* (2005).

We were halfway through this claymation, stop-motion spectacle before I remembered that Wallace's voice was not being played by actor Peter Sallis, who sadly died in 2017, but instead had been seamlessly voiced by someone else.

A quick Google search later, to see if an AI voice had been used in the production (as is a developing trend), I was delighted to find that British actor, Ben Whitehead, had voiced the part.

Eager to know more about how he prepared, I discovered that, as a fan of the first film, *A Grand Day Out* (1999), he grew up doing voices, accents and impressions as a boy. In 2003, a friend at Aardman hired him as a voice actor for *Woe-Rabbit*. By 2005, he was Sallis' understudy and, by 2009, he was Wallace's voice full-time, owing to Sallis' failing health.

Vocal mimicry, the art of imitating sounds or behaviour of another person, animal or thing, is sometimes referred to as the acting or voice-acting world as impersonation, imitation, impression or voice cloning, but with no formal training (his training consisted of *The London Underground*), what could other actors learn from Whitehead's craft?

In short, time and space to listen to and play with



Vengeance Most Fowl (BBC/Aardman Animations/Richard Davies/Stuart Collis)

voice. Whitehead admits that he had spent years at Aardman developing his character voices. He also had plenty of space and time to listen to and play with imitating these sounds for fun since he was 14.

But how do you follow an act like Sallis and honour a timeless character in your own way? How do you do it, as Whitehead explained to *Radio Times*, so you're not "too jarring" and that "people don't hear a completely different voice"?

In *Digital Spy*, Whitehead revealed the word that helps him get into the character of Wallace: "cheese". He listened to previous films to see what had gone before, including the iconic human sounds

of Wallace, such as the "tuumm" and the distinctive "hee hee" laugh.

With the help of vocal coach Andrea Hazel Lewis, they looked further into Peter Sallis' sound and played with the tongue protruding a little in his voicing, as this is what Wallace's character does. In the end, Whitehead recorded 22.5 hours of takes for Wallace's dialogue for *Vengeance*.

This film was a lovely reminder of the vocal craft that I teach, focusing on playing with voice and creating space and time to step outside our vocal comfort zones to discover something new. I was reminded of the usefulness of vocal mimicry as a tool in voice

THE GRAPEVINE

By PYT

PEARLS OF WISDOM



Neelam Munshi has a wise head on those shoulders. Check out his recent statement about looking good. "Beauty and grace come with age. People get very worried about things like fine lines appearing on their faces, but there is an inner confidence that comes with not wanting to get any work done... People look even more beautiful and natural when they look different from each other. The more work people get done on their faces, the more similar they look to everyone else." We agree, Neelam M. You don't look similar to anyone. Oh, and congratulations on your unique sagittae!

MUSIC FOR ALL



Well done Araf Aslam! In case you're wondering why we're praising the singer, here's why: he has come out with an initiative called *Borderless World*, an international platform for emerging talent in music. The vocalist says it's a place where musicians, artists and poets will be able to showcase their creativity without any constraints. It's where "dreams transcend borders." Wow! That sounds so cool, so inclusive and so transcendental. Good luck, Araf A!

BRAIN DRAIN

What does filmmaker Anurag Kashyap have against Hindi cinema? He has once again given an interview criticising Bollywood for many reasons. Doing so, he praised South Indian movies and claimed that Bollywood lacks the brains to make films such as the *Pachupatti* franchise. Seriously? Wait. Having recently seen Anurag K's 2023 neo-noir film *Kennedy*, some might say he is, in fact, right.



DONE AND DUSTED



It's officially official! Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie are now divorced in every sense of the word. Let's explain. In 2016, Angelina J. filed for divorce, citing irreconcilable differences (no one splits over reconcilable differences, duh) and, after a great deal of hot and cold episodes in court, including Angelina J. accusing Brad P. of child abuse — of which he's cleared — on December 31, the divorce settlement was finalised. It took eight long years for that to happen. The former couple and their children must have heaved a sigh of relief. Is this the end of the story for the media, though? We're not sure...



► STYLE

What fashion enthusiasts can learn from older, dapper gentlemen

FIFTY SHADES OF MENSWEAR

By Ania Sadkowska & Katherine Townsend

We first met Martyn in 2013, when he was 54 and working as a professor at a UK university. He cut a sharp figure in a black two-piece suit, a bright red shirt with cufflinks, a matching tie and a pocket square. We were meeting to talk about fashionable mature men's clothing habits. We spent nearly two hours looking at some of Martyn's most treasured fashion possessions and chatting about his interest in clothing and style. It's not very often in research that participants are so keen and engaged, and Martyn's passion for stylish clothing really shone through. This interest started early during his school years, when he used to unpick the seams of his school uniforms.

Martyn was one of five British men included in our research, all aged between 54 and 63 from the baby boomer generation (people born between 1946 and 1964). Our first study, conducted in 2013, consisted of interviews and inventories of their wardrobes.

One of the insights from this was that, through years of interest and engagement with fashion, these men had accumulated considerable knowledge and expertise in how to best dress their bodies — and amassed large archives of both functional and iconic items of clothing.

As a result, the way they bought and wore their clothes was rooted in practical need and emotional connection, rather than unthinking accumulation or impulsive purchasing. This is something other people, including younger generations, could be inspired by.

Now, almost a decade later, we've caught up with three of our interviewees again, conducting analyses and interpretations of their wardrobes as well as a series of interviews. While their clothing styles, and even some of the items, were pretty much the same as in 2013, the way they consume and engage with fashion has shifted.

These men now shop less, prioritising quality over quantity. Although their often-flamboyant appearance might suggest otherwise, this rationalised approach to purchasing is in step with fashion minimalism — the trend for slower and more considered clothing consumption, while rejecting the idea of clothes shopping as a leisure activity. As Ian, a retired 70-year-old businessman, reflected:

I think I probably have built up such a wardrobe of classic pieces that I really only need to buy some small additions now. Nothing major. If I do see some classic pieces that I love, I will still buy



Martyn in 2024 | Ania Sadkowska

For these three men, aged 65 to 74, their changing bodies are also important to how they now experience clothes — from minor aches and pains to health issues that affect their mobility. As a result, their clothes are required to fulfil different types of need — balancing comfort with style, avoiding items that could restrict movement or impede confidence.

them even now, but I have certainly slowed down with buying, and looking at the [men's fashion] magazines.

It's important to note we were talking to the men again at a time of major changes in their lives. Retirement had brought shifts in their lifestyle, such as more leisure time and new hobbies. This meant they were dressing for different contexts — no longer the office, but for a day at home or evening down the pub.

For these three men, aged 65 to 74, their changing bodies are also important to how they now experience clothes — from minor aches and pains to health issues that affect their mobility. As a result, their clothes are required to fulfil different types of need — balancing comfort with style, avoiding items that could restrict movement or impede confidence.

However, their commitment to expressing their identities through stylish clothing remains strong, lying in the face of commonly held assumptions that men stop caring about their appearance at a certain time in life.

Both our studies suggest the opposite. Indeed, when we spoke to Martyn again in 2024, his fashion sensibilities had only sharpened. He was the image of sartorial elegance, arriving for his interview in a checked suit accessorised with a trilby, tie pin and lapel clip, sleeve garters, a carved walking stick and handmade leather brogues. Martyn described his fashion choices as follows:

I've always got a smart shirt, reasonably smart trousers, proper shoes and, if it's to be cold, a waistcoat with a pocket watch. And that's me,

sliding on my own, cycling or just playing with the car.

Or take Kevin, a 74-year-old retired lecturer devoted to the most subculture's clothing aesthetics, including sporting main and tailored coats. His fashion archives consist of some incredible pieces that have been in his wardrobe for more than 20 years:

I used to wear [suits] all the time, irrespective of whether it was a formal occasion or work. That was my style for years and years — but less so now. My main social life revolves around my local pub, which is not a place really to get dressed up to go to — although I do, sometimes. I am fed up of wearing the same clothes.

Then he added, with a grin: "Once a mod, always a mod!"

Despite some major changes to their lifestyles, the three men have maintained their interest in clothing and its importance in expressing their unique identities — offering an interesting angle to the growing academic interest in men's and men's fashion.

Their slower and more considered consumption of fashion presents food for thought in relation to the role and value of clothes in all stages of life. ■

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DEATH OF FASHION?, FROM PAGE 1

and money into putting out a show dedicated to bridal-wear. As always, the show met mixed reviews. As always, a considerable fraction of the local fashion diaspora turned up its noses at BCW, raising disdainful eyebrows at the celebrities crowding its catwalk and the song and dance that is an inevitable part of the show.

Would they participate in BCW? Certainly not. Would they even sit in the front row to attend the fashion shows of labels they like? Probably not. They would rather opt out of the *Amasha*.

But set aside the snobbery and shift your focus away from the deluge of celebrities mauling and fawning down the runway and you spotted a few wedding-wear brands that actually had potential. Admittedly, some of the fashion was mediocre but, then, there were some fledgling designers who stood out with their beautiful, hand-embroidered bridals. With the right guidance, they could become fashion power-players in the future.

The guidance, unfortunately, isn't there. There was a time when veteran designers would edit out collections, guiding younger labels on what worked and what didn't work, putting in long hours in curating line-ups. Now, it seems that anything at all can be showcased on the runway. In fact, the critique against song, dance, theatrics and celebrities on the runway could easily be dismissed if the clothes being showcased on the runway stood out.

Where are these senior designers now, who would be so involved in uplifting fashion's next-gen?

Moreover, why can't the powers-that-be behind BCW — the Hum TV Network — go the extra mile by creating a committee of fashion veterans who could sift through collections, eliminating the noises and zoning in on the best?

One appreciates that the platform is consistent and is allowing new labels an opportunity to showcase their work but, now, with 22 editions under its belt, more needs to be done to usher in a bright future for local fashion.

The TV network admirably endeavours to highlight achievements in fashion with the yearly Hum Style Awards (HSAAs) — a platform that has, in a short span, managed to highlight and encourage some of the brightest young talents in the industry today. Why can't similar efforts be made to streamline the fashion framed on the BCW runway?

A CASE OF NEVER-ENDING BRIDALS

There also needs to be more to fashion than bridal bling. Bridal-wear may be extremely lucrative for designers but — except for the most inventive artists — its beauty lies primarily in a beautiful mix of colour and embroidery on luxe fabrics. Pret and luxury-wear, on the other hand, offers a wider playing field to designers, where they can experiment with silhouette, construction and technique and introduce new sartorial trends in the market.

And while it is certainly not as lucrative as an order placed for heavy-duty bridal-wear, there was a time when Pakistani designers looked beyond commerce and revelled in upping the ante with creative showcases dedicated entirely to pret.

Fashion councils would orchestrate one fashion week entirely to 'winter festive-wear', ie bridals, and another, to ready-to-wear. The short-lived but very innovative Showcase fashion show — another Hum TV Network project — had set new benchmarks by eschewing bridals altogether and strictly following the mandate of only allowing pret on its catwalk. Where is Showcase now? Why are no such efforts being made anymore?

It is ironic that, when Pakistani fashion was in its heyday, I would write impassioned critiques pinpointing a few young labels that had immense potential but no business sense whatsoever. The clothes they would show on the runway would mostly win rave reviews but would never reach retail racks, never generate business.

In complete contrast, fashion today is entirely commercial. Creative sparks are toned down so that clothes sell easily. Pastels and tone-on-tone embroideries are created and recreated unabashedly because, while they may not be trendsetting, they sell very well. Everything is viable but hardly any collection is catwalk-worthy. And if any investment is made at all in uplifting a collection, it is made into taking on-board an 'it' celebrity rather than making the effort to create bona fide original designs.

The rampant celebration could be bearable. So could the dancing on the catwalk. One would even nod grudgingly at the paid posts placed on Instagram, where designers unabashedly label their own collections as 'best', 'high-end' and, that most hackneyed of all adjectives, 'stunning'. If only the fashion would also fascinate, ■

THE TUBE

THE WEEK THAT WAS

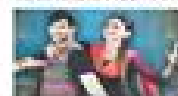
Chair | ART, Fri-Sat 8:00pm

With all the family secrets revealed, this story should be winding up but, as with any successful serial, the temptation to stretch it out for more episodes and ratings is just too great.

Director Yasir Nawaz has padded out the last few episodes with flashbacks and an empty revenge track from the now-jilted Shafiq (Yashmina Juss). While this trick may make money, it ruins any credibility the main lead Saad (Usman Kharr) had built up as a man worth fighting for. Ushna Shah shines in the last few episodes as a stronger, mature woman who is deciding her own fate, where she was less-than-believable in earlier episodes. Her character's father Usman (Babar Ali) finally understands he was tricked by his jealous sister Tehreem (Madhira Hisham) but fails to show any self-reflection and accountability for his own actions.

While an excellent Madhira as Tehreem may have been the match that lit the fire, the other characters needed some introspection about enabling her. Similarly, his nephew Saad has no deep scenes of growth or introspection, revealing a shallowness in the script that has been covered by Yasir Nawaz's sharp execution.

Darr Mann Neel-o-Neel | Hum TV, Sat 8:00pm



This serial touches on incredibly serious subjects, such as lynching, rape culture and corruption, yet manages to maintain a light mood without losing any impact or depth.

When Moon (Ammar Ali) finally gains the courage to report that he has been sexually assaulted to the police, they immediately use the information as an extortion tool. However, the rapist, local gangster-cum-politician Rao Qaiser (Saleem Mairaj) is an old hand at manipulation, and slips through the net of blackmail. The vengeful policeman then slips the information to his political rival Rao Kadaf (Sufi Hassan), who hires the rent-a-mob run by Kamal (Usman Zia). Kamal's obsession with Rabi (Seher Khan) illustrates the one-sidedness of honour culture, where only women carry this responsibility.

There is a mysterious track connecting Rabi's father to Kamal's (Shuja Asad) mother played by the excellent Samiya Mumtaz that will tie a lot of loose ends together. Excellent performances from the entire cast combined with an intelligent, purposeful script make this a must-watch every week.

Faraar | Green Entertainment, Sundays 8:00pm

An electric, fast-moving story with a strong star cast, filmed in a wide-open cinematic style, this is the kind of male-oriented show that should be a super-hit. After nine episodes, author Mustafa Afridi begins to consolidate the bafflingly disparate tracks of his protagonists into a story of corruption, politics and the sheer randomness of violence that haunts the headlines of the news cycles.

Hameez Ali Abbasi is brilliant as the unlikable hit man on the run. We should hate him but his matter-of-fact simplicity makes it impossible. Afridi gives us a fascinating array of characters, all beautifully played — from Haroon Shahid as the cynical "last friend" to the seriously earnest policeman Fasi (Ahmed Ali Akbar) — then sprinkles in the swaggering corrupt cops and criminals of a rather familiar gangster-style political party. If this were not enough, we are treated to some deliciously vicious Punjabi politicians who murder their brother-in-law to please their evil sister Shabira (Nadia Samir).

This action-packed thriller is a fantastic alternative to the usual romances and kitchen politics of TV dramas, and looks like an ideal Netflix-style binge-watch rather than a saga unfolding week to week.

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR (OR NOT)

Mann Marzi | Geo TV, Coming soon

Writer Rabia Razzaque has made her mark with *Qura-U-Jann*, but her latest offering for Geo TV is a more commercial project. Fuzma Effendi, Haroon Shahid and Humayun Aslam star in a story modelled around the popular "materialistic girl" trope that warns against ambition and middle class overreach — *Sadaf Haider*



THIS WEEK ON SPOTIFY

TOP 10 PAKISTANI SONGS		
S.#	SONG	STREAMS
1	Departure Lane Talha Anjum, Umair	489,091
2	Jhol Maanu, Annural Khalid	480,085
3	Maand Bayaan, Hasan Raheem, Rovallo	301,779
4	Heartbreak Kid Talha Anjum, Umair	242,645
5	Obvious (feat. Hasan Raheem) Umair, Hasan Raheem	186,768
6	Regrets Jevin Gill, Umair, Talha Anjum	167,767
7	Wishes Hasan Raheem, Umair, Talwinder	166,518
8	Tu Hai Kahan Aur	141,357
9	BTDT (Been There Done That) Bilal Saeed, Talha Anjum	137,741
10	Chal Diye Tum Kahan Aur	135,499

► SPOTLIGHT

ICON

Ghulam Abbas, whose musical career spans more than 50 years, was one of Pakistan's most prolific playback singers for almost a decade, recording the highest number of film songs for a wide array of actors, such as Nadeem, Shahid, Muhammad Ali, Rehman, Waheed Murad, Faisal Rehman and Shaan. His musical legacy endures but there is much more to him...

