



# Zardari, Xi chart course for expansion of CPEC

- President invites Chinese counterpart to Pakistan, lauds Beijing's development model
- MoUs signed to boost science, clean energy, media cooperation
- Two sides to enhance intelligence sharing, border security

By Syed Irfan Hashmi and  
Ihtisham A. Khan

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari met his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping on Wednesday, reaffirming the long-standing strategic partnership between the two nations and exploring new avenues of cooperation under CPEC 2.0.

According to the President, the meeting was held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

**Murad asks Chinese firms to invest in transport, energy projects** Page 13

where the two leaders also discussed regional and international issues of common interest, and opportunities to further expand the scope of bilateral partnerships, especially through continued high-level exchanges.

They highlighted the vital role of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in promoting regional connectivity, shared benefits and common prosperity, including through partnerships with other countries.

Both sides also underlined the significance of people-to-people linkages and cultural exchanges

for strengthening the China-Pakistan Community of Shared Future in the New Era.

Underlining the enduring friendship between the two countries, both leaders also reaffirmed support for each other on the issues of core interest.

President Zardari, who is currently on a five-day official visit to China, reaffirmed Pakistan's steadfast commitment to its "all-weather strategic cooperative partnership" with China and underlined the "unique, time-tested and special relationship" between the two countries.

He also commended China's exemplary development, progress and prosperity, calling it a manifestation of the vision of the Chinese leadership and the dynamism of the Chinese people.

President Zardari also paid rich tribute to President Xi Jinping for China's profound contributions to global development under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). He described CPEC as a shining model of the BRI's visionary concept of win-win cooperation.

He extended the invitation to President Xi to visit Pakistan, explaining that the people and government of Pakistan hold him

Continued on Page 5



CHINA: President Xi Jinping and President Asif Ali Zardari walk past the honour guards during the welcome ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, on Wednesday. —AFP

## PM calls for meaningful talks on Kashmir issue

- Urges India to move beyond Aug 5, 2019, mindset
- Addresses AJK Assembly as nation observes Solidarity Day
- COAS reaffirms military's commitment to Kashmir cause

By Tariq Naqash

MUZAFFARABAD: As people across the country came together in various ways to express solidarity with the struggling people of Indian-held Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif urged Delhi to move beyond the mindset of Aug 5, 2019, and engage in a meaningful and result-oriented dialogue to fulfil its commitments to the Kashmiris and the world regarding the implementation of the UN Security Council resolution.

"We have always adhered to the principle of peaceful coexistence with our neigh-

bours. We want all disputes, including Jammu and Kashmir, to be resolved through peaceful means based on democratic and diplomatic principles. This is essential for the development and prosperity of billions of people living in this region," the prime minister said in his address to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly, presided over by Speaker Chaudhary Latif Akhtar.

The session was among a slew of activities held across the country as well as in many other parts of the world to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day, a yearly national feature to manifest support for the Kashmiris fighting Indian occupation of their motherland with countless braveries.

After landing in Muzaffarabad, PM Shabbaz first visited a grand Martyrs' Monument, where he was also joined by Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Syed Asim Munir. Both laid floral wreaths at the monument and observed a one-minute silence to pay homage to the fallen heroes of the Kashmiri freedom movement.

While the prime minister drove to the Legislative Assembly, the army chief went to a nearby military installation where he interacted with a select group of

Continued on Page 5

## PTI ropes in ex-PM Abbasi to steer Opp alliance

By Iqram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: After talks between the government and the opposition collapsed last week, the PTI made another push to establish a joint front against the federal government and roped in former prime minister Shabbaz Sharif to become part of its anti-government movement.

The meeting with the former PM, a lawmaker from Murree came after PTI founder Imran Khan wrote a letter to Army Chief Gen Asim Munir proposing 'remedial measures' to bridge the purported trust deficit between the public and the military.

The PTI has also made efforts to convince Maulana Faruk Rehman of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam and former PPP senior Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar to become part of its anti-government alliance.

It may be noted that in April last year the PTI already formed a multi-party opposition alliance named Tehreek-e-Talaf-e-Azadi-e-Pakistan, comprising Sunni Ittehad Council, Pakistan Awami Milli Movement, Pakistan National Party, Pakistan Muslim League (N), and Majlis-e-Muslimeen.

The PTI officials said the grand alliance would be steered by Mr Abbasi. This was decided after major opposition parties gathered at the residence of former

Continued on Page 5

## Karim Aga Khan — Imam of the atomic age

By Qasim A. Moyni in Karachi

OBITUARY

SHAH Karim Al Husseini, better known to the world as the Aga Khan, was a prince without a physical realm. Yet he mingled with kings and presidents, and oversaw a fortune reportedly worth billions of dollars.

Prince Karim, who passed away on Tuesday at the age of 88, was the 49th hereditary imam of the Ismaili Muslims, and the fourth to bear the title of Aga Khan. In his nearly 68-year tenure as Ismaili imam, he worked for the socioeconomic uplift of his flock, as well as the larger communities wherever Ismailis could be found.

Claiming descent from the Ismaili imams that would separate from the Shia mainstream in the eighth cen-



GOLDEN Jubilee of the Aga Khan in London, 2008.—Courtesy Ismaili Imam / Zaher Ramo

tury, Prince Karim was very much a man of the modern world.

Born in 1936 in Geneva, Prince Karim assumed the mantle at age 20 in 1957, when he was declared heir to his grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, Aga Khan III. Both

**Prince Rahim made new imam as world condole**  
**Aga Khan's demise:** Page 3

**Karim Aga Khan: Editorial**  
**on Page 6**

his father Prince Aly and his uncle Sadruddin were bypassed by his grandfather and Prince Karim, described as a "handsome young Harvard man" in a Time magazine article from 1960, became the leader of millions of the Ismaili

faithful. He would finish his studies at Harvard (obtaining a BA Honours in Islamic History) after becoming imam. Talking to Vanity Fair in 2013, he described receiving his grandfather's mantle as "a shock".

**Ancient roots, modern outlook**

Though the Ismaili imam goes back 13 centuries, both the 'prince' and 'Aga Khan' titles in his name can be traced to the mid-19th century, before Prince Karim's Iranian forebears left their homeland to relocate to the subcontinent. The first to hold the title of Aga Khan was his great-great-grandfather, Hasan Ali Shah Mahallati, the 46th Nizari Ismaili imam. He was granted the title by Fath Ali Shah, Qajar monarch of Iran. The

Continued on Page 11

## Breathe Pakistan moot begins today

By Zaki Abbas

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif will address a global climate conference at the Jinnah Convention Centre in Islamabad, which will be attended by national and international experts to find viable solutions to climate change.

The international conference being held today (Thursday) and tomorrow

**No time left: Editorial**  
**on Page 6**

is part of DawnMedia's 'Breathe Pakistan' initiative, which aims to mobilise finance and find solutions to counter climate change.

The conference will witness a session on climate finance in which Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and two former State Bank of

Continued on Page 5

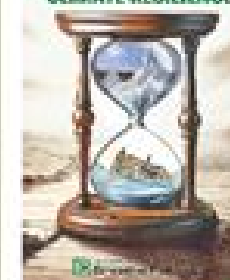
## ON OTHER PAGES

### MoUs may be signed during Erdogan visit

Pakistan and Turkey are expected to sign MoUs to expand economic ties during the upcoming visit of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to the country. Officials from the two countries discussed an action plan for future collaborations on Wednesday. Page 9

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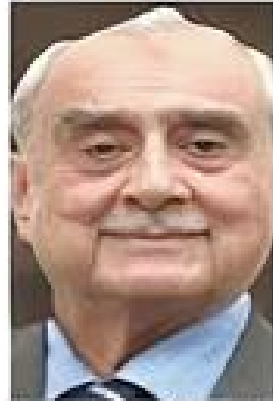
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## Female employment in federal govt remains low

Despite making up half the population, women hold only 5pc of federal jobs

By Khaleeq Kiari

ISLAMABAD: Despite constituting nearly half of the country's population, women account for only five per cent of the federal government's civilian workforce.