THE GOLDEN VOICE OF FILMS

Muhammad Suhayb

A telecom company's memorable 2003 TVC *'Khul Ke Boley Pakistan'*, featuring Momtaz Rana and Iqbal Ali, and the classic song *'Aisi woh dushmani'* from the film *De Seethi* (1975) may seem worlds apart, but there's an intriguing connection between the two.

While these two works span different eras, one featuring the lead pair from what was once East Pakistan and the other starring the daughter of famous film and TV actor Iqbal Ali and the son of a cricketer Shahid Rana, the common thread is the legendary voice of Ghulam Abbas.

Ghulam Abbas, renowned for his extensive contributions to music in Pakistan, lost his voice to both the TVC and the film song, starring then superstars Rehman and Shahman.

Abbas' career, which began in the late '60s, spans over 50 years, making him a living legend. Despite the generation gap between his early recordings and his later successes, Abbas is an inspiration to those who want to adopt music as a career.

Born in the early '30s in Haqq, Ghulam Abbas was interested in the performing arts from an early age. First, he moved to Multan and later to Lahore with his family. In Lahore, he found himself surrounded by intellectuals who shaped his outlook on music and life.

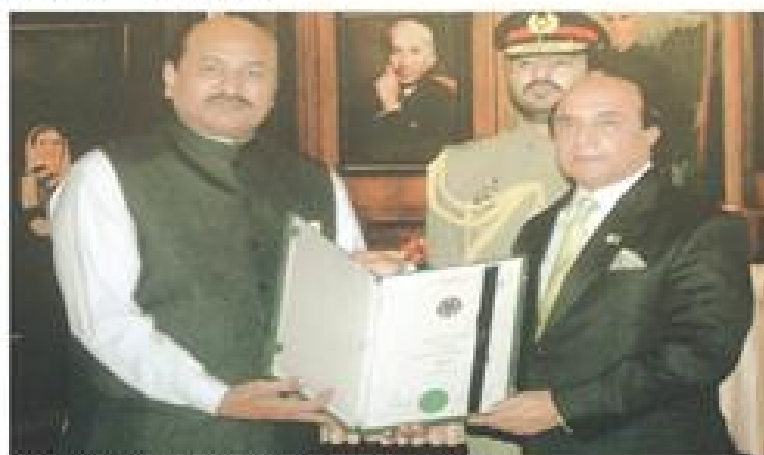
"I lost my father when I was barely five, but the place where I lived was close to poet Nisar Kazmi's house, who became a fatherly figure in my life," he recalls to *Dawn* from Lahore. "I had the honour of watching intellectuals such as Habib Jalib, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Qasim Shifai, Munir Niazi, Jodi Malhotra and Saghar Siddiqi very closely, which affected me during my growing years."

"My journey in music started in 1968 in Lahore, when I was the All Pakistan Student Competition. I soon got employed at Radio Pakistan, where Bushra Anvari and I used to sing in a kids' programme regularly."

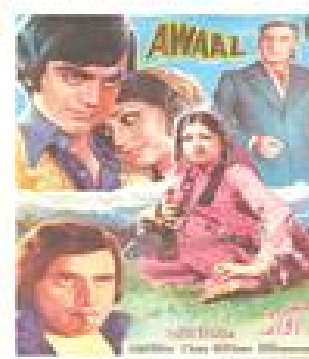
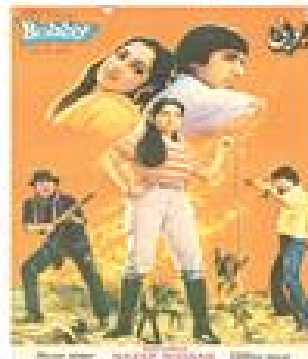
An interesting bit of serendipity led him to Mehdi Hassan, the ghazal maestro. A song by Ghulam Abbas was being aired from Radio Pakistan, Lahore, which grabbed the attention of Mehdi Hassan,



Ghulam Abbas on PTV



Receiving the Pride of Performance award in 2020



who immediately reached the radio station. "Khan sahib asked me at the gate about the singer who sang the song. When I told him it was me, he refused to believe it. He decided to take me under his wing but, due to his busy schedule, he couldn't give me proper time."

"Instead, I became the student of Ustad Iqbal Khan, who was the paternal uncle of Mehdi Hassan as well as his teacher. It wasn't until the late '80s that I truly became Mehdi Hassan's chagird (student)," Ghulam Abbas remembers, as if it were just yesterday.

After facing initial rejection in his pursuit of becoming a playback

singer, Ghulam Abbas took a different route and began assisting the legendary music composer Nisar Bazmi. During this period, he worked behind the scenes on super-hit films such as *Anjuman* (1970), *Naag Muni* (1972) and *Mohabbat* (1972), and helped release some popular songs with the most iconic voices in the industry, including Mehdi Hassan, Ahmed Rushdi, Runa Laila and Madam Noor Jehan.

Abbas' big break came after *Mohabbat*, when Nisar Bazmi decided to feature his vocals for a song that resembled the Mehdi Hassan classic *'Rangila hi sahi'*. The song, "Woh ne koi jayee

swaga", had similar emotional depth and melodic quality, leading some listeners to mistake Abbas' voice for that of Mehdi Hassan.

The song struck a chord with listeners, who were moved to tears by the powerful rendition. This marked a turning point in Ghulam Abbas' career, launching him into the spotlight as a playback singer.

Any one *Aurangzeb* (1976) had three songs from Ghulam Abbas, and each was on a different face — Muhammad Ali, Ghulam Mohsinuddin, and newcomer Talat Iqbal. He rendered the maximum number of songs for actors Nadeem and Shahid, while the songs on Waheed Murad, though few, were also praised: *'Koi ne koi to hoo'* (1976), *'Yeh hai ishq-e-akbar'* (1978) and *'Nisani mere pyar ki'* (1979), were considered among the best songs of the late chocolate hero Waheed Murad.

From 1976 to 1985, Ghulam Abbas remained one of Pakistan's most prolific playback singers, recording the highest number of film songs. He lent his voice to a wide array of actors, from the veterans of the industry, such as Waheed Murad, Rehman, Muhammad Ali and Nadeem, while also singing for actors born around the time he earned professional, such as Faisal Rehman, Shaan, Ayaz Nadeem, Saad and Momtaz Rana.

With Ahmed Rushdi's declining health and the ever-increasing overseas tours of Mehdi Hassan, Ghulam Abbas became the darling of film musicians. He sang all kinds of songs, from the fast *'Mujhe hai pyar'* (1979), 1979 to the melodramatic *'O bachpan'* (1980), (1980), he was equally at ease with both.

The pact with Mehdi Hassan from the film *Dehleez Ehsan* (1979), *'Jo duniya mein pyar hai uski raah mein'* (Muhammad Ali-Waheed Murad) became a road song and a favourite with all and sundry. The peppy *'Koiya de de de de de de de'* was very unlike him, yet the song had a touch of Ahmed Rushdi and a pinch of Mehdi Hassan in it.

His *'Zindagi to hai kya'* (1977) gave a new life to the actor's career while Ghulam Abbas became the go-to voice for TV artists in films, including the likes of Aftab Raza Mir, Usman Pervez, Ghulam Mohsinuddin, Javed Sheikh, Raza Kazmi, Wassan Abbas,

Ismail Shah and Ayaz Nadeem. He is also one of the few singers who provided vocals to macho men such as Badar Munir, Asif Khan and Sultan Rahi.

The maximum number of Ghulam Abbas' hits came from director/producer Pervez Malik, who used his voice for the best songs. *'Hum ne naseeb kahi'* (1977) with Muhammad Ali, *'Dekh de de de de'* (1978) with Raza Kazmi, *'Taj se pyar karoonga'* (1979) with Nadeem, *'Koi hai meri duniya'* (1980) with Nadeem and *'Mere nahi se nahi'* (1981) with Nadeem, were some of the standouts.

He was also a blessing for producer Shabbir Kauri and his sons, and gave hits such as *'Koiya de de de de de de de'* (1980) with Aftab Raza Mir, *'Mere pyar hai de de de de de de de'* (1981) with Javed Sheikh and *'Jo duniya mein pyar hai uski raah mein'* (1984) with Javed Sheikh.

Ghulam Abbas was also often the voice to go when needed for a patriotic song.

"I have sung the most number of *milli nahayen* (patriotic songs) on TV and radio. *'Pakistan to meri duniya'*, *'Watan to hum aise se aise'*, *'Jo Pakistan to meri duniya'* and *'Koi to hai de de de de de de de'* are just a few that come to my mind, but you can get the list from the internet," he says.

Ghulam Abbas was spot on as, according to Abbas Ahmed's book *Hum Toon Pakistan* (a book on Pakistan *milli nahayen*), he has the maximum number of such songs against his name.

As the number of male-oriented songs in film declined, Abbas shifted his focus back to radio and TV, also embarking on international concert tours.

"Every year or two, I used to go for a tour around the world, from the US, UK, France to the Middle East and many other places," says Abbas. "I started out in 1987 and continued till 2009. I never stopped singing for film and, whenever I was in town, I would record a song or two." Ghulam Abbas sang for film for nearly 30 years.

One of his memorable contributions in the 1990s was singing *'Jo hai de de de de de de de'* for composer Robin Ghosh in *Jo Duniya Mein Pyar Hai Uski Raah Mein* (1995). This song, where Nadeem lip-syncs for his on-screen daughter — a very young Ayesha Osho — remains etched in the memories of those

After facing initial rejection in his pursuit of becoming a playback singer, Ghulam Abbas took a different route and began assisting the legendary music composer Nisar Bazmi. During this period, he worked behind the scenes on super-hit films such as *Anjuman* (1970), *Naag Muni* (1972) and *Mohabbat* (1972), and helped rehearse some popular songs with the most iconic voices in the industry, including Mehdi Hassan, Ahmed Rushdi, Runa Laila and Madam Noor Jehan.

born in the 1980s.

'Mere nahi se nahi' is Ghulam Abbas' most popular non-film song. It was a Radio Pakistan production recorded in 1977 by producer Khalid Agha, and this particular ghazal won the award for maximum broadcasts on Radio Pakistan. With *humid, mist, ghazal, poet, with authority* and film songs to his credit, the tally of his songs has crossed over 10,000.

Ghulam Abbas' last hit song was recorded in 2004 for the film *Dehleez Ehsan*, where he sang alongside Shabnam Majeed. Interestingly, Majeed was also his partner in the famous telecom TV commercial, adding another layer of significance to their collaboration. The song with Reema and Shaan created a memorable visual and musical moment, leaving a lasting impression on audiences.

Though this marked the end of an era in his playback singing career, he voluntarily decided to give a chance to the new generation and was never shown the door, as happens in the case of many. He continued to sing for *milli nahayen* (patriotic gatherings), TV shows and other events until Covid-19, finally resuming in 2022.

There may have been a break in music but he never stopped in pursuing his other dreams, academics. Ghulam Abbas is one of the few from the music world who are highly academically qualified. A triple masters in philosophy, sociology and Urdu literature, he also has a doctorate degree in Music Philosophy from a university in Melbourne. He has even started teaching music and has also established an academy.

In addition to winning four Nigar Awards as a playback singer, Ghulam Abbas was also recognised for his exceptional contributions to music with several prestigious honours. He was awarded the Tamgha-i-Imtiaz (Medal of Excellence) in 2011 and later received the Pride of Performance Award in 2020, both conferred by the President of Pakistan. He was also given the Super Star Award from Radio Pakistan on its 74th Anniversary in 2022.

While these accolades reflect official recognition of his immense talent, dedication and lasting impact on the music industry in Pakistan, Ghulam Abbas' real legacy in the industry are his contributions to music, still resonating through the decades. ■



With mentor Mehdi Hassan



Ghulam Abbas with his awards



Ghulam Abbas (centre) with Farrukh Fatah Ali Khan (left) and Nusrat Fatah Ali Khan (right)

The recent strikes by Pakistan on Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan sanctuaries inside Afghanistan have inflamed Afghan rhetoric once again about sovereignty. However the basic issue that keeps coming up, as it has for the past 77 years, is the issue of the Pak-Afghan border and Afghan efforts to delegitimise it. **Ejaz Haider** examines the history of the contested 'Durand Line' and its implications for Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and Pakistan's security and foreign policy framework

THE DURAND LINE AND AFGHANISTAN



A Pakistani soldier in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stands next to a border fence along Afghanistan's Paktika province: like previous Afghan entities governing Kabul, the Tehreek-i-Taliban Afghanistan (TTA) refuses to accept the legitimacy of the border | AFP

THE PRESENT

Pakistan's targeted strikes on December 4, 2024 on the training camps of the self-styled Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in the Birmul area of eastern Paktika province of Afghanistan have brought Afghanistan's irredentist policy out in the open. The strikes came after a string of terrorist attacks by the TTP on Pakistan's security forces. The TTP, an internationally designated terrorist group, is headed by the self-declared Afghan Interim Government on Afghanistan's soil. The AIG — described herein as the Tehreek-i-Taliban Afghanistan (TTA) — has, despite multiple requests and démarches by Pakistan, refused to rein in the TTP.

Predictably, Afghanistan has protested the strikes and issued a *démarche*. But two other developments are more important than these *pro forma* moves. Mullah Khairullah Khairkhwa, TTA's Minister of Information and Culture, called the TTP "guests" and stated that the TTA would not stop helping the group. The TTA Ministry of Defence put out a statement on the social media site X, calling the Pakistan-Afghanistan border a "hypothetical line." Earlier in January 2024, TTA Minister for Borders and Tribal Affairs, Mullah Noorullah Noori, had called the recognised international border an "imaginary line."

Like previous Afghan entities governing Kabul, the TTA refuses to accept the legitimacy of the border. In the case of the TTA, however, the Pakistan nationalism is also coloured by sectarian religiosity. This is facilitated by the near-free movement across the border of tribesmen and groups since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

TTP is TTA's leverage against Pakistan. While the TTA leadership acted as a facilitator for the talks, it (TTA) continued to set the conditions through the TTP to pressure Pakistan. The talks were also meant to provide legitimacy to the TTP as a party vis-à-vis the Government of Pakistan. One central example should suffice: the TTP's demand to reverse the merger of erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) with Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, the return of TTP cadres to those territories and for Pakistan to have little-to-no administrative-legal control in those territories. In simple terms, the TTA, through the TTP, wanted to capture those territories — the first part of its *calam-ol-ing* tactic. Why?

This is where one has to go into history because as Jocasta, the mother

and wife of Oedipus, says in Sophocles' play *Oedipus Rex*, a man of sense must use his past experience to judge the present.

THE PAST

Since the formation of Pakistan as a successor state to the Government of India, Afghanistan has wanted to "reclaim" Pakistani territory up to the east of Indus River, what's described in geographical terms as *cis-Indus*. To be sure, Afghanistan's state practice has been anorexic with Kabul

If pre-nation state histories were to determine present-day realities, there would be no Afghanistan pre-Ahmad Shah Abdali (Durrani) because this was an area contested among whoever ruled India, Central Asia and Iran. History did not begin in 1747. But even if we were to consider for the sake of our present argument that it did, the Durrani dynasty was gone in what 19th century lawyer and historian William Fraser-Tytler called "five and forty years."

accepting the border at crucial points in Pakistan-Afghanistan history. But the irredentism continues to lurk, reminding one of T.S. Eliot's lines from *Waste Land*: "What might have been is an abstraction/Remaining a perpetual possibility/Only in a world of speculation."

The Afghan idea of a border stretching to the western banks of the Indus River (and even parts of Baluchistan) is an unfortunate abstraction that

has done much harm not only to Afghanistan itself but also Pakistan-Afghanistan relations.

History and myth can wreak much havoc on the peoples. The settler-colonialism of Zionists is an ongoing tragedy with its roots in a mythological past inflaming the present and singing constructive future possibilities.

If pre-nation state histories were to determine present-day realities, there would be no Afghanistan pre-Ahmad Shah Abdali (Durrani) because this was an area contested among whoever ruled India, Central Asia and Iran. History did not begin in 1747. But even if we were to consider for the sake of our present argument that it did, the Durrani dynasty was gone in what 19th century lawyer and historian William Fraser-Tytler called "five and forty years."

"[T]he Afghan people as a whole (had not) acquired that stability of purpose which would have enabled them to consolidate control of the vast dominions acquired by Ahmad Shah, or to found an enduring dynasty to replace the dying empire of the Moghals. Such a task was too great for a people who were still largely tribal, resembling in their composition rather the clans of the highlands of Scotland in ancient days..."

Fraser-Tytler should have known. He was Scottish! But let's get to an overview of the situation in the run-up to the Indian Subcontinent's Partition.

With the Durrani dynasty losing out to the Barakzais (Muhammads) and its territorial reach reduced, there was much strife. Nor did the fall of the Durrani dynasty in 1841 bring about calm. It was not until 1876 that Dost Muhammad, the youngest of Faizullah Khan's sons, finally prevailed over his brothers and lay claim to what remained of the Durrani empire. There was little left.

Writes Fraser-Tytler: "During the years of anarchy and of intestine strife, which had continued for upwards of a quarter of a century, one province after another had broken away from the central authority." Sindh, Baluchistan, the entire southern country from the Persian border to Ghazni and Balkh in the north had seceded.

Into this mix came a bigger problem: the Sikhs. In the later years of his rule, Ahmad Shah Durrani had resigned control of central Punjab to the

THE DURAND LINE AND AFGHANISTAN, PAGE 2

BORDERS OF STRIFE

THE DURAND LINE AND AFGHANISTAN, PAGE 1

Sikh Federation. During his grandson Zaman Shah's reign the Sikhs killed the Afghan representative. The incident forced Zaman Shah to personally return to Punjab to re-establish his authority. He is also said to have tinkered with the idea of moving his seat of power from Kabul to Lahore. That didn't happen because his tribal chieftains didn't want to leave Kabul. He then chose to have a Sikh governor in Lahore rather than an Afghan plenipotentiary. Eassey Ranjit Singh.

The viceroy Singh entrenched himself and began to take advantage of the growing weakness of the Durrani dynasty. By 1818, "he held all the northern Punjab between the Indus and the Sutlej." Between 1820 and 1823 he slipped away at the Afghan possession west of Attock in the battles of Attock and Nowshera. The Nowshera battle brought all of Peshawar valley under the Sikh rule. "While retaining his rights as suzerain of the country to the east of the Khyber Pass, [Ranjit Singh] entrusted the governorship of Peshawar to Sultan Muhammad Khan on the payment of a small tribute."

By the time of the Battle of Jamrud between the forces of Ranjit Singh and Dost Mohammad in 1837, Dost, facing internal strife in his territories within Afghanistan, wanted British mediation between Afghanistan and the Sikh kingdom. This is why, despite having defeated the Sikh force, including killing Hari Singh Nalwa, the famous Sikh general, he did not venture towards Peshawar. The letter to Lord Auckland, who had recently arrived in India, "opened the door to British intervention in Central Asia."

Dost Mohammad corresponded frequently with the British. The Library of Congress has multiple volumes on Dost Mohammad Khan's life and sought their intervention. He also signed two agreements with the British in March 1835 and January 1837, respectively. The texts of these agreements clearly indicate and confirm his acceptance of the existing frontiers between Afghanistan and British India. By then the Afghan frontier's eastern outreach was Ali Masjid Fort at the entrance to Khyber Pass. The Frontier Corps now maintains a company-strength in the fort.

It is important to mention these agreements because they preceded the Durand Treaty of 1893 and clearly show that Afghan rule did not extend to the Indus River much before the 1893 Treaty was signed. If anything, there's no indication after 1849 of an Afghan army setting foot anywhere near Peshawar. The 1857 agreement also stipulated 4,000 muskets and a monthly subsidy of 100,000 Indian rupees for Dost Mohammad Khan.

Another treaty which precedes the much-touted and misquoted 1893 Treaty was the 1879 Treaty of Gandamak, following the first campaign of the second Anglo-Afghan War. Dost Mohammad's son, Sher Ali Khan, fled after the British invaded Afghanistan and his son, Yaqub Khan, sued for peace. According to Article 9 of the Treaty, Yaqub relinquished Afghan sovereignty over Sibi, Karam and Poonia as assigned districts and also accepted British sovereignty over the "Khyber and Michni Passes, which lie between the Peshawar and Jellalabad Districts, and of all relations with the independent tribes of the territory directly connected with these Passes." (Quote from the Treaty)

The peace treaty did not last long. The British mission led by Louis Cavagnari was massacred by some Afghan soldiers and the treaty got buried with their bodies. There are other details until the ascension to the Kabul throne of Abdul Rahman but those are not relevant to our purpose, except that Rahman was told that Kandahar would not be part of his dominion.

The British position in Kandahar became untenable after a British army was defeated in the Battle of Maiwand by Yaqub's younger brother, Ayub Khan, who was the governor of Herat. Incidentally, Ayub Khan is considered a national hero in Afghanistan. He died in Lahore in 1914 and is buried in Peshawar. Another interesting bit is about how the Taliban used the reference to the Battle of Maiwand in their *rawazi* (songs). (See, "The Battle of Maiwand and the Taliban's Tazari" by Roshan Noorani.)

DURAND TREATY 1893

It's time to get to 1893. Rahman entered into a treaty with the British, delimiting the Indo-Afghan frontier, and their respective "spheres of influence." Maps were attached to the treaty and Amir Abdur Rahman relinquished Afghanistan's sovereignty over the frontier districts of Bajaur, Swat, Chitral and Chagay. In the bargain, he got Ambar, Kalistan and the Buzard tract, areas over which Afghanistan had exercised almost no control previously. Further, the Government of India undertook to "increase by the sum of six lakhs of rupees a year the subsidy of twelve lakhs now granted to His Highness."

Many Afghan writers and politicians make false claims that Afghanistan lost most of the territory between the Indus River and the Durand Line because of the Durand Treaty. That territory, as our historical overview shows, was lost three decades before the treaty, between the 1850s and 1870s. As Afghan academic Arwin Rafi argues, "In fact, through the Durand Treaty, Afghans would cede some territory to the British for the last time, not for the first time."

The second false claim made by Afghans and many Indians is about a 100-year time-limit on the Durand Treaty. There is nothing in the text of the Treaty — available to anyone interested — which gives even a hint of a 100-year time-limit.

Yet another claim made by the Afghans is that Rahman signed the treaty under duress. As British historian and barrister Bijan Omarani writes, "The negotiations lasted a month, and a stream of correspondence between Sir Mortimer Durand and the Government of India shows that there was a genuine process of negotiation over this period: the British conceded to the Government of Afghanistan that a number of areas should fall on the Afghan side of the Durand Line which they had originally wished to fall on the Indian side." Contemporary accounts suggest that even if Abdur Rahman had raised feelings about the agreement, his assent was not brought about by duress.

The 1893 frontiers under the treaty were also reaffirmed by Rahman's son and successor Amir Habibullah in the 1905 Kabul Treaty, including accepting the Durand Line as the frontier with India. Interestingly or perhaps for our present purpose, ironically, it was a victory for Habibullah since the



Mohammad Yaqub Khan of Afghanistan (middle) with Sir Louis Cavagnari (second from the left), military administrator of the British Government of India, at the signing of the Treaty of Gandamak on May 26, 1879: it is important to mention these agreements preceded the Durand Treaty of 1893 and clearly show that Afghan rule did not extend to the Indus River much before the 1893 Treaty was signed | British Library

Government of India had sought more concessions from Habibullah after Rahman's death and even stopped the subsidies to Kabul. After three months of negotiations with Louis Dune, Habibullah got his way with the arrangements under the 1893 Treaty. The Kabul Treaty was to be repudiated by Amanullah Khan in 1919, resulting in the third Anglo-Afghan War.

Resultantly, the treaty, signed in Rawalpindi, is short and curt. It not only got Amanullah to accept the border but under Article 5 stipulated "early demarcation by a British Commission of the un-demarcated portion of the line west of the Khyber, where the recent Afghan aggression took place, and to accept such boundary as the British Commission may lay down." Articles 2 and 3 of the treaty also withdrew certain privileges to Afghanistan and the subsidy to the Amir.

The 1919 Treaty was followed by the 1921 Treaty in Kabul which also reaffirmed the previous arrangements regarding the border in addition to other matters related to trade and setting up of diplomatic missions etc. This treaty, however, has a withdrawal clause in Article XIV. It was nonetheless reaffirmed in 1930 by Mohammad Nadir, then monarch of Afghanistan. The situation stood as it were until 1949 when Kabul claimed that it had withdrawn from the 1921 Treaty, a step very different from irredentist claim made under the Durand Treaty.

POST-INDEPENDENCE PAST

And this brings us to 1947. Afghanistan cast a negative vote against Pakistan in September 1947, arguing that Pakistan's northwest frontier "should not be recognised as a part of Pakistan until the [Pakistanis] of that area had been given the opportunity to opt out for independence." However, it withdrew the negative vote in October 1947 and both sides exchanged ambassadors in February 1948.

Zahir Shah sent his uncle, Sardar Shah Wali Khan, as ambassador to Karachi. Wali spoke Urdu and is said to have stated at one point that while Afghanistan might have had a claim on Pakistan-majority areas of Pakistan, it would forgo such claims.

In reality, as American diplomat James Spain who had served in Pakistan noted, "Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have come to be centred on one issue." That issue was Afghanistan's demand for "Pashtunistan" and Kabul's repeated attempts to subvert the Pakistan (and later the Baluch) through covert and overt actions.

The "Pashtunistan" issue, conceived in the right of self-determination for the Pakistan, was actually irredentist. It was clear that if such an "independent" state were to actually come into being, it would not be able to survive and would be subsumed into Afghanistan, satisfying Kabul's idea of Greater Afghanistan.

In a 1963 article for *Asian Survey*, titled "The Pak-Afghan Dilemma", George Montague, who served as a visiting professor of American history at the University of Karachi, wrote that Afghan agents operated among Pakistan tribesmen for many years, distributing large amounts of money, ammunition and even transmitter radios in an effort to sway loyalties from Pakistan

to Afghanistan, and to develop sentiments for the 'Pashtunistan' cause.

Montague also noted that Kabul had made no mention of including any Pashto-speaking areas of Afghanistan in a future 'Pashtunistan'. This silence would indicate that the Afghan plan has probably been one "pretext by a veiled irredentism."

It's important to note that this article mentions a period of détente following the May 1963 Tehran agreement to normalise relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which had nosedived because Afghanistan's prime minister and King Zahir Shah's cousin, Sardar Muhammad Daoud, had sent an Afghan army into Bajaur in September 1960. It took Pakistan and Bajauri tribesmen an entire year to evict the Afghan elements. Daoud was a vocal opponent of the border and a hardliner on the issue of 'Pashtunistan'. Pakistan had also challenged Afghanistan to hold a referendum in its own Pakistan areas to see if the Afghan Pakistan wanted to live in Afghanistan or join Pakistan.

There is a vast literature on how Kabul did everything to keep the border issue alive both through overt and, later, covert actions. This space does not allow for a full treatment but two points must be made: one, the negativity that mostly defined Pakistan-Afghanistan relations was the doing of Kabul; two, Pakistan's Afghanistan policy has been defined by Kabul's irredentism and its linkages with India, Pakistan's adversary in the east.

SARDAR DAUD OVERTHROWS ZAHIR SHAH

On 17 July 1973, Sardar Daoud ousted Zahir Shah and declared Afghanistan a republic. The push was bloodless and Daoud was supported by a large number of military officers. Daoud also revived the 'Pashtunistan' campaign and began supporting Pakistan and Baluch separatists. At home, his campaign against conservatives led to purges and a number of future Afghan leaders fled to Pakistan. Some important names included Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, Abdur Rab Rasul Kayyal, Burhanuddin Rabbani, Ahmad Shah Massoud et al.

The late Maj Gen Nasrullah Babar, then a brigadier, was Inspector-General Frontier Corps. He apprised Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of the situation. As Barnett Rubin notes in *The Fragmentation of Afghanistan: State Formation and Collapse in the International System*, "The influx of Islamic refugees after 1974 was a welcome opportunity [for the Bhutto government]... Pakistan covertly organised and supported the attempted uprising by the Islamists in 1975 which, together with pressure from the Shah [of Iran], had the desired effect of bringing Daoud to the bargaining table over his support for [Pakistan] and [Baluch] separatism in Pakistan and other regional issues."

It is clear from reports and analyses of the time and later that Pakistan's policy of reverse-pressure on Daoud's Afghanistan was not an attempt to meddle in Afghanistan's internal affairs but to use Daoud's troubles to get him to settle the border and end his irredentist policy.



Mujahideen rebels pictured in 1980 in the mountains of Afghanistan's Kunar province: the eventual Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan was the start of an entire era of new troubles for the region and Pakistan | AP

To cut a long story short, for a number of reasons Daoud began moving away from the Soviet Union and towards the United States, Egypt, Iran, Pakistan and Gulf states like Saudi Arabia. Books by Barnett Rubin, Diego Cordovez — then Under-Secretary General for Special Political Affairs who co-authored *Out of Afghanistan* with Selig Harrison — Angelo Rasanayagam, another United Nations diplomat who also served as the Director of UNHCR in Peshawar and many others note that Daoud had come round to putting an end to the "Durand Line" issue. (This was also corroborated to the writer years ago by the late Riaz Khokhar, former foreign secretary who was a young notetaker during Bhutto's meeting with Daoud.)

Bhutto visited Kabul in June 1976 and Daoud visited Islamabad in August, indicating his willingness to accept the Durand Line as an international border in return for Bhutto's undertaking to release the imprisoned National Awami Party leaders.

It is interesting to note that by 1975 Bhutto had also become wary of Soviet actions in West and South Asia. Bhutto's close letters to the then US President Gerald Ford (June to August) are intriguing, especially the August 17 letter in which Bhutto, quite precisely, speaks of how the Kremlin was likely to focus on West and South Asia after the centre (Europe) was stabilised through the Helsinki Final Act signed on August 1, 1975. Bhutto's argument was that "assured of security in Europe, the Soviet Union will relentlessly exert pressures on the smaller states of Asia and on Pakistan in particular, with a view to achieving its purpose of establishing an unchallengeable sphere of influence in this continent."

Ford's response basically ignored this point. The US would in about four years come to appreciate the developments that would lead to the Soviet tanks rolling south of Amu Darya.

What Bhutto was not counting on was a coup at home. The positive development was, however, picked up by Gen Ziaul Haq after he removed Bhutto in July 1977. Zia latched on to the diplomatic push since he knew the outlines of the Bhutto-Daoud discussions and he had, ironically, opposed Bhutto's decision to release the Baluch and Pakistan leaders. After removing Bhutto, he pursued the latter's policy and engaged Daoud, visiting Kabul in October 1977. Daoud had a reciprocal visit in March 1978.

Cordovez and Harrison write that when Daoud was asked at a farewell press conference "whether the Durand Line was discussed, he replied that 'everything was discussed, and with the passage of time everything would fall in place.'"