According to the latest figures compiled by the Pakistan Public Administration Research Centre (PPARC) of the Establishment Division, out of more than 1.2 million employees in the federal government and its affiliated entities, only 49,508 are women. This includes 30,190 female employees within the government and 19,318 in autonomous bodies and corporations.

This is despite a 10pc quota for employment of women to all posts across the board in federal government services, including the Civil Superior Services (CSS), to be filled by direct recruitment, in addition to their selection on open merit.

The report said the actual working strength of federal government female employees for the year 2022-23 stood at 30,190 as against 28,455 a year earlier, showing an increase of 6.07pc.

"Out of the total strength of 590,585 of federal government employees, the share of female employees in government sector is almost 5.11pc during 2022-23," it said.

The data showed that of the 30,190 female employees, 22,24pc (or 6,715) were officers in BS-17-22 and the remaining 7,77pc (23,475) were subordi-

nate staff in BS-1-16.

Of the female employees in BS-17 to 22, 61.01pc were in BS-17, 24.1pc in BS-18, 9.81pc in BS-19, 2.37pc in BS-20, 0.8pc in BS-21, and 0.12pc were working in BS-22 in the federal government.

Among the female employees working in BS-1-16, 33.57pc were in BS-1-5, 21.48pc in BS-16, 13.20pc in BS-14, 8.54pc in BS-7, 8.13pc in BS-6, 6.59pc in BS-11, 3.02pc in BS-15, 1.38pc in BS-6, while other scales had minor share.

The Defence Division employs the largest proportion of female workers, hiring 37,31pc of all women employed in the federal government. This is followed by Federal Education and Professional Training Division (20.42pc), Interior Division (7.10pc), National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination (6.52pc), and Aviation Division (4.75pc).

In the federal secretariat, the total working strength of female employees stood at 986, of which 39.64pc were working in BS-17 to 22 while 60.34pc in BS-1 to 16.

Of the 391 female officers working in the Federal Secretariat, 47.31pc were in BS-18, 27.62pc in BS-17, 12.79pc in BS-19, 7.10pc in BS-20, 3.53pc in BS-21 and 1.02pc in BS-22.

The number of female employees in BS-1 to 16 at the Federal Secretariat stood at 595, of whom 28.57pc were in BS-15, 17.59pc in BS-16, 17.48pc in BS-1-4, 14.37pc in BS-5, 11.91pc in BS-14, and 9.57pc in BS-11.

The total number of female employees in attached departments of the government was reported at 22,618. Of this, 5,824 (25.45pc) were working in BS-17 to 22. This included 61.35pc in BS-17, 22.45pc in BS-18, 9.72pc in BS-19, 2.03pc in BS-20, 0.24pc in BS-21, and none in BS-22.

On the other hand, of 16,194 females in BS-1 to 16 working in attached departments, 32.04pc were reported in BS-16, 20.95pc in BS-1-5, 17.26pc in BS-14, 9.05pc in BS-7, 7.97pc in BS-6, 7.12pc in BS-11, and 2.78pc in BS-15, while other scales had minor share.

"In autonomous bodies and corporations, there are 19,318 female employees, comprising 5.41pc of the total employment," the report said, putting the total number of employees in these entities at 357,025.

A total of 6,099 females were working in subordinate offices, of whom 325 were in BS-17 to 22 and the remaining in BS-1-16.

The working strength of female employees for the year 2022-23 across all autonomous and semi-autonomous bodies and corporations under the federal government showed a minor increase of 0.32pc compared to the previous year's figure of 19,257. The actual working strength of female employees shows that 32.75pc were officers working in BS-17-22 or equivalent and the remaining 67.25pc in BS-1-16 or equivalent.

Among the female employees working in autonomous, semi-autonomous bodies and corporations, the provincial and regional domicile-wise breakdown showed that the share of Punjab was 63.35pc (including 6.24pc from Islamabad), followed by Sindh 21.05pc (Sindh Rural 6.92pc and Sindh Urban 14.09pc), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 9.5pc and Balochistan 3.17pc.

The share of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan and erstwhile Fata stood at 1.98pc, 0.79pc and 0.23pc, respectively, in total female employees.

The share of female employees from Fata, Sindh (rural) and Punjab decreased compared to the previous year.

## Prince Rahim made new imam as world condolees Aga Khan's demise

• Zardari says Pakistan has lost a great friend • PM says his legacy will continue to inspire generations • UN chief, King Charles, Malala, Trudeau saddened

LISBON / ISLAMABAD: Prince Rahim Ad-Din Muhammad Aga Khan V was on Wednesday named the 50th hereditary imam (spiritual leader), following the passing of the will of his late father, Prince Karim Ad-Din Muhammad Aga Khan IV, who died in Lisbon, Portugal, on Tuesday night. He was 88.

According to a press release issued by Divan of the Ismaili Imam, Prince Rahim Aga Khan V is a direct descendant of the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him).

Leaders and prominent figures from Pakistan and around the world expressed deep shock and profound sadness over the passing of Prince Karim Aga Khan, with tributes pouring in from all corners of the globe in honour of his legacy and leadership.

President Anwar Ali Zardari said Pakistan had lost a great friend who made great contributions to the uplift of the country's social sector, particularly in health, education and community development. The invaluable services of the Aga Khan for humanity will always be remembered, the President's secretariat quoted him as saying.

The president termed the Aga Khan's demise a monumental loss, saying words could not adequately



PRINCE Rahim Aga Khan.—AFP

express his sorrow at the loss of such a devoted friend of Pakistan. He said the late Aga Khan revolutionised the educational landscape in Gilgit-Baltistan, establishing world-class educational standards in the region.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the Aga Khan was a man of vision, faith and generosity and his enduring legacy will continue to inspire generations. His contributions transcended borders, bringing hope and progress to communities in need, he added.

In a post on X, PM Shehbaz said the Aga Khan's enduring legacy will continue to inspire generations. His contributions transcended borders, bringing hope and progress to com-

munities in need.

The Foreign Office, in a statement, said that spiritual leader, statesman, visionary and philanthropist, Aga Khan continued many roles and stood out as a unifying figure in a fragmented world.

The Gilgit-Baltistan government announced three days of mourning. During this period (Feb 5 to 7), the national flag will remain at half-mast on all government buildings.

'A symbol of peace'

United Nations chief Antonio Guterres described Aga Khan as "a symbol of peace, tolerance and compassion in our troubled world".

Malala Yousafzai, the Nobel Peace laureate, said his legacy would "live on through the incredible work he did for education, health and development around the world".

Britain's King Charles was "deeply saddened" by the death of Aga Khan, who was "a personal friend of many years", an unnamed royal source was quoted in the British press as saying.

Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau described Aga Khan as an "extraordinary man of vision, faith, and generosity" who "devoted his life to peace and prosperity for all". —Agencies

## Political activist shot dead in Turbat

By Behram Baloch and Ali Jan Mangi

GWADAR/DERA: MURAD JAMALI: Unidentified armed men shot dead a National Democratic Party activist in Turbat town of Kuch district on Wednesday night.

Police said Allah Dad, an MPhil student, was targeted while sitting in a hotel in Turbat Bazaar, having tea with a friend. The attackers opened fire, killing Allah Dad on the spot.

Police rushed to the area after receiving information about the incident and took the body to the district hospital. Hospital officials said Allah Dad suffered multiple

bullet wounds, causing his immediate death. His friend remained unharmed in the shooting. The body was later handed over to his family. The Baloch Yakjehi Committee condemned the assassination of Allah Dad, demanding the immediate arrest of the attackers.