The two writers also mention that Daoud had begun to mould public opinion at home and met Pakistan and Baluch leaders who had taken refuge in Kabul and told them that "all of their eight thousand activists and guerrillas from Pakistan... should leave by April 30 [1978]." Cordovez and Harrison also quote the late Ajmal Khattak, a NAP/ANP leader, on this meeting and what Khattak said to Daoud about being "either a fool or a knave and we would not go [back to Pakistan]."

DENOUEMENT AWAITS

April 30 proved a date too far. Daoud and his family were murdered in a coup by officers belonging to the Peoples Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) on April 27, 1978.

The PDPA took over. True to Afghanistan's history, resistance by tribal solidarity groups emerged to central control and suppressive "reforms" by the communists. The situation got to a point where the USSR's Leonid Brezhnev, an emotive alcoholic with failing health, took the decision to get invited (dread, invade) Afghanistan to stabilise the PDPA. On December 24, 1979, Soviet tanks rolled into Afghanistan.

The communist misadventure was to come to an end in a decade. But the Soviet withdrawal was also the beginning of an entire era of new troubles for the region and Pakistan. Pakistan's primary policy objective, the acceptance by Kabul of the international border, had earlier died with Daoud. That problem has re-emerged. While the border is recognised by the world, the western neighbour remains irredentist and, this time, also religiously clamped.

The situation requires a thorough review of relations with Afghanistan and recourse to an array of non-kinetic and kinetic means. It also requires a constitutional compact within Pakistan, since facing the outside world prerequisites internal harmony. ■

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A longer version of this piece can be accessed at dawn.com

► MEDIA

THE EXODUS FROM X

Elon Musk's changes to Twitter and his political allegiances have made the platform less appealing to news publishers and journalists. Bluesky has emerged as a new alternative, but can it reach critical mass?

By Craig Robertson

When Elon Musk took over Twitter and changed its name to X, many users vowed to move to another platform. First was talk of a shift to Mastodon that never seemed to catch on. Then Meta tried to make Threads appealing by linking the app to Instagram — but this hasn't had much cut-through either.

Now it's Bluesky's turn. In the weeks since the US election, the platform has grown rapidly as users flee X.

This is partly because Musk's involvement in Donald Trump's election campaign clearly showed where his political allegiances lay. But he has also fundamentally changed how people see X as a platform, particularly as a place to get good-quality journalism.

Many of those flocking to Bluesky have been publishers, news organisations and journalists, sending a message that they no longer see X as a valuable space to post their reporting. A group of UK journalists signed an open letter, calling X "no longer a useful tool for objective reporting."

Right now, Bluesky still remains very small compared to X. Getting official and widely agreed-upon user numbers is difficult, but estimates put X's worldwide userbase at around 600 million, with small declines in recent months.

In comparison, Bluesky reported 13 million users in October, with increases following the US election. Estimates vary widely, however, if you choose different metrics like 'daily active' or 'monthly active' users.

Our 2024 Digital News Report data at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (from surveys fielded in January) puts the proportion of adults using X for any purpose at 25 percent in both the US and UK. Meanwhile, 15 percent of people in the US and 14 percent of people in the UK report using X for news. Our figures are similar to those of the Pew Research Centre and Ofcom.

As for Bluesky, usage barely registered in our 2024 data. Usage for any purpose was two percent in the US and one percent in the UK. Facebook and YouTube are still the most widely used platforms in the UK and US, followed by Instagram.

But what is perhaps more important right now is looking at the specific organisations and individuals that are leaving X. (The American NPR [National Public Radio]

Proportion of people using each platform

2024 use for any purpose	UK	USA
Facebook	63%	61%
YouTube	53%	60%
Instagram	38%	36%
X (formerly Twitter)	25%	25%
LinkedIn	16%	14%
TikTok	16%	23%
Threads	3%	5%
Bluesky	1%	2%
Mastodon	1%	2%

Source: Digital News Report 2024, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism

was one of the first news brands to stop posting, and the (UK's) *Guardian* followed. The European Federation of Journalists, which represents nearly 300,000 journalists, has said it will stop posting on X from January, when Trump takes office. And some celebrities are also leaving.

JOURNALISM ON TWITTER

Relative to its size, Twitter/X has always had an outsized impact on public discourse. This is largely due to the types of people who were attracted to the platform and became heavy users: journalists, politicians and other public figures. "Power users" on the platform drive public narratives in many ways. Twitter was where cultural and political debates happened. News broke on Twitter.

Our research at the Reuters Institute from 2021 and 2023 showed this. People saw the platform as a good place to see breaking news, follow news publishers and generally keep up with goings on. While Facebook was seen as a place to connect with friends and family, and YouTube a place to find entertainment, Twitter's brand was as a destination for up-to-date information.

Musk's changes to X, from complicating the "blue tick" verification system, to removing



Elon Musk has made several changes to X that have made it easier to spread disinformation. (Reuters)

news headlines from links, to deprecating news and links, have negatively affected the news industry, making the platform less appealing to publishers.

As news brands and journalists leave, in their place Musk has appeared to boost the voices of right-leaning users, while abandoning many of Twitter's content moderation policies and reframing X as a right-wing social media platform.

Bluesky, on the other hand, has

demonstrated appeal to the news industry, with reports of better referral traffic, a chronological timeline that suits breaking news, the ability to customise feeds and a general creative spark that some say reminds them of early Twitter.

For those remaining on X, the experience for many has been a steady increase in misinformation, hate speech and general toxicity, fuelled by Musk's changes to the platform. With many reliable news publishers leaving, there is the risk that less reliable sources are further amplified.

THE NEW 'IT' PLACE

It is possible, because of the migration of certain types of users, that the popularity of Bluesky is overstated. If journalists, academics and other professionals see all their friends and colleagues popping up on Bluesky, it may give the impression that a wider movement is underway — but this could be a mistake.

On the other hand, it may be precisely who is moving to Bluesky that matters. What the shift among social media power users (journalists, politicians, public figures) may do is encourage others to join. If the buzz maintains its current level,

more people may sign up to be part of it. Once there, they may see Bluesky's "anti-toxic" features, including the ability to hide replies and filter notifications, and come to like the user experience, as many journalists have.

The key to whether it can really "replace" Twitter as a driver of news will be in how many people ultimately move. What's always required to make a platform successful is a critical mass — enough people being there to make it feel useful and interesting, making you want to come back.

If people initially joined Twitter because that's where the up-to-date conversations were happening, then Bluesky may benefit from becoming the new "it" place, supplanting X/Twitter's former status as the place to be.

However, Bluesky could still go the way of other X competitors, if it doesn't maintain momentum and reach that critical mass. We've seen plenty of hype cycles before. ■

The writer is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford in the UK.

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► COMMENT

THE BA'ATHIST LEGACY IN THE ARAB WORLD

The overthrow of Bashar al-Assad marks the demise of Ba'athism, leaving Syria's future — and the fate of Arab anti-Zionism — hanging in uncertainty

By Hussain Qazi

The year that has ended witnessed several events of global impact, particularly concerning foreign policy and the economy. Be it the Middle East or Europe, 2024 was full of political and military tensions.

In terms of warfare, perhaps the most notable hotbed of tension and regional instability has been the Arab world where, most recently, Syria saw the end of almost 60 years of Ba'athist rule. In a surprisingly swift onslaught, a group of rebels managed to take over the capital and declare a 'new Syria'. This concluded the legacy of the Ba'athist ideology in the Arab world, while leaving several questions unanswered.

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Before delving into those questions, a brief history of the Assad rule and Ba'athism in the Arab world must be explored for a better understanding of this conflict and the general nature of conflict in the Middle East.

Perhaps the starting point of this history would be in the early 1950s, while the world was still recovering from the scars and wounds of World War II.

One of the worst affected was the British Empire. By 1952, most of their main empire had collapsed, and with the fading go of India in 1947, there was not much territory left for the once mighty Crown. Areas that they had not left were full of rebellion and uprisings.

This was definitely the case in the Middle East, where many were disgruntled with the colonial occupation. They saw, perhaps justifiably, the rulers installed by the Crown as agents of imperialism, who sought to divide the Arab world amongst itself. With the erosion of the Zionist state of Israel in 1948, things did not improve for the Crown in the Middle East, and it is where our story begins.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, a



An image of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, riddled with bullets, on the facade of a government office after the opposition's takeover of Hama, Syria in December 2024. (AP)

new philosophy called Ba'athism was taking root in the Arab world. Its main proponent was Syrian philosopher and nationalist Michel Aflaq, who is now considered its founder. In essence, it described a socialist Arab world independent from imperialist chains and espoused a homeland for the Arabs ruled by the Arabs. This philosophy was also anti-Zionist, which would become more visible during the Suez Canal crisis in 1956 and, later, during the Six-Day War in 1967.

This philosophy was deemed appealing throughout the Arab world, particularly in the Levant region, Iraq and newly independent Syria as well as North Africa.

FLAG BEARERS OF THE BA'ATHIST MOVEMENT

It was specifically the case in Egypt, with one Egyptian influenced by it going on to become the figurehead of this movement. That man was Col Gamal Abdel Nasser who, in 1952, led the Egyptian revolution, deposing King Farouk and establishing the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Nasser's actions inspired others to rise up and, soon, the world saw other Arab socialist movements taking to

power as well, such as the revolution led by Houari Boumedienne in Algeria and Abdel Karim Kasbi in Iraq. Although most of these countries were not Ba'athist at the time, Nasser still saw the dream of a unified homeland for Arabs. For this, he formed the United Arab Republic (UAR) with Syria in 1958. This would be Syria's first official exposure to Ba'athism.

However, this union was short-lived, with Syria seceding from the UAR in 1961 following a coup headed by Nuri al-Qadhi. Ironically, Qadhi would be himself deposed by Gen Amin al-Hafiz, who would then bring into existence Ba'athist Syria in 1963. Amin al-Hafiz was deposed in 1966, in a coup in which Hafez al-Assad took part. Four years later, Assad initiated a third coup, which ousted the de facto leader Salah Jadid, and appointed himself as leader of Syria.

Despite Syria's secession from the UAR, it maintained close ties with Egypt due to their unifying Ba'athist ideals. These ties would be reinforced during the Six-Day War, with US-supported Israel pined against Egypt, Syria and Jordan, who were backed by the erstwhile Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). This saw



Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser with Syrian Ba'ath Party co-founders Michel Aflaq and Salah al-Bitar in 1958. (Wikimedia Commons)

Ba'athism take an extreme anti-Zionist turn and a vehement anti-imperialist stance, to the point where cooperation with the US and other Western powers was not an option.

It warrants mention that relations between Egypt and Syria deteriorated by the late 1970s, following the US-brokered Camp David Accords of 1978, which established a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. This meant Syria became the last 'true' Ba'athist nation alongside Iraq, which had now come under the rule of Saddam Hussein. Following the fall of Saddam in 2003, Syria would become the last anti-Zionist and truly Ba'athist nation in the Arab world.

Now, after the de facto dissolution of the Ba'athist party in December 2024 following Bashar al-Assad's overthrow, several questions have cropped up, not just about Syrian sovereignty, but also the future of anti-Zionism and Arab unity.

Syria, under the rule of the Assads, had a complicated relationship with the terms development and sovereignty. For instance, while the Ba'ath Party ruled with an iron fist, it ensured

significant development with regards to Syria being a modern society. There was significant tolerance of different ethnicities and religious groups. There was also a notable lack of petty crime.

Ba'athist Syria also maintained nationalisation of economic resources, including oil. While this showed a sense of economic sovereignty, at the same time, it had leased land to Russian forces and Iranian militias to fight against the rebellion threatening Assad's rule.

AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

With the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham in power now and speculation rife that the group has the support of Turkey and Israel amongst others, it throws into uncertainty what is to become of Syria and its oil. Perhaps, it might end up in Zionist or Turkish hands, with the latter a stronger possibility, considering Ankara's long-displayed aspirations towards becoming Europe's next oil and gas giant, ousting Russia.

For the Zionists, a weak Syria could allow them to achieve their territorial aspirations of annexing the remaining

parts of the Golan Heights, further crippling Syria and compromising its ability to protect its territory.

As far as the question of anti-Zionism in the Arab world goes, the collapse of the Ba'athist government appears to be the final nail in the coffin of Arab socialism. With the last nation to have maintained an anti-Zionist policy — to the point of military confrontation — in turmoil, the cause of anti-Zionism has been reduced to a few groups, who no longer have the numerical, logistical or diplomatic support they once had.

This is because Syria was the only country that was effectively still at war with Israel and could pose a significant regional threat, unlike the rest of its Arab neighbours, who have been neutralised by Israel and the US with promises of trade deals.

So, not only is it premature to say Syria is free, but it also must be feared that Syria may well turn into another Iraq, Egypt or Libya, be forced to toe the line of the Western powers and their Zionist client.

The current situation also raises questions about the future of the Kurds. The north-eastern parts of Syria are a significant haven for the US-allied Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which have posed significant challenges to contemporary Turkish expansionism. While the SDF were able to coexist with the Ba'athists, it remains uncertain how they will deal with the foreign-backed deposition of their allies and subsequent occupation of their territory.

Now, not only is Syria's future uncertain, the fall of the Ba'athist regime also marks an end to the legacy of anti-Israeli sentiment as a national policy and, alongside it, the legacy of its greatest advocates, such as Nasser or Aflaq. Ba'athist ideology will be but a relic on display in a museum or gathering dust in the pages of history. ■

The writer is an A-Level student with an interest in history and research

SPORTS

Celebrity boxing matches and 'doping-legal Olympics' are the increasingly blurred line between sports and entertainment

ENTERTAINMENT OVER ETHICS

By Giulia Sesa and Silvia Camporesi

We like to think that sports are fixed and immutable but, like anything else, they are a product of their time.

Just look at the Olympic Games, where events like motorboating, tug-of-war and obstacle course swimming came and went during the 1900s. More recently, breakdancing appeared in last year's Paris Olympics, while lacrosse will make a return in the 2028 Games in Los Angeles.

Alongside this trend, there is a growing pursuit of spectacle and profit from events supposedly marketed as sports. High-profile examples include last year's Netflix-produced boxing match between influencer Jake Paul and boxing legend Mike Tyson, and the Enhanced Games, also known as the "doping-legal Olympics."

Events like these blur the line between entertainment and sport. They run the risk of compromising the values that underpin competitive sport, and put participants' safety at risk.

The Paul-Tyson boxing match was one of the year's biggest "sports" events, with over 108 million viewers, while the Enhanced Games is still at the planning stage. Proposed by Australian billionaire Dr Aaron D'Souza in August 2023 as an alternative to the "corrupt and dysfunctional" world of the Olympics, it has already gathered financial momentum, thanks to investments from US billionaire and PayPal founder Peter Thiel, among others.

At these events, money is king. Though official figures were not published, Paul and Tyson were allegedly paid tens of millions for their bout, while 54 million awaits those who break the 50 and 100 metre freestyle swimming records at the Enhanced Games. At least one former swimming world

champion has already agreed to come out of retirement to compete.

The Enhanced Games are not a particularly original idea. They plan to put into practice a certain version of "doping under medical supervision" which has been advocated by several philosophers over the years. Proponents claim that by allowing athletes to take performance-enhancing drugs, they will promote values of honesty and transparency, and create a safe environment for the athletes.

CHALLENGING SPORT'S CORE VALUES

One prominent critic has said anyone would be "insane" to sign up for the Enhanced Games, but roundly dismissing them means ignoring their evidently strong public appeal. Instead, we should look more closely at the values underpinning sports. According to philosopher Alexander MacIntyre, these can be broken down into two categories: internal and external values.

Sport's internal values are the excellences inherent to a particular type of sport as well as values such as fairness, physical excellence, adherence to regulations, and honesty. These are broadly captured in the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)'s "spirit of sport" criteria.

External values are linked to validation from outside sources. This can include breaking world records, fame, prize money, sponsorships, and so on.

Sport's appeal lies in the combination of these two sets of values. However, events like the Paul vs Tyson match and the Enhanced Games prioritise external values at the expense of internal ones.