Man killed in Dera Bugti

Unknown armed men shot dead a man and injured another in Dera Bugti district on Wednesday.

According to Levies officials, Zafar Ali and his friend were attacked in the Gharibabad area of Jafar Sai. The body and the injured were taken to a nearby hospital. The officials described the incident as a target killing.

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THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE



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TOMORROW DAY TWO MORNING SESSION

FRIDAY 7 FEBRUARY 9 AM SHARP TO 11 AM

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On Friday 7 February 2025 at 9 AM sharp in the Pakistan Symposium at *Breathe Pakistan*, session chairman Ahsan Iqbal Minister Planning & Development, will be joined by United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan Mohamed Yahya, Aban Marker Kabraji (UNEP), Abdullah Fadil (UNICEF), Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Alam, Florence Rolle (FAO), UNIC Director Pakistan Catherine Weibel, and Senior Minister Government of Punjab Marriyum Aurangzeb for an open, honest, and solutions-driven dialogue on one of the most pressing issues of our time.

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THE PAKISTAN SYMPOSIUM SOUNDS A WARNING ON THE DANGERS INHERENT IN UNPREDICTABLE WATERFLOWS IN THE MIGHTY INDUS



**‘THERE IS NO LONGER A COMFORTABLE PREDICTABILITY AS TO MONSOON RAINFALLS OR RISING TEMPERATURES IN PAKISTAN. THE SURVIVAL OF THE INDUS RIVER AS WE KNOW IT BECOMES PARAMOUNT FOR US’**

ABAN MARKER KABRAJI



ABAN MARKER KABRAJI (UNEP), CATHERINE WEIBEL (UNIC), FLORENCE ROLLE (FAO) &amp; ABDULLAH FADIL (UNICEF)

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## THE LIVING INDUS

The Indus River, lifeline to millions across Pakistan, faces unprecedented challenges as climate change upends the natural balance that has sustained the region for centuries. At the Pakistan Symposium, Aban Marker Kabraji (UNEP), Florence Rolle (FAO), Catherine Weibel (UNIC) and Abdullah Fadil (UNICEF) will highlight the urgent need to preserve and protect the mighty Indus. Let's change the climate of conversation to ignite bold action.

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## No time left

**P**AKISTAN teeters on the edge of an environmental abyss. Ranked among the most climate-vulnerable nations, it endures extreme heat, apocalyptic floods, prolonged droughts, and choking air pollution. The annual smog that engulfs urban centres is not merely an inconvenience — it is a broader governance failure. Meanwhile, rural communities watch helplessly as their worlds disintegrate: glaciers retreat, monsoons become erratic, and fertile lands turn to dust. Yet, climate change concerns continue to remain a footnote as politics dominates the national discourse, surfacing only when disaster strikes. A proactive approach, built on long-term resilience, is the obvious way forward. But what are we willing to do about it? *Danish 'Breathe Pakistan' campaign is one attempt to make it central to the national conversation. However, Pakistan needs much more — it needs a revolution in environmental governance. This demands unprecedented coordination among stakeholders: government bodies, industry leaders, international partners, researchers, CSOs, and communities. The time for symbolic gestures and non-binding commitments has passed.*

The path forward requires fundamental shifts. First, climate change must be elevated to the highest tier of national security concerns, alongside terrorism and economic stability. This means overhauling environmental protection frameworks with substantial fines for polluters, stringent emissions controls, and massive investment in public transportation. Urban planning must pivot from concrete-jungle expansion to green development, with strict preservation of remaining urban forests. Agriculture, both a casualty and a contributor to climate change, also requires urgent reform. Pakistan's excessive reliance on water-intensive crops has depleted underground resources. The solution lies in introducing drought-resistant crop varieties, implementing water-smart irrigation systems, and incentivising farmers to adopt climate-resilient techniques. This revolution must be supported by a parallel energy transition, leveraging our abundant renewable resources — solar, wind, and hydroelectric power.

The private sector, often seen as part of the problem, must be brought into the solution. Corporate accountability on carbon footprints should be non-negotiable, with tax incentives for sustainable business practices. Pakistan's international partners, too, have a role — debt relief mechanisms tied to green development, knowledge transfers, and climate finance must be expanded to help chart a sustainable path. Environmental education needs radical reimagining. Pakistan requires comprehensive climate literacy programmes integrated into school and university curricula. Media outlets must move beyond disaster coverage to sustained environmental journalism, investigating root causes and highlighting solutions. Change begins at the grassroots, and public participation is indispensable. Pakistan's survival hinges on its ability to treat climate change as the defining challenge of our time. Either we act now, or we surrender to a future of escalating disasters.

## Karim Aga Khan

**P**RINCE Karim Aga Khan was a man who straddled various worlds and cultures. Beyond his role as spiritual leader of the world's Ismaili Muslims, he was a man of great wealth and influence, channelling funds towards the socioeconomic uplift of his flock as well as other communities, particularly in the developing world. Pakistan — where his followers can be found from the coastal towns of Sindh to the mountains of the far north — was among the key countries he focused on, especially with regard to health and education schemes, with people from all confessional backgrounds benefiting. A major university and hospital, as well as countless health and education schemes across the country, bear the Aga Khan mark. Perhaps his concern for Pakistan, apart from the presence of his community members in the country, can be traced to his grandfather, Aga Khan III, who played a key role in the Pakistan Movement.

Though Karim Aga Khan was the leader of a religious group that traces its origins to the eighth century, he was a thoroughly modern man. He wore many hats — Olympic skier, breeder and owner of thoroughbred horses, astute entrepreneur, philanthropist, and religious leader. He rubbed shoulders with royalty and the global political elite, while his followers were spread out across the world, from the subcontinent to the mountains of Central Asia and the coast of East Africa and beyond. In almost seven decades as head of the Ismaili Imamate, the late prince transformed his Imamate, while also contributing to the communities and states where his followers lived. Arguably, it was his contributions to health, education and culture that will particularly stand out. He encouraged his followers to pursue educational excellence, and the institutions he oversaw also offered pathways for people from all confessional backgrounds to gain quality education. Prince Karim's contribution to cultural preservation was also considerable, particularly of historical monuments in Muslim states. In his condolence message, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stated that the late Aga Khan "championed the cause of the marginalised". In fact, Prince Karim's focus on health and education would be a model worthy of emulation for religious and community leaders across the Muslim world. There is little doubt that the 56th Ismaili Imam, Rahim Aga Khan, will have formidable standards to uphold.

## Cotton production

**P**AKISTAN'S cotton crop is on the ropes. The crop output has been falling since 1975, when the country harvested a record quantity of nearly 14m bales. In the past 10 years, its production has fluctuated from 4.5m bales to just over 10m. This year is no different, as the output is estimated to plunge by nearly a third to around 7m bales from last year's 10.2, the latest cotton arrivals indicate. Even though Pakistan remains the world's fifth largest cotton producer, our share in global production has plunged to around 6pc compared to India's 22pc.

The reasons for the collapse of the cotton crop, the backbone of the textile exports, which fetch over half our export revenue, range from government policy failures to farmers shifting from cotton to more profitable crops like sugarcane due to unavailability of quality seeds, slow adoption of modern farming practices and the impact of climate change. Our scientists and researchers have done little to build new seed technologies to help cotton farmers fight crop diseases and manage the impact of the climate change as seen in heatwaves, drought, and excessive rain. It was against this backdrop that the First National Cotton Revival Conference was held in Multan recently. The government officials, scientists, researchers, and growers attending the meet called for "policy reforms, including the development of high-yield and climate-resilient seed varieties, efficient irrigation systems, and enhanced farmer support programmes" to revitalise the cotton economy. The world is implementing "sustainable and better cotton" initiatives to improve the social, environmental, and economic sustainability of cotton production. This makes it imperative for Pakistan to urgently implement suggested policy reforms to revive the cotton economy so that it remains a part of the global textile and clothing supply chain. However, if the past is any guide, there is little chance of the authorities considering these suggestions, let alone implementing the much-needed reforms.