PUTTING ENTERTAINMENT OVER SAFETY

These events not only threaten sport's internal values, but also



The Jake Paul vs Mike Tyson match had significant risk factors, not least Tyson's age (58), recent health issues and the absence of protective gear (AP)

pose serious risks to participants' safety.

Disclosing doping could, as the Enhanced Games' promoters argue, foster honesty, transparency, and reduce corruption. However, allowing performance-enhancing drugs is undeniably dangerous, and a permissive attitude raises significant concerns about health risks, harmful combinations of performance-enhancing drugs, and negative spillover effects on young people and society as a whole.

Moreover, as long as financial incentives are at play, there will be incentives for athletes to "take and hide", meaning they take some substances secretly. This would defy the very ethos of the Enhanced Games, and put athletes' health at risk.

Safety concerns are not, of course, limited to the Enhanced Games. Despite adjustments — such as using 14-ounce gloves instead of 10-ounce ones to reduce impact — the Paul vs Tyson match had significant risk factors, not least Tyson's age (58), recent

health issues, and the absence of protective gear.

BALANCING ENTERTAINMENT AND VALUES

We are left with a conundrum. Events such as these have an evidently very wide public appeal, but they also pose significant health risks to their participants, and potentially impact the internal rules of the sports themselves, which are bent to enhance entertainment.

So should we, as a society, allow these events to take place?

We believe that regulation is preferable to an outright ban, as with no regulatory oversight, safety standards remain unaddressed. Unlimited earnings and prize money can also influence participants' ability to make autonomous choices, and encourages them to overlook health priorities.

We also argue that events such as the Paul-Tyson match should be clearly labelled as "not sport", putting clear distance between these events and the sports they are inspired by.

The Enhanced Games, for their part, should be taken seriously as a challenge to current anti-doping policies. They reflect a widespread attitude of discontent, where the public sees athletes as the sole culprits in doping scandals.

We have argued elsewhere for the need to extend the liability of doping beyond the athlete to other key members of their entourage, including coaches. The new WADA Code, currently being drafted and due to come into effect in January 2027, should take this into account.

Ultimately, over time, it is unavoidable that sports will evolve, gaining different meanings as societies also change. However, we can try to influence their evolution by reducing the incentives for doping in sports, and making other internal values, such as skill and creativity, more central to athletic performance. ■

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ESSAY

THE MYTH OF ABUNDANCE

From Sui gas to fast bowlers and the environment, Pakistan's approach towards its resources is one of extraction as opposed to regeneration, which has placed the country on an unsustainable trajectory. We need to re-imagine our vision of the future...

By Sheheryar Khan

One of the great misfield beliefs amongst Pakistanis is that of abundance. This notion, deeply embedded in societal practices and institutional policies, assumes that there are enough, inexhaustible resources available for everyone and for the country to benefit from them.

Yet, as the realities of environmental degradation and resource depletion become more apparent, this belief reveals itself to be not only flawed, but dangerously misleading. It is this very belief that has shaped an extractive relationship with resources, driving Pakistan towards crises across multiple fronts.

Pakistan's history with its resources reveals a troubling pattern of exploitation, rooted in this belief in abundance. Whether it is natural resources such as gas, clean air, agricultural land or even human resources — such as its talented fast bowlers — the country's approach has been characterised by relentless extraction and exploitation, and little regard for sustainability. This mindset lays bare the flaws in its relationship with resources, especially the environment.

AN EXTRACTORY SOCIETY

To understand Pakistan's extractive ethos, we must examine the origins of the idea of abundance. Historically, abundance has been equated with infinite availability, a notion reinforced by colonial-capitalist systems that treated natural and human resources as commodities.

Under this worldview, land, air, water and even labour were framed as inexhaustible assets to be exploited for profit and progress. This legacy was not only a feature of colonial administration, but it was also internalised in post-colonial governance, where short-term gains often trumped long-term sustainability. The idea of abundance was, and remains, deeply intertwined with the belief that resources — both natural and human — exist to serve economic development, no matter the cost.

Take natural gas for instance. Discovered in the early 1950s, the reserves in Sui, Balochistan, were heralded as a national treasure. For decades, the resource was extracted at unsustainable levels (both at household and state levels), with little effort to explore new reserves or diversify energy sources. The early 2000s policy of using natural gas for vehicular use intensified the rate of depletion. This approach assumed an endless supply of gas, ignoring the finite nature of the resource.

Today, the near-depletion of Sui's reserves has left Pakistan reliant on imported liquefied natural gas (LNG), which strains the national exchequer and exposes the country to volatile global energy markets. This depletion exemplifies how the myth of abundance fosters neglect, eroding the very foundations



of sustainability.

This mindset extends beyond natural resources and the way we treat human resources in the country. Here, one needs not to look beyond the way our cricket board has treated fast bowlers in recent years.

Pakistan is celebrated for producing a steady stream of fast bowlers, often touted as natural talents. But, why is it then that we haven't been able to produce fast bowlers in the past 20 years that have produced similar kinds of numbers as Wasim Akram or Waqar Younis?

One obvious reason is that these athletes are subjected to overwork, mismanagement and neglect, with little investment in their long-term well-being and healthcare. Much like natural resources, they are treated as commodities, discarded once their performance declines.

This cycle reflects a broader societal inability to appreciate and sustain what is valuable. Talent, similar to gas reserves, is treated as an endless supply, rather than a finite resource that requires care and stewardship.

PROFIT OVER PRESERVATION

The environment offers perhaps the most important example of the consequences of this mindset. Clean air and environment, a fundamental public good, has been treated as a limitless resource and the deteriorating air quality across Punjab underscores this neglect.

Despite overwhelming evidence that vehicular emissions are a leading cause of pollution, policy priorities have favoured infrastructure projects, such as flyovers, underpasses and signal-free corridors, which incentivise private car use. More cars on the road means more emissions, meaning poorer air quality.

Investments in public transportation, which could significantly reduce emissions, remain inadequate. This systemic failure reflects the entrenched belief that the environment can endure endless exploitation. As a result, Lahore now ranks among the most polluted cities globally, with smog becoming a seasonal crisis that threatens public health and disrupts daily life.

This extractive relationship — whether with

natural gas, human talent or the environment — is rooted in a colonial-capitalist logic that prioritises profit over preservation. The legacy of colonialism, which commodified land, labour and resources, persists in the structures and policies of modern governance.

This worldview sees resources as separate from human and ecological systems, ignoring their interconnectedness. Such thinking not only accelerates depletion, but it also deepens social and environmental inequalities, as the burdens of such crises often fall on the most vulnerable.

REIMAGINING THE FUTURE

Moving away from this mindset requires a fundamental shift in how resources are perceived and managed. First, we as a country and society must confront the origins of our extractive ethos. This involves acknowledging that our relationship with our environment is broken and needs to be reimagined. Acknowledging these roots can pave the way for alternative approaches that value sustainability and equity.

One such approach is to embrace the concept of planetary boundaries — the ecological thresholds within which humanity can operate safely. Recognising these limits can guide policy and planning, ensuring that resources are used responsibly and equitably. For example, urban planning must shift focus from car-centric infrastructure to sustainable public transportation systems that reduce emissions and improve air quality.

Cultural change is equally important. The myth of abundance must be replaced with a narrative of stewardship and interdependence.

Public awareness campaigns can play a critical role in fostering such a shift, educating citizens about the finite nature of resources and the importance of conservation. This cultural transformation must also extend to governance, where long-term planning and accountability must take precedence over short-term gains.

Ultimately, addressing Pakistan's extractive relationship with resources and its environment requires reimagining the nation's future. This involves not only policy reforms, but also a broader philosophical shift that prioritises regeneration over extraction.

This does not mean rejecting development, rather redefining it. This involves rethinking progress not as the accumulation of wealth, but as the ability to live harmoniously within ecological limits.

The current trajectory is unsustainable. Our belief in abundance has led to the depletion of the country's natural resources and degradation of our environment, undermining their long-term utility. Moving forward requires a collective commitment to stewardship, sustainability and equity. ■

The author is a Commonwealth Scholar at the University of Bristol in the UK

► EXHIBITION

Age-old techniques are fused with modern sensibilities to striking effect at an exhibition that pays tribute to the everlasting allure of clay creations

THE CLAY CONTINUUM

By Rumana Husain

The moment one steps into the gallery, the sight is arresting: three humble earthenware (clay pots traditionally used for storing drinking water), suspended mid-air, command immediate attention. Elevated from their earthly origins, they hover like timeless relics, defying gravity and transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary.

This striking display sets the tone for the exhibition 'Clay - Earth, Malleable, Memory' at Koel Gallery, Karachi, drawing the viewer into a world where clay becomes a medium of wonder, history and innovation.

According to Nusrat Shahid Nahi, the curator of this masterful exploration of our enduring relationship with clay, "Clay is more than a medium; it is a keeper of stories, a bridge between past and present." She further explains, "Artisans and visual practitioners innovate with age-old techniques passed down through generations to shape toys, ornaments, vessels, tiles, and sculptural forms." This exhibition celebrates our enduring connection to earth — malleable and rich with memory — through contemporary practices that honour and expand upon ancient traditions.

The journey begins with Harappa, an archaeological marvel on the banks of the River Ravi in Punjab, dating back to the Indus Valley Civilisation (3300-1700 BCE). Known for their advanced town planning, metallurgy and artistry, the Harappans left behind a legacy of pottery, jewellery and terracotta creations. Among their discoveries are animal figurines — bulls, rhinoceroses, elephants, crocodiles, birds and more — crafted in terracotta.

The exhibition includes replicas of these ancient toys, popularised by archaeologist Jonathan Mark Kenoyer, who has excavated Harappa since 1986. Their presence here, crafted by the Chagata Kumbhars of District Sialkot, serves as a poignant reminder of our shared heritage, seamlessly linking the past with the present.

The Kumbhars, whose name originates from the Sanskrit word *Kumbhakar* (earthen-pot maker), are found in nearly every district across the country. In Nasirpur — a historic town in Sindh located about 45 kilometres from Hyderabad and believed to be one of the oldest settlements of the Indus Valley Civilisation — the art of glazing and hand-painting ceramics has become a hallmark of its cultural identity. This intricate craft, known as *Kashigari*, involves creating stunning mosaic work by carefully cutting small pieces of coloured tiles and meticulously attaching them, piece by piece, to a surface.

The exhibition celebrates the rich terracotta pottery tradition with a display of exquisite *Kashigari* pieces, alongside a video presentation and a live demonstration on the inaugural day. Featured artisans include potter from Mouth Gohi (located off Hub Chowki Road, Karachi), the *Kashigari* Karkhans of Nasirpur, the Gull Kashi Centre of Hala, and practitioners from the renowned *Kashigari* hub in Nasirpur.

The Daudpota brothers, Ghulam Hyder and Anjad, both trained at the National College of Arts (NCA) in Lahore and at the King's Foundation School of Traditional Arts in London, have worked to preserve and modernise Nasirpur's *Kashigari* tradition. Their mosaic tile-making processes were influenced by the brick style of making and glazing in Turkey. In this 'under-glaze' technique, clay is shaped in moulds or on potter's wheels, undercoated and kiln-dried and then decorated. When the paint dries, it is glazed and fired again.

This exhibition is brimming with standout pieces, but one pairing truly captures the imagination: the legendary late ceramist Mian Salahuddin's iconic hand-built and glazed study boxes, displayed alongside Aled Ur Zafar's *Tin Horse*, an engraving on plastic vinyl rendered in his distinctive monochromatic style. Though born four decades apart and working in vastly different mediums, the juxtaposition of their works invites a compelling dialogue. Salahuddin's earthy, tactile creations resonate with Zafar's meticulous, modern precision, forging an unexpected yet profound connection between their practices.

Sadia Salim, a multidisciplinary artist and former head of the Department of Ceramics at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture, is noted for her work in ceramics. Her series *Memory of a Landscape*, stored in a glass box and captured in striking black-and-white images by Haniyoun Meimon, features delicate porcelain forms inspired by plant life. The fragile ceramic pots and disintegrating pine cones poignantly highlight the vulnerability of our ecosystem, with the cones symbolising nature's delicate balance as they shelter the seeds of cedar trees.



Herd series, Mian Salahuddin



Untitled, Anita Ashraf



Layers of Being, Fraz Maseen

Nahid Lotia, author of the meticulously researched *Pottery Traditions of Pakistan*, presented a gas-fired wall relief titled *Kansak*. Crafted in red clay, the piece features three squashed, urn-like forms — one turned upside down — symbolising the kiln's unpredictable nature. It captures the delicate tension between the potter's meticulous craftsmanship and the uncontrollable forces of fire that ultimately shape the final creation.

Anita Ashraf's *Moon Art* series masterfully blends tradition with innovation. Inspired by the ceramics of Korea's Joseon dynasty, the self-taught artist transforms wheel-thrown forms with distinctive glazes. The textured peeling of the outer layers and the leather-like coating, partially revealing one jar's smooth interior, creates a captivating interplay of surfaces that is both tactile and visually striking.

Aamna Talpur, a recent graduate in ceramics from Shaheed Allah Bakhsh University in Jamshoro, draws inspiration from the vibrant and deeply rooted textile tradition of Sindh — the *ralli*. Known for its bold geometric patterns, vivid colours, and intricate stitching, the *ralli* quilt is a functional and artistic creation crafted by women in rural communities. These quilts are pieced together using scraps of fabric, often recycled from old garments, and stitched with meticulous handwork. Talpur's *Ralli*, a folded piece, has been beautifully executed in glazed stoneware clay.



Layers of Memory, Abeer Asim



A potter at the exhibition

Aisha Tahar, who studied at the same university, showcased the transformative powers of her works in *Curios Box* and *Newspaper*, made in stoneware ceramics. In his three mask-like human faces titled *Layers of Being*, Fraz Maseen explores the many layers that form our identities. Salmaan Usman's several exquisite stoneware vases were a pleasure to behold.

Jawaria Akram, who teaches at the NCA in Lahore, presented her *Amma Ke Khaw* series, mostly consisting of envelopes in stoneware and porcelain. Abeer Asim's *Layers of Memory* evokes a sense of remembrance. Shadia Mirza, with an impressive list of residencies from Provence in France to Thailand to Iceland, showcased small pieces of jewellery in porcelain. Shadia Zafar, who began as a clay artist in the late nineties, displayed *The Clay Artist's Studio*, an intriguing display showcasing various tools, different types of clays such as volcanic, kaolin, ball, fire and Thai clay, as well as quartz and glazes.

In a world of constant change, this exhibition stands as a tribute to the malleability of both earth and memory — an ever-evolving testament to the creativity, resilience and heritage of the human spirit. ■

'Clay - Earth, Malleable, Memory' was on display at Koel Gallery in Karachi from December 17, 2024-January 7, 2025

Rumana Husain is a writer, artist and educator. She is the author of two coffee-table books on Karachi, and has authored and illustrated 75 children's books

SMOKERS' CORNER



The Politics of Boycotts and Buycotts

As youth-driven activism links consumption with ethics, many local alternatives are thriving by aligning themselves with progressive causes. However, the long-term impact of this on market dynamics and brand strategies remains unpredictable

By Nadeem F. Paracha

The act of boycotting brands is referred to as "political consumerism." According to the political scientists Gretlind Stöle and Michele Micheletti, political consumerism refers to the use of the market as an arena for politics, in order to change institutional or market practices found to be ethically, environmentally or politically objectionable.

Political consumerism can also be about people deliberately purchasing brands to reward them. This is referred to as "buycotting." For example, in 2023, millennials and Gen Z, the core consumers of the American ice cream brand Ben & Jerry's, increased their consumption of the brand due to its overt support for 'progressive causes.' Ben & Jerry's 'reward' in this regard was that it became 2023's leading ice cream brand in the US.

Boycotting or buycotting brands are both political acts. Recently, a once-obscure Pakistani cola brand witnessed a manifold increase in demand at the expense of two established international cola brands. Since late 2023, the established cola brands have increasingly been accused of being 'pro-Israel.' Their names have appeared on various 'boycott lists' circulated by human rights groups active in highlighting Israel's atrocities against Palestinians in Gaza.