## OPINION



BY AHMED BILAL MEHBOOB

## A deserving raise?

The recent increase in legislators' salaries is in sync with similar raises for other public officials.

**A RAISE** in the salaries of members of parliament and the provincial legislatures in Pakistan always evokes a strong negative reaction, at least from vocal segments of society, including the media. In 2019, the increase in the salary of Punjab Assembly members by the PTI-led provincial government led to such intense criticism that the raise had to be held back on the directions of the then prime minister Imran Khan, but was silently implemented after a few weeks.

The most recent raise granted to MNAs in January this year was no exception, as widespread criticism was heaped on the legislators from all major parties who, despite their differences, had taken a unanimous stand to demand a hefty salary raise. In response to mounting pressure from the legislators, the National Assembly Finance Committee, constituted under Article 88 of the Constitution and headed by the Speaker, ended up approving in the last week of January an increase of about 17% per cent, almost three times the previous salary of Rs188,000 enhancing it to Rs516,000 per month for MNAs. The committee's decision received Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's approval within days, and the new salaries were notified by the Speaker by Jan 31. The increase became effective from Jan 1, 2025. A similar raise for senators is also in the works and it is expected that the increase in this case will also be effective from the same date.

MNAs had received their last raise about nine years ago. Interestingly, although Section 148 of the Members of Parliament (Salaries and Allowances) Act, 1974, updated as of July 2024, provides that the "salaries, allowances and privileges of members shall automatically be increased by the Finance Committee of the National Assembly Secretariat by notification in the official Gazette in proportion to the increase in the emoluments of the civil servants", no such automatic increase was approved in the past years, apparently because of fear of a public backlash. This is so despite the fact that the salaries of civil servants were increased almost

every year at the time of the passage of the annual budget. During the approval of Budget 2024-25, for example, the salaries of civil servants of pay scales one to 16 and from 17 to 22 were increased by 25pc and 20pc respectively.

In the meantime, the procedure to adjust salaries of members of parliament has also been altered. Earlier, the Members of Parliament (Salaries and Allowances) Act, 1974, was amended by parliament each time a change was to be made, but later, the National Assembly Finance Committee was authorised to approve the adjustments in the Finance Act, 2024.

The Baluchistan Assembly had taken the lead to significantly increase the monthly salaries of its members to Rs440,000 in October 2014. The Punjab Assembly spring into action much later in 2024, when the salaries of its members were increased from Rs176,000 to Rs500,000 per month. The members' monthly salaries in the provincial assemblies of Sindh and KP, in the meantime, remain modest at Rs145,000 and Rs160,000 respectively. It seems that it won't be long before these two assemblies also increase the salaries of their members after seeing the pattern of increase in the other two provincial assemblies and the National Assembly.

The recent increase in the salaries of legislators is not out of sync with similar raises given to other public officials. The house rent and judicial allowance of the judges of the Supreme Court and the high courts were increased by over 200pc in November 2024, after which the salaries of their lordships are estimated to reach around Rs1 million per month, excluding perks such as fully maintained and chauffeur-driven vehicles, etc. The salaries of the superior court judges are generally higher than the salaries of national legislators but an analysis of the data presented in the *Commonwealth Parliamentary Pay and Remuneration Survey* (Supreme Report) indicates that the salaries of judges are higher by a much greater margin in Pakistan than in several Commonwealth countries such as Australia, where judges earn 198.74pc more than legislators.

In India and Bangladesh, judges earn around 150pc and 91pc more than legislators respectively. In Pakistan, this disparity was around 431pc in 2021. Although it has come down to 287pc after the recent raises in legislators' salaries, it remains higher than in many countries.

Since legislators are public figures and mostly lead a full-time life, it is natural that their emoluments and raises invite much greater attention. However, populist rhetoric aside, much of the criticism on the recent increase is not justified. Being a legislator is more than a full-time job, and a member who has to do justice to his or her duties within the assembly, parliamentary committees, a large constituency and parliamentary party, has to put in considerable time and effort, often at a huge cost to his or her personal life. It is true that, in general, legislators' performance leaves much to be desired and that is what prompts most of the criticism, but it is also the strong preference of their constituents which forces them to spend a major part of their time outside the assemblies focusing on resolving the personal issues of their constituents and trying to secure development projects for the constituencies. Unless the quality of our governance considerably improves and local governments become effective, it is unlikely that the legislators' time will be spent differently.

If we wish to attract accomplished and professional persons to our legislatures, we should be prepared to pay them salaries closer to market rates. We should not assume that all legislators come (or will come in the future) from affluent classes, with huge disposable incomes. Middle-class professionals will require decent emoluments for doing the tough job of a legislator. The increased salaries should therefore be accepted as a cost of the effort to befittingly run democratic institutions. ■

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## US TO LEAVE UN HR COUNCIL



BY KHURRAM HUSAIN

## Faking growth with real estate

IT never fails. For a number of years now, we've been seeing a common trend where interests connected with real estate manage to get their views heard by the prime minister, and before even anybody else connected with manufacturing or exports can get their say, the real estate tycoons start walking away with government 'incentives'.

This happened in the PTI government, for instance, when a small coterie of industrial tycoons met the then army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa in October 2019, only a few months into the IMF programme which had begun in July of that year. They emerged from the meeting with a commitment that the government will not loosen the macroeconomic settings dictated by the IMF programme, such as the high interest rates, but will work with the business community "in order to bring stakeholders on one platform to formulate recommendations for a synergistic way forward", according to a press release put out by BPR at that time.

The recommendations for this "synergistic way forward" all focused on real estate, and days later, the then PM Imran Khan held a special meeting with his economic team, during which they discussed many things for economic revival, including ways to help small and medium enterprises, "kick-start" through so-called public-private partnerships, and of course the "construction sector", for which his financial adviser was instructed to work with the FRR and the Naps Pakistan Housing Authority as well as the provincial governments.

That directive was the seed from which eventually grew a package of policies ranging from an amnesty scheme to large-scale directed lending to the housing sector for real estate. What was touted as a package for "construction" in the name of providing employment for daily wage workers was more just a way to plough massive amounts of unexplained wealth into the trading of plot files, and the real estate sector took off manically.

Everyone knows what happened thereafter. A large housing bubble was created. Massive quantities of fictitious assets, otherwise known as "plot files", were conjured out of thin air as more than 2,100 housing projects were registered

under the package in FY21 alone. Housing finance surged by Rs109 billion as the State Bank mandated banks to allocate five per cent of the private sector lending portfolio to housing finance.

The PTI government was helped along in its push for promoting real estate by the temporary suspension of the IMF programme with the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Fund programme would have disallowed many of the elements with which the real estate-led economic boom of those years was engineered; so, under the cover of the Covid suspension, the government was free to plough ahead. The conse-

**The real meat comes where the industry proposals start, such as halving the property sale tax from 4pc to 2pc.**

quences were disastrous, because the real estate boom was largely focused on the trading of speculative assets like plot files. There was some real activity in allied industries like paints and cement, along with some employment generation for daily wage workers. But all that vanished as soon as the boom times ended with the depletion of the country's foreign exchange reserves, the arrival of the inevitable inflationary tsunami that came on the heels of the massive money supply creation this boom was predicated on, and the eventual resumption of the IMF programme, which suffered two abortive starts in 2021 and again in 2022 before resuming in earnest by August 2022.

Khan came to regret betting so heavily with the real estate magnates of this country. Those are ruthless and unscrupulous speculators, and a lot of people who bought the fictitious assets that those people sell — the so-called plot files — also regretted their investments as the schemes announced during the boom years of the construction package went bust one by one. That is when buyers of these "plot files" realised the truth about what they had bought — a piece

of paper with a promise to deliver clean titles to a piece of land at a later date, but literally nobody tasked with ensuring the seller would actually uphold the promise.

The government of Shehbaz Sharif initially moved to unwind this racket in their early days in power back in 2022. In the budget announced in June that year, they levied taxes on all those who own more than one immovable property in Pakistan in a widely vilified move that introduced the idea of a 'deemed income'. The idea was to discourage hoarding of assets and speculative investments in real estate. And it worked. But now, they too have gone off the rails. In December 2024, the same PM announced the formation of a 'task force' for housing, and gave it a broad mandate to develop a 'growth framework' for property development, along with the tax incentives that would be required to promote growth in this sector.

A few days ago, this task force reported its recommendations. As usual, the recommendations came couched in the language of "low income housing", and some of them claim to be aimed at "first time buyers" of houses. But the real meat comes where the industry proposals start, such as halving the property sale tax from 4pc to 2pc, the buyer's tax from 4pc to 0.5pc, and eliminating federal excise duties altogether on property transactions.

Thus begins the gravy train. It never fails. The real estate racket is strong in this country for a number of reasons. First is the massive accumulation of tax-evaded wealth that shuffles around in the system, waiting for a amnesty scheme or some sort of Ponzi scheme like these plot file rackets through which to valorise itself. Second is the paucity of channels for formal sector savings. When you can invest fictitious assets on paper only, and find willing buyers for them, and no questions need be asked about the source of funds, why bother going into any other line of work? In the days to come, the powerful lobby that operates these rackets in Pakistan is likely to start reeling in Shehbaz Sharif in the same way they reeled in Imran Khan. ■

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## OPINION



BY F. S. AIJAZUDDIN

## Fatal decisions

**TIMING** is everything, especially in politics. Mistiming can be fatal, as three recent leaders, now out of power, have learned. In October 1979, PM Mian Nawaz Sharif decided to remove COAS Gen Musharraf, even while Musharraf was returning home from Sri Lanka. In June 2018, PM Imran Khan transferred the then head of ISI, Gen Asim Munir. Both prime ministers paid for their misjudgment.

On July 21, 2024, US president Joe Biden stepped aside in favour of his vice-president Kamala Harris, a few months before the elections. His selfish delay cost their Democratic party the presidency.

Americans may recall the 1980 presidential elections that lost Jimmy Carter the presidency. A year earlier, on Nov 4, 1979, Iranian students seized the US embassy in Tehran and detained 66 American diplomats and staff. Fourteen managed to escape. The remaining 52 were held hostage for 444 days.

Carter ordered two rescue missions, which failed. In September 1980, a US-friendly Iraq invaded Iran. Two months later, Carter contested the presidential election and suffered a landslide loss to Ronald Reagan. Immediately after Reagan was sworn into office, the Iranians obliged him by releasing the embassy hostages.

That scenario has been replayed 45 years later, this time with different actors. Donald Trump replaces Reagan, and Benjamin Netanyahu and Hamas the hostage holders.

Over a year ago, on Oct 7, 2023, 250 hostages were captured by Hamas when it attacked Israel. The attack triggered Israel's retaliatory military offensive which, over the next 15 months, killed over 47,500 Palestinians, injured more than 110,000, and destroyed everything above the ground in the Gaza Strip.

On Jan 15, 2025, five days before Trump's swearing-in, it was announced that an agreement had been reached between Hamas and Israel. Hamas agreed to release 33 out of 98 hostages in the first phase. In exchange, Israel would release more than 1,000 Palestinian prisoners. Not all the hostages were Israeli. Almost half were citizens from other countries: Thailand, Nepal, Philippines, the US, Russia, France, Germany, UK, Ireland and Argentina.

Over the period of their incarceration, these hostages were visited by the International Red Cross and other NGO teams. One report was inconclusive at its best, or worst. Who but someone hoarding in Geneva would describe the condition of the hostages in Gaza with this euphemism: they were "prone to immediate mortality"?

The case is so clear that it is hard to see why Israel had not tried to rescue the hostages. It certainly had the capability. It had with

precision targeted and then annihilated Hamas's top leadership.

According to a recent BBC report, specific Hamas victims were: Yahya Sinwar, the architect of the Oct 7 attack; Ismail Haniyeh who was killed during a visit to Tehran; Mohammed Deif, the head of Hamas's military wing, the al-Qassam Brigades; Marwan Issa, the deputy commander of al-Qassam Brigades, killed in a tunnel beneath the Gaza Strip; and Mahmud Zahar, who was injured when an Israeli plane dropped a bomb on his home in Gaza City in 2023.

Perhaps the most intriguing was the botched attempt in 1997 to kill Khalid Mehalha (one of the founders of Hamas). Under direct instructions from Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, Israeli Mossad spy agency entered Jordan on forged passports and injected, 860mg, a toxic substance into Mehalha. The BBC disclosed: "The late King Hussein of Jordan asked Israeli PM for the antidote for the substance Mehalha was injected with. Facing pressure from then US President Bill Clinton, Mr Netanyahu provided the antidote."

Given such murky depths in international politics, it is not inconceivable that Hamas kept the hostages in a place known to the Israelis and perhaps also the countries whose nationals had been abducted. That may explain why the impression was created that the hostages were primarily Israeli and therefore bargaining counters between Israel and Hamas. Why did Hamas need to hold citizens of Thailand, Ireland, Argentina and the Philippines? Unless it was done at Israel's behest.

An Israeli-British hostage released recently said that she and other hostages were kept at facilities run by UN's agency for Palestinian refugees. Interestingly, the day after being sworn in, President Trump had support for UNRWA, Israel's agency to ban it. A generation ago, during the peace talks in Sharm el-Sheikh after the 1973 war over Bangladesh, Mrs Indira Gandhi offered Mr Z.A. Bhutto return of 5,000 square miles (approximately 13,000 square kilometres) of captured land, or 90,000 Pakistani POWs & CIPCs. He opted for the land. He knew she could not hold the hostages indefinitely, Israel and the US gave the Palestinians no such choice. The Palestinians have lost both their lives and their land. ■

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BY ZOFEEEN T. EBRAHIM

## Errant PM2.5

THE Indo-Gangetic Plain and the Himalayan foothills, straddling Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, India, and Pakistan are increasingly getting a bad rap as the global hotspot of air pollution.

Home to over two billion people who breathe air that is considered unsafe by the WHO, nine of the world's 10 cities with the worst air quality are in South Asia. A combination of everything — tailpipe emissions, crop residue-burning, chimneys spewing deadly fumes from industries and power plants, and smoke from stoves fired by cow dung or wood — is responsible for millions of premature deaths each year.

To combat air pollution, we must first understand PM2.5 — the minuscule particles that fuel it. At just 2.5 micrometres, they're far thinner than a strand of human hair and only visible under an electron microscope. These tiny particles can travel vast distances, defying boundaries.

Delhi, with an annual concentration of 98.6 micrograms of PM2.5 particles per cubic metre, Lahore 80 µg/m³, Dhaka 70.2 5.0 µg/m³ and Kathmandu 49.95.0 µg/m³, all have levels higher than the safe air quality threshold of 5.0 µg/m³ set by the WHO, and which countries like Finland, Norway and Sweden have been able to attain. The Air Quality Life Index's 2024 report states that the average person living in South Asia would gain 3.5 years in their lives if WHO guidelines are met.

While it may be challenging to reach WHO levels, South Asia aspires to keep the annual average PM2.5 concentration below 35 µg/m³ by 2035.