There is no conclusive literature/research, though, to determine to what extent boycotts or buycotts really work. And even though Ben & Jerry's example can be viewed as a buycott success, one does wonder whether the brand could have posted



Illustration by Feroz

even larger profits had it not just focused on embracing the politics of liberal millennials and Gen Z.

But was the brand interested in profits or in just promoting certain causes? All businesses are for profit. Causes in this regard are part of brand positioning. Ben & Jerry's chose to position the brand as an activist brand. The brand's marketing strategy seemed to be to engage with politically aware, cosmopolitan youth who are likely to continue accumulating consumption power in the future more than the ageing 'boomers', and the 'Gen Xers' who have entered middle age.

Many giant brands did report a fall in sales in various countries due to Israel-related boycott campaigns

against them. But this did not succeed in even slightly lessening the intensity of Israel's onslaught in Gaza.

Yet, one can state that this is not the core intention of the boycott campaign. The intention is to disrupt the market share of the boycotted brands long enough for the disruption to compel major stakeholders of the brand to start exhibiting serious concern.

Interestingly, whereas it is tough for many brands to disprove their association with pro-Israel business/political interests, there are some brands that do not belong on the boycott list but have been put there.

In early 2024, an international fast-food chain (not McDonalds) in Pakistan was shocked to find its name

in a boycott list that began to circulate on social media. According to the chain, its name was added in the list by a PR firm of a Pakistani fast-food brand. To this day, the chain is trying to clarify this, but to no avail. It has lost a lot of business to the local brand. Is this cheating or a clever strategy?

Israel-related brand boycotts have opened up the market for local brands. For example, local cola brands in the Muslim world have suddenly witnessed an unprecedented demand. Quality and taste are not considerations as such. Because consuming a local cola makes the consumer feel that they are part of a noble cause.

But who are these consumers? This is important to understand — especially by brands who believe

they are being demonised through false information. To rebound, they need to be talking to the most active participants of the boycott campaign.

According to the American journalist Moore Terence, "Political consumers choose products based on the politics of the product than the product as material object." This is a growing trend across the world, especially among the youth. This is also why, over the years, brands have intensified their claims of being environment-friendly, charitable, gender neutral etc. But how is a brand to address accusations of facilitating a genocide?

Apologising would mean that, indeed, the brand did facilitate the genocide. Saying that the actions of its producers in Israel have nothing to do with the intent of its producers elsewhere has drawn even more criticism. Remaining quiet hasn't worked either because this boycott campaign has gone on for over a year now.

Brand boycotts cannot succeed if there are no alternative brands for the boycotters to choose as a replacement. Keeping in mind that major brands often buy-out competitive alternatives, and alternatives often allow this because they're not sure for how long they can sustain the people's interest, brands facing the boycott for over a year, may try to buy-out all major local brands that have risen.

And most local brands will be willing to sell due the kind of money that will be on offer. This is likely to happen if the boycott continues for yet another year. The Israel-related boycott campaign has witnessed moments of lull. And it is in such moments, the buy-outs may take place. Quietly. ■

B&A

BOOKS & AUTHORS

► FICTION

A first collection of short stories by a renowned academic fuses the absurd with realism and explores social layers of contemporary society with minimalist prose and an almost cinematic approach

A bag full of surprises



Pothi
By Dr Khalid Afiah
Sang-e-Meel Publications
ISBN: 969-3526177
229pp.

Reviewed by Navid Shahzad

The world-renowned British linguist Roger Fowler's view of realism exposed notable characters positioned within the domain of everyday situations that lead to plausible events but which negated the need for a writer to provide a "detailed repertoire of physical minutiae of everyday life", opting for a social commentary instead. Barring the social commentary requirement is precisely what Dr Khalid Afiah sets out to do in his handsomely produced collection of 19 Urdu short stories titled *Pothi*.

As the first vice chancellor of the Government College University, Lahore, and a distinguished and highly respected economist and researcher, Dr Afiah enjoys an enviable reputation within academic circles. In the history of the institution itself, there have been only two principals' vice chancellors who have consciously chosen literature as a medium to address contemporary socio-political issues, with reference to the collective attitudes of society.

Professor Ahmad Shah Bokhari, better known as Patras Bokhari, and his humorous essays bordering on absurdist literature made his mark as principal, commencing with his tenure in 1948. While Bokhari's forte was essays and particularly humorous ones, it is equally interesting to note that, shortly after retirement from service, Dr Afiah appears to have discovered a second career as a writer of Urdu fiction.

Dr Afiah's recently discovered talent may partly be attributed to a special DNA link to the famed Urdu writer Asad Ali Khan, who was his paternal uncle. But the stories are distinctly Afiah's. The man writing *Pothi* is neither vice chancellor nor economist but an objective 'outsider' skillfully capturing nuances of largely non-bureaucratic, competitive, self-centred characters and events that border on the absurd.

Whether a story concerns itself with an unknown man running himself on a cold winter morning in his courtyard being regaled with anecdotes about local

film stars by a portbellied, greasy-haired man looking for a job, or acting like the proverbial fly on the wall, recording scenes of a marriage turned bitterly cold in the face of the wife's 'poth' (bundle) of complaints — from which the collection itself gets its title — or, in yet another instance, narrating the bare-boned story of a woman returning home to her two children after a prolonged mysterious absence, with a young child in tow and an explanation that verges on a Punjabi film plot, Afiah's presence as writer is never intrusive.

In crisp, plain Urdu, which occasionally uses Punjabi expressions with delight of abandon, his approach to the many characters he introduces his reader to is almost cinematic in approach, as a few lines suffice to sketch material portraits. Like an artist using the minutely challenging medium of charcoal, which is notoriously prone to smudging, Afiah is visibly equanimous in his writing as he courageously explores the social layers of contemporary society, weaving stories between the twin domains of the haves and the have-nots.

Collectively, his world is one in which, regardless of social status, all his characters appear to carry a distinctly personal 'poth', which is increasingly cumbersome and needs airing. If it is not the acerbic complaints of a seemingly unloved wife, it is the ramblings of a man facing interrogation in the local police *thana*. Each *poth*, when unfolded, testifies to the utter helplessness and misery of men and women living empty lives in a world oblivious to individual pain.

In this respect, *Pothi* may well be seen as an anthology attempting to maintain a precarious balancing act between realism and absurdism. The reader cannot help but be drawn to the striking parallel between the story of Albert Camus' *Strepitus*, condemned to push a large stone uphill only to have it roll down again in an endless cycle of struggle and survival in a pitiless world, and Afiah's stories, with one significant difference: The gods who punished *Strepitus* in Hellenistic fashion have been replaced by Afiah with pygmy-like figures of authority like the local *hukurdar* (police) who, in the given context, wields an authority as potent as that of the gods of yesteryear.

In Western literary history, the short story made its first appearance in the 19th century. In a world recovering from the ravages of global wars, the older traditional genre dictated by Giovanni Boccaccio's tales found itself understandably replaced by a new form. By the 1930s, literature had been impacted by drama, the prose of Kafka and the artistic movements

of Dadaism and Surrealism, giving rise to what the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard called the idea of the absurd.

Fully developed into a philosophy by Albert Camus in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, the sensuous created by humanity's need for meaning in a post-World War scenario and the universe's inability to provide any solace, birthed the movement called Absurdism. Absurd in form, plot or both, Samuel Beckett with his *Waiting for Godot* and Eugene Ionesco with his *Chairs* became the key figures associated with the latest genre.

At home, we need not look to Western literary traditions to elaborate upon the genesis of Absurdism; one can see that, in the Subcontinent, the new concept is clearly visible in the poetry of the renowned poet Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib. Witnessing the devastation in the aftermath of the failed 1857 War of Independence, Ghalib's desperation generated a deep depression from which he never recovered, resulting in a permanently destabilised life, while the tone of his poetry appears to have prompted the rise of Absurdism in the West.

Reading through this collection of stories, one can see that Afiah's narrative world swings between the binaries of realism and Absurdism, like a pendulum switching between opposing points, representing need on the one hand and a prodigal affluence on the other, in equal measure.

The language remains deceptively simple, employing an almost dry, descriptive tone, creating a challenge for the wary reader. Instances such as the man sunning himself on a cold winter morning in his courtyard suffering being regaled with anecdotes about local film stars by a portbellied, greasy-haired man looking for a job, only to offer him one at the end in an unexpected move, abound. They hammer home the idea of how absurd and meaningless life can be!

The 'poth' itself, in local culture, is a common ubiquitous denigrating tag used for a variety of things. In cultural imagination, the word brings up images of the tiny, unbridled bags used by aristocratic Lucknow men and women to carry their favourite mix of mouth fresheners, consisting of cardamom, roasted fennel seeds and silvered bent nut or gold pieces. However, the *poth* referred to in Afiah's story is more akin to the rough and ready knotted piece of cloth used to bundle clothing or personal items of use in the absence of a suitable case or trunk.

Afiah's *Pothi* of stories, therefore, is a collection stripped of any romantic or glamorous connotations,

as his characters concern themselves with the muted, knotty metaphorical connotations of their lost dreams, asphyxiated desires, and angst weighed down by a perpetual dread of the unknown.

One of the many striking features of the stories is the deliberate and skillful deviation from the accepted structure of storytelling, which implies a beginning, a middle and an end. By contrast, many of Afiah's stories remain open-ended, in that he offers no explanation for the reader's inevitable query of 'what next?' as events take place and lives remain in limbo permanently doused with disappointment.

For example, consider the story of Hasharat who comes to Lahore to seek his fortune and is robbed of his *poth* at the doorstep of the city's most respected Sufi saint, forcing him to leave in as wretched a state as when he had come. The story may easily be interpreted as an Absurdist parable, signifying the emptiness of man's life on earth as he struggles to survive, only to succumb to the inevitability of fate and return with hands as empty as those at the time of birth.

Afiah deals with his characters with an uncommon generosity, as he allows them to speak for themselves. As a result, the exchanges between his characters lend themselves well to radio, much in the same vein as that master-storyteller Munir's characters do in his admirable collection of radio plays.

Needless to say, the craft of the short story-writer demands almost the same strict discipline as that practised by a physical-writer: brevity and compactness, combined with the ability to create graphic visual images using a minimum number of words, is a skill that is honed over years of practice. Dr Afiah, however, appears innately gifted, as his ear readily catches the colloquial idiom in Urdu and Punjabi, while the eye captures the finest detail, such as that of the gargantuan appetite of Lahore's *dentists* in their quest for good food, pretty women (who may or may not be available) and the schizoid passion of advancing age.

In capturing the visible deterioration of ethical and socio-cultural values in contemporary society, Dr Khalid Afiah's collection is a welcome addition to the popular oeuvre of the Urdu short story, especially since it fuses an active sense of the Absurd and realism with quiet fluency in language that is reader-friendly, to which the elegant printing on quality paper adds substantially. This is a collection not to be missed in

The reviewer is Academic Adviser/Head, Resource Centre, Lahore Grammar School

► FICTION

Set against the backdrop of gruesome murders in the late 1970s in bleak post-industrial Yorkshire, England, a rewarding debut novel shows that sensational crimes are not the only forms of harrowing trauma and violence in society

Through a glass, darkly



The List of Suspicious Things
By Jennie Godfrey
Penguin
ISBN: 978-1804942949
455pp.

Reviewed by Nadya Chishty-Mujahid

From 1975 to 1980, a horrendous murderer by the name of Peter Sutcliffe terrorised Yorkshire by killing no less than 13 women (some of them prostitutes) and severely injuring several others.

He was referred to as the Yorkshire Ripper because, like the infamous Jack the Ripper, Sutcliffe (who was diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic when finally caught) considered himself to be on a mission to rid the world of prostitutes.

The author of this interesting debut novel, *The List of Suspicious Things*, Jennie Godfrey grew up in Yorkshire at that time and, following the murderer's arrest, her entire family was horrified to find that Jennie's father, who worked as a mechanic, had actually serviced Sutcliffe's lorry from time to time!

Decades later, this point inspired Godfrey to set this coming-of-age novel against the grim and foreboding backdrop of the Yorkshire Ripper's crimes. Although his presence in the novel is relatively passive (in that he is not an actual character, and is generally mentioned on and off as a gruesome news item), Sutcliffe still casts an ominous shadow over much of the book's plot. The action takes place between 1979 and 1980 — Sutcliffe was finally apprehended and arrested in January, 1981.

The central character is a 12-year-old named Miv (short for 'Mavis') who is as intrigued by the grisly crimes of the Ripper as most individuals in her small community. Godfrey does a very fine job of portraying a working-class British community in a small Yorkshire town, in spite of their mundanity, her characters are well-drawn and the tragedy and pathos underlying their existence lends considerable

momentum to the narrative.

Miv's father Austin, and his sister Jean, take care of the child because, for the major part of the novel, her mother Marian is presented as a seriously depressed individual who can barely bring herself to interact with anyone.

But Austin and Marian are by no means the only miserable couple in the book. The librarian at the school attended by Miv gets regularly battered by her husband. A Pakistani shopkeeper in the town has to combat both racism as well as the trauma of having lost his beloved wife. A stressed-out teacher at Miv's school is estranged from his wife, and even an aged dealer in 'shoddy' (cheap fabric made from scraps) is described as still mourning for a spouse he lost decades ago.

The dysfunctionality does not stop at sad partnerships. A couple of the boys at Miv's school are serious bullies (to the point where their actions end up being dangerous and life-threatening), a depressed young man who is questioned by the police during the hunt for the Ripper ends up committing suicide, and a young girl is sexually molested by a repressed and twisted man.

The most positive influence in Miv's life is her best friend and fellow schoolmate Sharon, a sweet and innocent child who genuinely cares for Miv. Perhaps it is partly due to childhood curiosity and partly to distract herself from the emotional bleakness of her existence that Miv convinces Sharon that they should make a list of people in their town who might potentially be the Yorkshire Ripper!

Barty and tedious though this scheme might seem to some, I personally found nothing remotely funny about two school-going girls playing detective on such a dangerous front. Especially when Miv gets carried away to the point where she makes a trip with Sharon to a red-light area in Leeds known to have been one of the Ripper's haunts in the past! Fortunately, while the duo are at Leeds, a good-natured and intelligent prostitute named Maggie ensures that the police return both girls to their hometown.

Sharon eventually convinces Miv to abandon the list-project, which the latter fortunately does. However, although Godfrey never describes any of the actual murders, they continue to take place and are regularly mentioned on the news. But what Jennie Godfrey does describe with vivid clarity are other crimes in Miv's town, such as the racist destruction of a store by means of arson, sexual harassment and rape, domestic violence,

a death by hanging in the local forest, and hazardous substance abuse.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, West Yorkshire was famous for its textile mills, but the old mill in Miv's town was shut down long ago, and one suspects that when the town lost that industry, it lost much of its positivity.

Miv has several happy memories of her mother but we do not find out until very late in the novel why Marian found it so difficult to cope with life that she silently retreated into herself for a number of years. Exasperating though the novel's protagonist might be, one finds it impossible not to feel sorry for her, especially since one gets the sense that Miv would have been a far more well-adjusted child under more sanguine circumstances.

Much of the novel is written in first person and Godfrey is to be credited with accurately portraying the pre-teen angst of a child whose lively intelligence can find few healthy outlets, if any. The conclusion of the book contains a brilliant plot-twist that is as heart-warming as it is unexpected. But the book also maintains its sense of tragedy until the very end, its most vital lesson being that escaping from the clutches of the Ripper does not equate to escaping from other forms of harrowing trauma and violence.

In spite of the limited geographical scope of the book, it underscores how certain human emotions such as love, hatred, fear and sorrow remain timeless and exist across diverse cultures. Driven by paternal love, the Pakistani shopkeeper Omar Bashir struggles against overwhelming social odds to provide his son Idris with sound education and a comfortable existence. Equally driven by paternal love, the librarian's old father protects her from a cruelly abusive spouse when the situation becomes untenable.

As to whether Miv's mother eventually realises whether her daughter's well-being is worth overcoming her own depression is a question that can only be answered by readers pursuing the novel for themselves. I can guarantee, however, that that will be a literary exercise that is worth their time.

The reviewer is associate professor of social sciences and liberal arts at the Institute of Islamic Administration. She has authored two collections of short stories, Timeless College Tales and Perennial College Tales, and a play, The Political Chess King

▶ DIARY OF A SOCIAL BUTTERFLY



By Moni Mohsin

The never-ending wedding season in The Smog has left an exhausted Butterfly seeking inspiration from the industriousness of retired generals

LIGHT AT THE END OF THE FUNNEL

YOU may know what a sophistry socialist I am and how much I love parties and balls and bling and hanging out with everyone who's everyone. So, I never thought I'd ever say this in a hundred million years, but *Absai*, I'm *taa* getting a little bit tired of *absai*.

It's not that I've become a *baadli rooh* like Janoo or anything. God forbid, or grown old or anything. Touch my ears, bite my tongue, but it's just that it's so cold and *ogayr* so rainy, and then there's The Smog. And all the weddings crammed together, like a traffic jam, in these same two, three weeks. And people also doing events in far, far places. Barricade this and pleasure garden that, in the bag of beyond.

And if you miss even a single function out of the nine they're having, then they mind *have* and they stop inviting you to their *khawass* and their parties, and before you know it, you've ended up like a ghost in a movie, where you keep going up to people and standing in front of them and talking *shakking*, but they just look through you, as if you weren't there. The only people who can see you are seriously weird. Or else, dead themselves. So really, you have no choice but to go.

So, you slap on your face, you put on your jewellery, you throw on your *jorwa* and you *sapare* your aching feet into your golden heels, and you get into your car and you go and you go and you go and, after two full hours of going, you still haven't reached the *absai* ki place.

And with Janoo grumbling all the way like a broken record about why people are so inconsiderate, so selfish, so *gana nahin kya kya*. As if I'm a prosecutor in their hearts and I know *nahi* under ki *baat*.

Meanwhile, you don't know where you are, because fog is like cotton wool



Illustration by Rada Durrani

outside. And the driver is peering into the swirling, whirling darkness ahead and muttering under his breaths. It's like being invited to a destination wedding, but destination is not Koh-i-Sumir or Lisbon, but Phase Eighty-Nine,

Defence.

Anyways, in these last two weeks, I've *abgha*ed eight weddings now, with at least four functions each. No wonder I'm nearly at the end of my feather.

You know, sheep and ducks

vaghra, they are much cleverer than us. They have their mating season in spring, when weather is nice and smog is low. Only we are stupid enough to have it now. *Chalo*, Not much longer to go now. With only three more *absai* to attend, I can see a *baadli* of light at the end of the funnel. Unless it's a truck laden with sugarcane heading straight at me, which I can't see because of The Smog.

It wouldn't be so bad to get to these destinations if Google Maps for *unbura* *Absai*, that thanks to the inner net being what it is, that even we don't have. Mulloos was telling me it's all the fault of sharks and turtles *vaghra*. Being plasticarians — that's like being a vegetarian, but instead of liking veggies, you like plastics — they've eaten our inner net cables running on the ocean floor.

But why do sharks have a soft spot for our cables and no other country's? I asked Mulloos. 'But ab, what to say?' she said. 'Our fibres must be like our *maangos* — extra juicy. And the sharks around here must also be fancy eaters, *nahi* *hai* kya?'

But a retired general, who is PTA chairman, says inner net blocking is "legal grey area." I don't know what that means, but I'm so happy to know that a retired general is also doing the looking after of our cables.

Vaghra, have you noticed how *handwork*ing generals are? They never retire. Even when they are aged and they say they are retired, they keep on working, like busy bees. If not chairmanning Waqda or PTA, then building housing societies and designing golf courses and running *absai* balls and selling meat and fertilizer and even *knitwear*. No *handwork*ing and talented also *at* *unbura* *tasking*, *waahallah* *ai*.

And here I am, after just nine weddings in three weeks, ready to embrace permanent retirement. Shame on me. ■

▶ GARDENING



By Dr Khwaja Ali Shahid

The tall and elegant flowering plant requires six hours of sunlight daily between dawn and the afternoon

THE HOLLYHOCKS' GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

The sight of hundreds of cup-shaped hollyhocks blooming on a wall is a visual treat. But being aesthetically enchanting is just one of the many aspects of this tall and elegant flowering plant. Hollyhocks are also widely used for their medicinal and herbal benefits, both in man and animals.

As discussed in last week's column, one of the stories about how the plant came to be known as hollyhock is that it was used on the hind legs, or the hocks, of the horses participating in the crusades to reduce pain and inflammation. Although there isn't any significant empirical evidence to prove the medicinal uses of the hollyhock flower, it continues to be extensively used as an application to reduce the severity in different minor ailments, low-level pain and to facilitate the healing of wounds.

Among other things, the flower is used for skin and dermatological issues, such as treating bed sores, and the resultant ulcers and different forms of swellings. The hollyhock has also been used for mild forms of early gingivitis, bad breath and even to prevent breathing disorders. Its tea and infusion is also considered beneficial for digestive tract health and stomach ulcers. The roots of the hollyhocks are also considered healthy.

There are also certain legends surrounding the plant. One such belief entails that the hollyhocks are planted outside the entrance of the house to prevent any evil spirits from entering. Historically, the plant was also considered to bring with it improved fertility and good fortune for the dwellers. It is understandable, then, that the flower made its way into witchcraft and spiritual practices as well.

The previous column described how to sow the seeds of the hollyhock plant when the temperature is in the range of 18 to 23 degrees Celsius. In favourable conditions, good quality seeds are likely to germinate within 10 days to two weeks of sowing the seeds.

Within one to two weeks of germination, true leaves begin to appear on the seedlings. Once the plant grows six to seven true leaves, it is time to begin transplanting it, provided the seeds were grown in a seedling tray or any other makeshift arrangement, such as small containers.



Transplanted hollyhock plants should be exposed to six hours of direct sunlight daily | Photos by the writer

During this phase of the plant life cycle, it is important to stay vigilant against any insect or pest attacks. Any indication of such attacks should be dealt with as early as possible. The pest or insect can be removed manually or with the help of a toothpick, especially from the underside of the leaves.

Whether you prepare a wall of adjacent plants in the yard, place a large pot with one plant each on either side of your house entrance or simply make a colourful corner with a hollyhock plant with blooming flowers, the minimum space required by each plant is of at least one to two feet on either side.

This will also allow better aeration between the leaves and reduce chances of any probable pest attacks as well. The hollyhock plant grows better when it is planted in a container

measuring 10 inches, both in width and depth. However, the plant can survive in 12-inch pots as well.

It is always best to grow hollyhocks in the ground or in raised beds. When planted in the ground, one can also reduce the distance between each plant by around three to six inches.

Ideally, at this stage, the plant requires direct sunlight exposure of at least six hours. Therefore, it is important to keep the sunlight position in consideration when transplanting the hollyhock sapling to its permanent location. It is also suggested that the six-hour period of sunlight should stretch from dawn to afternoon and not from afternoon to evening. The latter phase of sunlight is considered relatively harsh.

Watering should be timed in such



Hollyhock plants produce better results when grown in the ground or raised beds

a manner that the soil remains moist till the next scheduled watering. The gardener must bear in mind that the plant is neither overwatered nor parched. The growth and maturity phase of the hollyhock plant is relatively longer than other common seasonal flowering plants, and one needs to remain patient to enjoy the fruits of their labour.

The next column will elaborate on the flowering phase of the hollyhocks, its fertiliser requirements and other interesting aspects of this flowering plant. ■

Please send your queries and emails to doctor@thatmail.com. The writer is a physician and a host for the YouTube channel 'ThatTree Gardening' promoting organic kitchen gardening.

EOS

ADVICE



AUNTIE AGNI

'My Parents Favour My Siblings Over Me'

Hi Auntie,

I'm a 22-year-old university student and the second of four sisters. I'm writing because I've been deeply affected by the way my parents treat me, compared to my eldest sister. She is clearly their favourite, receiving all their love, attention and even financial support. Meanwhile, the rest of us are often overlooked, especially me.

I've noticed that when my younger sisters share something, my parents at least listen, but when I try to speak, they ignore me entirely. This favouritism has made me feel so alienated that I've become rude and short-tempered at home. My parents now use my behaviour as a justification for their treatment, saying I'm not as calm and respectful as my elder sister, which is why they favour her.

What they don't realise is that their neglect and unfairness are the reasons I've become this way. It's a vicious cycle, one that leaves me feeling helpless and misunderstood. I've tried talking to them, but like many brown parents, they become emotional and avoid taking responsibility for their actions.

How do I bridge this gap and make them see the distance between us?
Disturbed Daughter

Dear Disturbed Daughter,

It breaks one's heart to feel overlooked by your own parents. Whether favouritism is intentional or not, it can deeply wound your self-worth. It's clear from your letter that there is an imbalance.

In your case, there is a vicious cycle. The lack of attention from your parents has led to feelings of frustration, which is resulting in your rudeness. Unfortunately, their reaction only reinforces the dynamic, which leaves you more hurt. This is a difficult space to be in, but change is possible if you approach things with patience and understanding.

The first thing to do is to acknowledge your feelings and allow yourself to grieve the imbalance in your family. It's natural to want your parents to treat you the same way they treat your elder sister, but it's important to accept that their behaviour reflects their perspective and not your worth. This can help ease some of the pain.

When trying to bridge the gap with your parents, you should pick the time wisely. Instead of confronting them in the heat of the moment, choose a calm time to have a conversation. Instead of blaming them, tell them how you feel. So say something like, "I feel hurt when I am not heard", instead of "You never listen to me."

Also, try to understand their point of view. While their favouritism is not justified, they may have reasons for their behaviour. Maybe they rely on your elder sister in ways they don't with you, or they might have preconceived notions about roles within the family. You don't have to agree with it, but just knowing their perspective can help you approach them with empathy.

In the meantime, focus on building your sense of self-worth outside of your family. Strengthen your relationships with your siblings and with friends. Get involved in activities that bring you joy.

Just remember that change takes time. Your parents may not immediately take responsibility for their actions, but by consistently telling them your feelings, you can begin to build trust. At the same time, be prepared for the possibility that they may never change, so learn to find peace within yourself. ■

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 auntieagni@gmail.com

STATIC CLING



THE FACT THAT THE ISRAELI ARMY HAD TO EXPLICITLY WARN ITS CITIZENS THAT THEY COULD POSSIBLY FACE PROSECUTION ABROAD FOR THEIR WAR CRIMES IN GAZA, BASED ON FOOTAGE THEY HAD UPLOADED THEMSELVES ON SOCIAL MEDIA, SHOWED THAT NOT ONLY WERE ZIONIST SOLDIERS SHAMELESS AND IMMORAL, THEY WERE ALSO RATHER STUPID IN THE HEAD.



FOREIGN DISCLOSURE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

INVITATION TO BID FOR SUPPLY OF POLY PRODUCTS

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DAWN
DISCLAIMER

Students are encouraged to create original lyrics making any reference to controversial issues in a respectful and humorous way. But students are not permitted to publish or perform satirical songs. The FBI, "Protects" music. Publishers and songwriters are not allowed to use the lyrics of the songs in their books and sheet music. They must be approved by the FBI, and those that are cleared that are subsequently placed in a book or on a record are not subject to any further review. The FBI is not allowed to seek all types of information on young Americans who are writing their own material that refers to the military. The FBI is not allowed to conduct independent investigations and deployment of all arms, the management of all weapons, and the use of all weapons. The FBI is not allowed to conduct independent investigations and deployment of all arms, the management of all weapons, and the use of all weapons. The FBI is not allowed to conduct independent investigations and deployment of all arms, the management of all weapons, and the use of all weapons.



Expression of Interest (EOI)

**Prequalification of Consultancy Services for Architectural Services
for 6 proposed Centers of Excellence in Pakistan
TVET Sector Support Programme (TVET SSP)**

A response to the EOI does not necessarily imply that your firm will receive the G2's RFP for the provision of above-mentioned services. G2 reserves the right to accept or reject any bid without providing a reason for its decision.

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1. Describe how and why the following are related:

a. Government and the economy - Government is the largest employer in the economy. It also controls the money supply and interest rates, which in turn affect the economy. The government also regulates the economy through various laws and regulations.

b. Government and the environment - The government is responsible for protecting the environment and ensuring that natural resources are used sustainably. It also regulates the use of land and water resources.

c. Government and the social system - The government is responsible for providing social services and ensuring that the social system is fair and just. It also regulates the labor market and ensures that workers are protected.

d. Government and the international system - The government is responsible for representing the country in the international system and ensuring that the country's interests are protected. It also negotiates trade agreements and other international treaties.

2. Explain the following:

a. The role of the government in the economy - The government plays a crucial role in the economy by providing public goods, regulating the market, and redistributing income. It also acts as a lender of last resort and a guarantor of deposits.

b. The role of the government in the environment - The government is responsible for protecting the environment and ensuring that natural resources are used sustainably. It also regulates the use of land and water resources.

c. The role of the government in the social system - The government is responsible for providing social services and ensuring that the social system is fair and just. It also regulates the labor market and ensures that workers are protected.

d. The role of the government in the international system - The government is responsible for representing the country in the international system and ensuring that the country's interests are protected. It also negotiates trade agreements and other international treaties.

3. Discuss the following:

a. The impact of government on the economy - Government intervention in the economy can have both positive and negative effects. On the one hand, it can provide public goods and regulate the market, which can lead to a more efficient and stable economy. On the other hand, it can also create distortions and inefficiencies, which can lead to a less competitive and less dynamic economy.

b. The impact of government on the environment - Government intervention in the environment can have both positive and negative effects. On the one hand, it can protect the environment and ensure that natural resources are used sustainably. On the other hand, it can also create distortions and inefficiencies, which can lead to a less competitive and less dynamic economy.

c. The impact of government on the social system - Government intervention in the social system can have both positive and negative effects. On the one hand, it can provide social services and ensure that the social system is fair and just. On the other hand, it can also create distortions and inefficiencies, which can lead to a less competitive and less dynamic economy.

d. The impact of government on the international system - Government intervention in the international system can have both positive and negative effects. On the one hand, it can represent the country's interests and negotiate trade agreements. On the other hand, it can also create distortions and inefficiencies, which can lead to a less competitive and less dynamic economy.

4. Write a short essay on the following:

a. The role of the government in the economy - The government plays a crucial role in the economy by providing public goods, regulating the market, and redistributing income. It also acts as a lender of last resort and a guarantor of deposits.

b. The role of the government in the environment - The government is responsible for protecting the environment and ensuring that natural resources are used sustainably. It also regulates the use of land and water resources.

c. The role of the government in the social system - The government is responsible for providing social services and ensuring that the social system is fair and just. It also regulates the labor market and ensures that workers are protected.

d. The role of the government in the international system - The government is responsible for representing the country in the international system and ensuring that the country's interests are protected. It also negotiates trade agreements and other international treaties.

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IN THE HIGH COURT OF NINON ELBAONI

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IN THE HIGH COURT OF SINDH

AT KARACHI

To:

- &
 Rio House No. 537 St. No. 12, Gul Maher
 Block, Bahria Town, Lahore

Take notice that the above matter is now fixed in Court on **22-01-2025 at 09:15 a.m. for Hearing of Main Case & for Orders on M.A. No. 784 & 785 of 2022**, when you are required to be present, failing which the matter will be decided in your absence.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Court this 26th day of December 2024.