Ali Moosa Malik believes Pakistan can leapfrog towards attaining cleaner air by 2035. Co-founder of the startup eBike, he says the answer lies in popularising electric vehicles. With surplus electricity, if Pakistan can retrofit the nearly 300 petrol-powered motorbikes and convert them into e-bikes, cities in Pakistan can reduce CO2 levels in the air by over 50 per cent, since "most bikes are the biggest polluters in the transport sector". With over 40,000 e-bikes across Pakistan, he is confident the number can double by next year with a little hand-holding and oodles of will on the government's part.

E-bikes are just one of many innovative solutions emerging across South Asia to combat air pollution. The region is strewn with amazing ideas, but more have been scaled up or realised by governments. For instance, a husband-wife duo (in their 80s and 70s respectively) in Delhi have created a green oasis at home, surrounded by 15,000 plants irrigated with fish tank water. Their home boasts an AQI of just 15. They also run online courses teaching others how to embrace eco-friendly lifestyles.

Countries and citizens across South Asia can learn from each other. Pakistan could draw inspiration from initiatives like the one in West Bengal, India, where 12m students were provided bicycles to promote cleaner transportation, or from Bangladesh's use of brick kiln trackers to identify and monitor polluting kilns. Conversely, other South Asian countries can learn from Vietnam's Larri "thatched social architecture" programme.

Pakistan's first female architect trains villagers to build eco-friendly products that they can sell to each other. Last year, her organisation provided training to a team of villagers from Madani, who are replicating their model in their country. "The first item they have taken up to build is the smokeless earthen stove," she said. While energy-efficient mud stoves are being built all over the region, her moves have an edge as they have lime in the mud, which absorbs carbon in the air.

The more we understand air pollution, the clearer it becomes that it is an area where South Asian countries just cannot work in silos.

Countries will have to collaborate and cooperate across borders and with multiple agencies. According to a World Bank report, in major cities in South Asia, over 50pc of air pollution is not local but transboundary in nature.

Fortunately, unbeknownst to many, these countries have been engaged in a quiet dialogue for the past three decades.

From the Male Declaration in 1998 on control and prevention of air pollution, to the Kathmandu Roadmap when the first Minister Policy Dialogue was held in Nepal in 2022, followed by the Thimphu Outcome with the second MPO, held last year in Bhutan, where countries aspired to reach the "35 by 35" goal, a strong consensus is emerging on the importance of sharing information, taking collective and co-ordinated action, private-public partnerships, ensuring science guides policymaking, and emphasising the role of regional institutions — but most importantly, working towards building trust.

However, everyone agrees science diplomacy alone can only get you that far. All these conversations will remain relegated within the confines of conference halls if political relations in the region remain choppy. ■

The writer is a Karachi-based independent journalist

FROM THE PAST  
PAGES OF DAWN

1975 | Fifty years ago

## Ford's pledge

**WASHINGTON:** President Gerald Ford reaffirmed here today [Feb 5] "continuing American support for the integrity and independence of Pakistan" and told Prime Minister Bhutto that the question of removing the embargo on the sale of arms to Pakistan will receive "active consideration". White House spokesman Ron Nason told newsmen after the one-hour, ten-minute meeting between President Ford and Prime Minister Bhutto that the Pakistani leader was also informed by the President that the [US] will be as helpful as possible in providing quantities of food grains beyond the 100,000 tons already made available.

The ... spokesman said President Ford expressed his great pleasure at this first opportunity to get to know Mr Bhutto. ... Mr Nason said that the President had assured the Prime Minister that the economic needs of Pakistan will continue to receive priority attention. The Prime Minister discussed the steps that were being taken for the normalisation of relations among the nations of South Asia. The President expressed strong admiration for Prime Minister Bhutto's contribution to that historic process.

1950 | Seventy-five years ago

## 'India prepping for war'

**RAWALPINDH:** Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan today [Feb 5] charged India with preparing for a war. Huge ordnance factories in India, he declared, were working night and day and recruitment to the fighting forces was in full swing. The Prime Minister, who was addressing a large public meeting here this evening, challenged any man in India who claims in the world had achieved what Pakistan had accomplished during its short life despite the crippling handicaps and hardships which this country had faced.

The world's statements had described Pakistan's achievements as a miracle, Mr Liaquat Ali Khan said. "No matter what the cost, we shall be India across Kashmir by force of arms." — News agencies

[Meanwhile, as reported by a staff correspondent in Karachi] the Government of Pakistan have withdrawn the ban on trade with South Africa with effect from today [Monday] [Feb 6], says ... the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth Relations. The decision has been taken "to create the right atmosphere" for the settlement of the question of the rights of Pakistanis and Indians domiciled in South Africa and "to pave the way" for the success of the tripartite conference ... in Capetown today.

## 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.

## Israel must be made to rebuild Gaza



THIS is with reference to the report "10 urgent world to develop 'concrete plan' to rebuild Gaza, demands accountability for Israeli crimes" (Dawn.Com, Jan 23). Let us get aside the loss of over 46,000 Palestinians, which is painful to even fathom. According to some reports, 90 per cent of schools are damaged, and 70pc of agriculture has been destroyed in Gaza by the Zionist occupiers. The question now is how to rebuild the ravaged city? The cost of rebuilding must not be borne by the "international community", but by the occupiers and the coalition of Western supporters who are responsible for what has happened in Palestine.

No doubt, the United Nations would run around seeking funds from the Arab or other nations moved by the scale of the damage done by the Zionist settlers who were planted in the region by the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States. But the world should not fall in the trap once again.

The occupiers have got away with this for far too many a time. This kind of damage is nothing new as whenever the occupation has failed in its policy or whenever there is an election in the air, the Zionists "move the lever", as they put it in Gaza.

This time the occupier must be made to pay for its crimes against humanity. The Zionists cannot bring back murdered innocent people, including thousands of children and women, but they surely can rebuild what they have destroyed.

Angabene Ahmed  
Karachi

## Sheer hypocrisy

If the United States does not support the Israeli government, Palestinians would likely have a chance at peace. Right? American aid and its use of veto power

on international forums have always made a significant difference. We have repeatedly requested US senators and members of Congress to stop supporting the Israeli government, and to cease providing aid that perpetuates war. However, these efforts have not yielded the desired results.

Despite investing substantial amounts in lobbying, we have not achieved what we aimed for. While American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) plays a significant role in this issue, one of the main reasons lies within our own actions.

On the one hand, we support the Palestinians' cause and their struggle against oppression, while, on the other hand, some among us request US legislators and officials to interfere in our own country's politics. We ask them to influence leadership appointments.

Abusar Nageet  
Yorba Linda, USA

## A logical question

THE main opposition party and its supporters maintain that their leader, who has recently been convicted for corruption in the £190 million Al-Qadiri Trust corruption case, never did anything wrong. Let us ask them a slightly different question.

In the aftermath of the Panama Papers revelations, it was reported back in 2016 by the British newspaper Daily Mail that the value of Sharif family's properties in England was about £32 million.

The jailed opposition leader had a hardline stance against the entire opposition at the time, which included the statement that "I will not give them NRO" as well as his demand after being ousted through a vote of no-confidence that in a struggle between good (by which he meant himself) and evil (by which he meant every other politician), the military should not be neutral and favour him.

Eventually, with the context thus set, the simple question for the incarcerated leader convicted for corruption himself and his followers is this: between £32 million and £190 million, which figure indicates higher level of corruption?

Agri Sajjad  
Maryland, USA

## Technical allowance

THE engineers in Sindh and Balochistan are facing discrimination as they are being deprived by their respective provincial governments of their rights. Engineers employed by Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) governments are not receiving technical allowance for specialised skills and significant contributions to infrastructure development.

On the contrary, engineers in Sindh

and Balochistan are deprived of similar benefits, demotivating the engineers and creating inequity among the professionals. Progressive measures taken by the governments in Punjab and KP have been vital in supporting and retaining skilled engineering professionals.

Sindh passed a unanimous resolution in the provincial assembly on June 12 last year, advocating the grant of technical allowance for engineers.

However, the provincial government has yet to make any move in this regard. The situation in Balochistan is equally concerning.

This lack of acknowledgement affects their morale and hinders the province's capacity to attract and retain skilled professionals crucial for sustainable development.

Sindh and Balochistan government's need to address this disparity and align with the standards established by the Punjab and KP governments through granting technical allowance to their engineers. Such measures would uplift the morale of these professionals, and significantly enhance the quality of infrastructure and development projects in the provinces.

Prof (Dr) Araf Nigal  
Hyderabad

## Depleting groundwater



WITH Punjab's agricultural sector already under threat, the province's groundwater crisis has reached a tipping point. The latest data from the Water Resources Zone of the Punjab Irrigation Department paints a grim picture: the province's groundwater table is depleting at an alarming rate of 0.5-1.0 metres per annum.

This precipitous decline is largely attributed to the unchecked installation of tube wells that has increased from a mere 4,500 in 1960 to over 1.5 million in 2024. The statistics are nothing short of staggering.

Punjab's groundwater extraction rate is a whopping 142 per cent higher than the recharge rate. Contemporary research on groundwater resources has unveiled a shocking truth. A staggering 60 billion

cubic metres (bml) out of total 68bml of groundwater have been extracted in Pakistan, with Punjab accounting for 90pc share of this extraction.

But that is not all; the situation is about to take a turn for the worse. Some other studies have revealed a high risk of contamination associated with arsenic and other heavy metals in groundwater, particularly in Punjab's hotspots. These contaminants are highly carcinogenic and mutagenic, posing a lethal threat to human health.

The consequences of this unchecked groundwater exploitation are far-reaching and devastating. Rural communities are struggling to access clean drinking water, leading to an increased incidence of waterborne diseases.

With the added risk of arsenic contamination, the situation has become nothing short of catastrophic. It is high time the government took immediate action to address the crisis. This includes regulating the installation of tube wells, enforcing strict pumping limits, as well as investing in water conservation and recharge schemes.

Moreover, urgent measures are needed to mitigate the risk of water contamination, including regular water quality monitoring and public awareness campaigns.

The people of Punjab cannot afford to wait any longer. The time to act is now, lest we want to be left high and dry with a toxic legacy that will haunt us for generations to come.

Dr M. Mehboob Hassan Khan  
Multan

## Countering terrorism

TERROR has once again struck Balochistan in recent months. As such, it has been going on in Balochistan since 1947. The first conflict occurred in 1948 against the signing of instrument of accession by the Khan of Kalat when his brother revolted against him and took refuge in Afghanistan.

He later surrendered to Pakistan in 1953. The second conflict was when Nur Khan took up arms in resistance against the one unit policy from 1958 to 1979. His revolt was crushed, and he was put in prison where he died. His sons and nephews were also charged with treason and subsequently hanged.

Since then, conflicts have become characteristic of life in Balochistan. Not much different is the situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Truly, the government in the centre seems to be helpless due to the 18th Amendment, and the governments in the provinces lack the will due to political considerations. As a result, Pakistan and its people continue to suffer.

Malik of Quailons  
Karachi

► **FEAR IN VILLAGES:** Security has become a serious issue in villages across upper Rindhi. From small-time thieves to armed robbers, outlaws roam around with our fear in towns and villages. Owing to this, people spend sleepless nights, and pass their days in a state of fear. Those who resist these gangsters end up losing their lives. Many people have left their villages because they feel unsafe and unprotected there. The authorities concerned should provide these innocent people the needed help to protect themselves, their families, cattle and properties. Can anyone make these villages safe and secure again as they once used to be in the past?

Kashoom Akro  
Islamabad

► **FUNCTIONAL SCHOOL:** Kalimat is a village near Panni where the students are deprived of quality education. The school in the village lacks foundational facilities, such as teachers, water and electricity. While over 60 teachers are registered on the payroll, only one or two are actually present to teach more than 600 students. As a result, student's suffer. Most of them cannot travel to other areas to acquire secondary education. In fact, we are not asking for a college or a university, but only a well-equipped school where girls and boys may acquire education till matriculation. Is this too much to ask for? Is it not our basic right?

Strag Ammar  
Kalimat

► **E-OFFICE:** The recent notification by the government regarding total switch-over to e-office and discontinuing paper files is a step in the right direction. The default features in the e-office ensure proper allocation of functions, and the haphazard dosing of numerous documents is avoided. Additionally, it provides the complete record of all cases, ensures greater accountability, and minimises the chances of unnecessary delays, while providing swift access to records and relevant documents without any hassle. To ensure that the initiative is effectively followed, the civil servants shall make good use of e-office for institutional efficiency and greater public welfare. **Name withheld on request**

Lower Dir

**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: dmahmoodombudsman@gmail.com**



## Midnight attack on Bannu police station foiled

By Our Correspondent

**LAKKI MAHWAT:** The police on Wednesday claimed to have repulsed a midnight terror attack on a police station in the Township area of Bannu district.

An official said that a group of militants attacked the police station at around 12:30am with light and heavy weapons. "The attack was multi-pronged aiming to take over the building of the police station," said the official, adding that the cops deployed there resisted effectively and forced the assailants to flee the place.

The official said that an effective response by the law enforcers foiled the militants' bid to breach the police station. He said that all policemen remained safe in the attack.

District police officer Zauddin Ahmad visited the police station, met cops and praised them for exhibiting bravery.

He announced commendation certificates and cash prizes for them from IGP Zulfiqar Hameed.

Meanwhile, police swung into action when armed men attacked the cops escorting a police vaccination team in remote Surki Lawaghar area of Karak district.

A police official confirmed the attack and said that both the cops and vaccinators remained unhurt. He said that unknown armed assailants opened fire on the cops, who were on an escort duty with vaccinators in the remote and difficult mountainous region.

The official said a heavy police contingent led by district police officer Shahbaz Elahi along with SP investigators Mohammad Ashfaq Khan immediately reached there, surrounded the area and launched a search for the attackers.

He quoted the district police chief as saying that the militants targeting policemen performing security duty with polo teams would be dealt with sternly. He said the DPO asked the cops to remain alert and vigilant on duty and provide complete security to vaccinators engaged in performing the national obligation of immunising children against the crippling disease.

## Tehreek-i-Insaf leader gunned down in Nowshera

**PESHAWAR:** A leader of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf from Nowshera district, Mian Daman Shah, was gunned down by unidentified assailants near Pabbi railway station on GT Road on Wednesday.

An official at the police station concerned said that the deceased, who was president of PTI Dag Baud area, was travelling in his vehicle along with a friend, Haris Khan, when unidentified motorcycle riders ambushed them.

Mian Usman died on the spot, whereas Haris Khan received serious injuries, and has now been undergoing treatment at a local hospital. An FIR of the occurrence was registered at the Pabbi police station, wherein Mian Usman Shah, a brother of the deceased, is the complainant.

The complainant has charged some of their rivals for the commission of the offence, stating that they had previous blood feud with the suspects.

He has charged three brothers — Khan Baz, Fayyaz and Zorbat — for the attack. He stated that last month a member of their rival family, Khan Baz, was killed near Jalozai area for which the suspects had been suspecting the involvement of the deceased Mian Usman. — Bureau Report

## 'Human traffickers' arrested in Gujrat

**GUJRAT:** The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) claims to have arrested two human traffickers, including a suspect wanted in a recent Greece boat capsizing tragedy, on Wednesday.