**I/C Assistant Registrar
Criminal Branch**

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[illegible]

KARACHI METROPOLITAN CORPORATION
THE SENIOR DIRECTOR
 P.O. Box: 99216320
 Zoological Garden, Nishtar Road, Karachi West

OPENING TENDERS
 (AS PER SPPHRA 2010 AMENDED TILL DATE)
 For the following items from the contractors/suppliers on Single
 Lot 46 to SPPHRA 2010 (Amended till date)

Estimated Cost (Million)	Estimated Money (Rhs.)	Cost of Tender (in shape of Pay Order)
Office Rm	2% of the Est Amount	Rhs. 5,000/-

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

1. The tenderer must submit a copy of the tender to the Senior Director, Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, P.O. Box: 99216320, Karachi West, on or before the date and time specified in the tender.

2. The tenderer must submit a copy of the tender to the Senior Director, Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, P.O. Box: 99216320, Karachi West, on or before the date and time specified in the tender.

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7. The tenderer must submit a copy of the tender to the Senior Director, Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, P.O. Box: 99216320, Karachi West, on or before the date and time specified in the tender.

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9. The tenderer must submit a copy of the tender to the Senior Director, Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, P.O. Box: 99216320, Karachi West, on or before the date and time specified in the tender.

10. The tenderer must submit a copy of the tender to the Senior Director, Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, P.O. Box: 99216320, Karachi West, on or before the date and time specified in the tender.

SENIOR DIRECTOR
Zoo, Safari & Recreation,
Karachi Metropolitan Corporation

KMC/99216320/2020
 Ref: 99216320/2020

DISPOSAL OF MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

A multinational company is inviting bids for the disposal of various items located in Karachi, including:

- Electronic Equipment
- Furniture & Fixtures
- Miscellaneous Items

Details and images of the items can be accessed by scanning the following QR code or by visiting the link <http://aauri.iiisorekci>.



Terms & Conditions:
 Interested parties/individuals may call at 0322-5694588, 0305-3774790, 0300-8245111 to schedule date and time for physical inspection before Friday, 17 January 2025. Items will be sold on an "as-is, where-is" basis with no warranty and claims. The company reserves the right to accept or reject all or any bid(s) without providing a reason. QR code and link above contains detailed terms and conditions.

Last date of bids submission is **Wednesday, 22 January 2025.**

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Peoples Steel Mills Limited, the premier alloy steel manufacturer of Pakistan is seeking a seasoned GM/Director Sales and Marketing to lead and implement strategies that drive revenue growth, enhance brand awareness, and expand market share both locally and internationally.

Requirements

- Master Degree in Business Administration, Marketing or a related field.
- Engineering Degree in Mechanical / Metallurgy Engineers will be preferred.
- 20+ years of experience in Sales and Marketing (at least 5 years in leadership position), with a strong focus on the steel industry or related sectors.
- Proven track record of Business Development / Marketing of steel / engineering products.
- Adequate knowledge of governmental policies such as Fiscal, Tariff, Trade & Industrial Policies and execution of government policies and statutory orders.

Key Responsibilities

- Develop and execute comprehensive sales and marketing strategies to drive revenue growth, expand market presence, and enhance brand recognition.
- Set ambitious sales and export targets for both domestic and international markets, devising action plans to achieve these goals.
- Oversee the sales pipeline and ensure accurate forecasting, performance tracking, and reporting.
- Set individual and team targets, regularly monitor performance, and adjust strategies to meet or exceed goals.
- Foster a culture of accountability, collaboration, and continuous improvement across the sales and marketing teams.
- Collaborate with finance, production, and logistics teams to ensure competitive pricing and maximize profitability.

How To Apply

Interested professionals meeting the above criteria may apply through email at hr@psmltd.com, within 15 days of the publication of this advertisement.



UNITED NATIONS
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION



Funded by
the European Union

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) - 3RD BATCH

Business Development Grants for Entrepreneurs, SMEs & Cooperatives / Associations
"POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT ACROSS RURAL SINDH" (PAIDARI)

PAIDARI is a five-year programme funded by the European Union (EU) and implemented by United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to support the Government of Sindh in implementing its Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS). PAIDARI programme aims to support capable and eligible business owners with the required resources to help them grow their businesses and create sustainable incomes for the poor population.

Under this Call for EOI, UNIDO invites prospective and eligible investors in Pakistan to submit their innovative and viable business ideas as a first step towards accessing PAIDARI grants. The proposed business ideas can either be for expansion / modernization / technology upgradation of existing business facilities or for setting up new business (start-up) facilities within five selected districts of Sindh (Thatta, Sujawal, Badin, Tharparkar and Larkana).

At a later stage, short-listed applicants will be invited to submit their fully-fledged investment proposals for UNIDO grant-funding, against a restricted Call for Proposals (30th Jan).

FUNDING RANGE: from € 11,000 to € 200,000 per grant award. UNIDO may cover up to 50% of the selected project cost and up to 70% in case of businesses owned & operated by women as well as physically disabled persons and transgender persons.

WHO CAN APPLY: Private entrepreneurs, Small & Medium Enterprises and Cooperatives / Associations, duly registered with relevant Government authorities. Applications from Government agencies or Joint Venture companies are also welcomed.

Deadline for submitting of proposals in January 21st, 2025 (17:00 CET).

To Apply: Access details from the UNIDO e-Procurement Portal
<https://www.unido.org/get-involved/procurement/procurement-opportunities>
For any inquiries or clarifications, please contact: Ms. Natalie Masudi at N.Masudi@unido.org



PAIDARI

UNIVERSITY OF KARACHI

University Road, Karachi-75270
Tel: (021) 9926 1344 Email: registrar@uok.edu.pk

JANUARY 10, 2025

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Applications are invited for the following Positions in the respective Departments / Institutes of the University of Karachi as per Criteria and Terms & Conditions given below:-

DIRECTOR Quality Enhancement Cell (One Post) (Contractual)

First Class Master's Degree or preferably Higher Degree from HEC recognized institute with No Third Division in the entire academic career and 10 years administrative experience (preferably in QEC) in any public or reputed private sector higher education institution or equivalent. In addition any law degree is highly desirable. The incumbent must have the knowledge of Quality Assurance and Data Processing in respect of SARF, IPE and Academic Audit for Universities and Affiliated allied institutions in the process of Quality Control and Quality Enhancement according to Higher Education parameters described by HEC. Should have proficiency in English language with good communication skills and command on office automation.

HORTICULTURE OFFICER

(One Post) (Contractual)
First Class B.S Degree in Horticulture / M.Sc in Botany / Agriculture with specialization in Plant Taxonomy or preferably higher degree along with 05 years' experience in Botanical Garden. Field knowledge will be considered as an additional qualification.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- Application should be submitted on prescribed form obtainable from the HRM Section, Ground Floor, New Administration, University of Karachi on Payment of Rs. 4,000 through Pay Order in favor of "University of Karachi".
- Degree / Certificate Courses must be passed from University / Board / Institutions recognized by the HEC.
- Application on Plain Paper will NOT be accepted.
- Maximum Age Limit for Applicants is 40 Years on the Closing Date of Advertisement. Condition of Age is Relaxable for Internal Candidates / Government Employees.
- Candidate already working in Government, Semi Government and Autonomous Organizations in Pakistan must apply through Proper Channel.
- Only Short Listed Candidates will be called for Test / Interview / Selection Board of the University.
- The University of Karachi reserves the right to withdraw any Post or may cancel the Advertisement at any time without assigning any reason.
- Candidates must have Sindh Domicile.
- All previous Advertisements of these Posts are withdrawn.
- The University of Karachi is an Equal Opportunity Employer.
- Two Copies of Application along with Photocopies of Degree / Diploma / Certificate / Experience Certificate must reach the HRM Section, University of Karachi, within 15 Working Days of the Publication of this Advertisement.

REGISTRAR

Application Form for the position of Registrar, University of Karachi. The form includes fields for Name, Address, Contact Information, and a section for the Registrar's signature and stamp. It also contains a declaration section where the applicant confirms the accuracy of the information provided and agrees to the terms of the advertisement.

TEACHER TRAINER REQUIRED

We are looking for confident, energetic and career-oriented female individuals for a trust operated School/Teachers Professional Development Center. The applicants should have MEd./BEd./Diploma or other professional qualifications with strengths in Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics) for Primary and Secondary levels. The applicant should have experience of designing and conducting courses and need-based workshops for teachers. She should be able to facilitate teachers' professional development through classroom observations, conducting academic sessions and using other modes of need-based professional support. Fluency in written and spoken English is essential.

Opportunities for professional growth and attractive salary with fringe benefits will be offered commensurate with experience and qualifications.

Please send your application with complete CV or E-mail to amnetworkhr@gmail.com

Al-Murtaza Professional Development Centre
1-64-D, Block-III, PECHS, Karachi. Phone: 0300-2665231
E-mail: amnetworkhr@gmail.com

Confidentiality of applicants will be strictly observed.

DAWN

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CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

We are seeking a skilled Import Officer & Import Assistant for our import department.

IMPORT OFFICER (Salary Range: Rs. 40,000 – 75,000)

- Be a graduate with 4-8 years of experience in import handling.
- Be skilled in preparing LC/Contracts, communicating with banks, shipping companies, custom agents, and transporters etc.
- Maintain a proper track record of all shipments.

IMPORT ASSISTANT (Salary Range: Rs. 40,000 – 10,000)

- A graduate with 4-8 years of experience in handling import clearing bills, and vendor payments etc.
- Proficiency in preparing landed costs of import items.
- Ability to communicate effectively with the shipping agents, custom agents, and transporters.
- Capacity to maintain accurate records of all payments / port charges and other costs.

Apply by 31st January 2025 Send your CV to
E-mail: jobs.bw@shawl.com

POSITION VACANT

PMA Model Secondary School invites applications from eligible and interested candidates for the following positions:		
Principal	Any Subject	Master's Degree in any subject. BEd / MEd will be preferred. 05 (five) years' experience as principal.
Teacher for Secondary Section	Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Urdu, English, Computer Science	Masters in relevant subject, at least 02 years of teaching experience at school level.
PTIs / Sports Teacher	Physical Edu. & Sports Science	Male / Female Masters / Graduate at least 02 years experience at school level.

Interested applicants should send their detailed CV to address given at the end, till 24th January, 2025.

PMA MODEL SECONDARY SCHOOL
Malangpur, Hazratnagar Road Karachi Contact: 0321-2206658
Email: pma.model.secondary.school@gmail.com

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CAREER OPPORTUNITY

All requests with applications form, forms and cover should be submitted to the following email address:

- General Manager / Finance
- Assistant Manager - Finance (Revenue)
- SGA Engineer - HR
- Senior Executive - IT Governance
- Senior Executive - Finance (Reporting)
- Senior Executive - Finance (Revenue)
- Senior Executive - Finance (Payroll)
- Senior Technical Project Executive
- Executive - Finance (Pre Audit)
- Executive - Finance (Revenue)
- Software Support Executive
- Junior Data Analyst
- Junior Database Administration
- Web Developer
- Site Engineer (Civil)
- Library Assistant

For a detailed job description, please visit our career page: www.shawl.com/career. Interested candidates must apply online within 02 days from the publication date of this advertisement. Shaws is an equal opportunity employer and all applications are assessed based on merit. Differently-abled individuals are also encouraged to apply. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted for an interview.

Women are encouraged to apply.
Human Resources Department, Shaws Karachi, University Road, Karachi
Cable: 1110000000

0300-2665231



Benzair Institute of Urology & Transplantation (BIUT), & Sindh Institute of Urology & Transplantation (SIUT), on Shaheed Benazirabad (Nawabshah), is a 300-bedded, tertiary healthcare hospital. Established with a mission to provide free-of-cost medical cover to the patients with renal & related diseases.

We are looking for energetic and enthusiastic professionals who have passion and a desire to make a positive difference in patient care. The below mentioned positions are based at Shaheed Benazirabad (Nawabshah).

St. LECTURER / ASSISTANT PROFESSOR / CONSULTANT / SPECIALIST

- Clinical Pathology
- Microbiology
- Histopathology
- Hematology
- MBBS/FCPS/MCPS/DGP in respective disciplines.
- Qualification, Experience & Publications of faculty positions are as per PMDC requirements.
- For Consultant/Specialist posts 02 years' experience is required.

SENIOR LECTURER/ ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

- Paeds Urology
- Paeds Nephrology
- Nephrology
- Anesthesiology
- Intensive Care Unit
- Qualification, Experience & Publications of faculty positions are as per PMDC requirements.

CONSULTANT/SPECIALIST RADIOLOGY

- FCPS/MCPS/DMRD in Radiology with relevant experience.

RESIDENT MEDICAL OFFICER (SHIFT OUTPAT)

- Urology
- Anesthesiology
- Nephrology
- ICU
- Emergency
- MBBS with one year house job completed.

NURSING SUPERVISOR

B.ScN or 03-year diploma of General Nursing with valid PMC registration. Candidates must have 07 years post-qualification experience out of which 03 years in Supervisory role in a tertiary care hospital.

ASSISTANT MEDICAL SOCIAL OFFICER

Graduate preferably in Social work / Sociology / Public Health from recognized institution with 02-03 years relevant experience in a hospital set up.

HOW TO APPLY

If you are interested in joining our dynamic team, please send your updated resume at BIUTSIUT.HR@GMAIL.COM, latest by January 25, 2025. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.



AL MURTAZA SCHOOL NETWORK
Affiliated with ARJIS

FEMALE TEACHING STAFF REQUIRED

- Teachers for Primary Level (Classes I-V)
- Art Teachers for Primary and Lower Secondary Level
- English Teacher for Lower Secondary Level (Classes IV-V)
- Maths Teacher for Secondary Level

Eligibility Criteria

- Minimum Bachelor's Degree or A-Levels.
- Experience will be preferred.
- Proficiency in spoken and written English.

Benefits

- Excellent in-house training and sponsorship for further Professional Development.
- Progressive salaries with enhanced personal skills and training.
- Life insurance, Health insurance, EOB, Provident Fund Scheme and other fringe benefits.

Confidentiality of applicant will be strictly observed

118-A, Block III, PECHS, Karachi. ☎ 0300-2665231 ✉ Email: CV to amnetworkhr@gmail.com



#BankofKhyber

WE ARE HIRING!

Bank of Khyber is seeking applications from highly skilled and experienced candidates for the following positions:

- Branch Managers**
Locations: Lahore, Islamabad, Dera, Islamabad, Sharada, Miranshah, Bahawal, Karak.
- Sub Branch Manager**
Location: Swat
- Officer Financial Planning Unit - Budgeting & Planning Department**
Finance Group
Location: Head Office - Peshawar
- Head Remittances Department - Trade Operations Division**
Location: Karachi
- Trade Officers**
Location: Lahore
- Officer Trade Based Money Laundering Department**
Location: Karachi

Note: In case the degree is obtained from a foreign university, equivalency certificate from HEC is to be submitted by the candidates at the time of interview to validate the required education.

Interested candidates may visit our website at www.bok.com.pk/careers for further details regarding job responsibilities and for submission of ONLINE application latest by January 26, 2025.

PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ARE PERSUADED TO APPLY
BANK OF KHYBER IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER.
ALL CANDIDATES ARE TREATED STRICTLY ON MERIT.
WOMEN ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO APPLY



Khanjar General Hospital (KGH), Managed by MHA Health Association, State of the art, 350 bedded tertiary care, Post-Graduate Teaching & Training Centre Recognized by CPSP & PMDC, ISO 9001:2015 Certified for providing "Quality Health Services".

DEPARTMENT OF OBSTETRICS & GYNAECOLOGY

One of the oldest and busiest unit of city, catering about 6000 deliveries per year. FRCOG, MRCDG, FCPS Faculty engaged to conduct OPD, IPD, Emergency and operative procedures. KGH offers a structured training program for Post - Graduate Medical Education recognized by CPSP & PMDC in Obs / Gynae. Applications are invited for following position: **Consultant, Obstetrics & Gynaecology (Full-time)** Qualification: FCPS, FRCOG or equivalent Eligibility: Post FCPS 5 years relevant experience. Must be enrolled as Supervisor in CPSP. **How to Apply:** Applications with a Covering letter and detailed CV, should be sent to HR Department, KGH, Aga Khan Road, Karachi or Email: kgk.hospital@gmail.com latest by January 26, 2025.