The FIA arrested Anwar Mahmood, a resident of Zafarwal village, Nowshera district. He extorted Rs4.5 million from the family of Anwar Ali of Mahroo, Jhelum Jattan taluk of Gujrat, under the pretext of securing an employment visa for him, however, later on the intending emigrant was boarded in a vessel going to Greece that capsized near Gavdos, and many migrants died, including the son of the complainant.

Another human trafficker namely Muhammad Azeem, a resident of Gajrawala, was arrested. He extorted Rs1.5m from the complainant on the pretext of sending him to Canada on an employment visa. — Correspondent



LAHORE: Civil society members light candles to pay a tribute to martyrs at Liberty Chowk on the Kashmir Solidarity Day. — White Star

## On mandatory training, well-connected bureaucrats retain key positions in Punjab

CS says officials are working on 200 initiatives

By Mansoor Malik

**LAHORE:** Some politically well-connected bureaucrats in Punjab have been kept intact to their key positions despite being on a four-month National Management Course at the National School of Public Policy in breach of clear instructions that the provincial government is bound to relieve such officers "on their selection for training course without fail".

The prime minister's directive also says the provincial governments shall make stopgap arrangements, as the nominated officers are not required to attend their offices while undergoing training. Non-compliance of the directions of the Prime Minister can attract disciplinary proceedings under the Civil Servants (SRD) Rules, 2020.

The NMC, which started on Jan 13

and ends on May 16, is being attended by finance department secretary Majid Shaukat, secretary services (SGGAD) Shaukat Ali, forestry, wildlife and fisheries secretary Mukhtar Wahid Malik, excise and taxation department secretary Masood Mukhtar and industries, commerce, investment and skills development secretary Ehsan Bhatta. Mr Bhatta, however, was transferred and posted as member P&D Board.

While the government spends Rs2.2 million fee for each trainee for the course — which is mandatory for their promotion from BS-20 to BS-21 — the bureaucrats still manage their "lucrative" postings to ensure that they should not surrender their perks and privileges.

The Punjab government and the NSPP have also closed their eyes and violating prime minister's directions as well as NSPP's own instructions — notified in officers' nomination notifications.

Similarly, Punjab health secretary Nadia Saghi, implementation and coordination (M&C) S&GAD secretary Rafique Ali and finance department (Budget and

resource) special secretary Syed Muhammad Masood Noonan are attending Senior Management Course (SMC) while holding their administrative posts.

The NMC is mandatory for the officers for their promotion from BS-19 to BS-20 and the government is paying a course fee of Rs350,000 each for their boarding and lodging at the National Institute of Management, Lahore.

The course, being run from Jan 27 to May 16, has notified similar conditions that the officer attending the NMC will be relieved and not required to attend their offices while undergoing training.

Source in the bureaucracy say lobbying is playing a major role in facilitating these bureaucrats, which is generally visible in the posting of "lucrative" bureaucrats against important positions, while others are sidelined.

Dawn tried to seek comments from NSPP Director Dr Ijaz Muneer but he did not respond.

Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman responded to the questions and said: "We do not want to change the sec-

retary because Punjab is working on some 200 initiatives. Should we block the massive work going on in Punjab?" he asked.

When asked if their presence was required, they might have been retained and sent for courses in the upcoming opportunities, the chief secretary said the administrative secretaries, as required by the NSPP and PM directions, do not work as all powers had been handed over to special secretaries as a stopgap arrangement.

"The secretaries, while on the course, have no responsibility. They have been retained so that they should come to the office and supervise whether the CM initiatives are progressing accordingly," the chief secretary explained.

Mr Zaman said the government was not expecting any work from the administrative secretaries on course but wanted them to stay in the picture and continue upon their return.

While several other bureaucrats are also attending the NMC and SMC, Mr Zaman said that no other bureaucrat had been retained.

## Four held in 'swift action' in crime against women

A motor vehicle examiner detained for harassing varsity student; three arrested for gang-rape of teenage girls, two policemen at large

By Asif Chaudhry

**LAHORE:** The Lahore operations police on Wednesday arrested a motor vehicle examiner of the transport department for continuously harassing a student from her home to her university.

The complainant even blocked his 70 mobile sim during the last seven months. In yet another case the same day, the police arrested three suspects who allegedly gang-raped two teenage girls.

Reports suggested two policemen had "visited the house" of a bride and sexually assaulted her daughter and niece. An official said the first incident

took place in Mian Shah where the university student filed a complaint against the transport department official who had been harassing and blackmailing her for long. As the matter reached DGI Operations Faisal Kamran, he ordered the formation of a special team which arrested the accused official, ensuring immediate legal proceedings under the relevant sections of the law.

According to police report, the university student complained the inspector had been harassing her for the past several months. She blocked approximately 70 sim but could not deter him.

She said the suspect was well-known and had no fear of police and law. The official said the police team had collected substantial evidence which confirmed the allegations.

The DGI Operations confirmed to Dawn the action had been taken under CM initiative of zero tolerance towards crime against women.

He said special units had been established in police stations to ensure swift action against harassment complaints. He said the women can report harass-

ment instantly through emergency helplines and the Women Safety App, ensuring immediate police response. He said trained units had been deployed in public places and educational institutions to prevent harassment.

About the other incident, the police said the armed men barged their entry into the residence of a housemaid, a widow in Rawwind area, on Wednesday. He said the intruders allegedly gang-raped two girls, leaving the woman in a trauma as she was forced to hear cries of her daughter and a niece.

The official said the DGI Operations suspended a police post head from service and got arrested three suspects.

The raids were being conducted for the arrest of two policemen, the other prime suspects who forcibly entered her home along with private accomplices in the name of "police raid".

The woman told the police she was a housemaid and only breadwinner of her daughter and niece. She said the accused also made video recording of the rape and threatened to kill her if she reported the matter to the police.

## Pakistani herbal medicines popular in Kazakhstan, says envoy

By Ibrahim Junaidi

**ISLAMABAD:** Kazakhstan Ambassador Yuryan Kistafin has proposed collaboration in the herbal medicines sector as medicines are highly popular in his country.

He was speaking to participants of an awareness session held in connection with World Cancer Day at Mansaf International Hospital.

Mr Yuryan Kistafin confirmed Kazakhstan's interest in strengthening ties with Pakistan in healthcare, medical research and pharmaceutical development.

He highlighted the potential for joint investment in hospital infrastructure, digital health technologies and exchange programmes for doctors and medical students.

Dr Yasser Rehman, a US-trained oncologist at the hospital, delivered a presentation on cancer prevention, early diagnosis and treatment advancements.

Spokesman Haroon Nasser highlighted alarming statistics, revealing that Pakistan records over 185,000 new cancer cases annually, with breast cancer being the most prevalent, affecting one in nine women.

He stressed that timely screening and lifestyle modifications could prevent up to 40 percent of cancer-related deaths.

He emphasised the importance of cross-border collaboration between Pakistan and Kazakhstan in healthcare. He outlined key areas for cooperation, including medical education, partnerships between universities in both countries, establish nursing schools to enhance professional training and joint cancer research and initiatives.

## Health ministry wants cost of land for Jinnah Medical Complex waived

PM Office seeks CDA's point of view over ministry's summary

By Our Staff Reporter

**ISLAMABAD:** Prime Minister Office has sought Capital Development Authority's (CDA) point of view over a summary of health ministry seeking waiver of land cost for proposed Jinnah Medical Complex.

CDA in November asked the health ministry to arrange Rs19.7 billion funds to lease 600 kanal of

land for the Jinnah Medical Complex to be built in Sector H-16. A few days ago, the civic agency in a letter to the health ministry offered a 33-year lease on 600 kanal for the medical complex. The lease is extendable for two terms of 33 years and the ministry has been asked to pay Rs19.7 billion for it.

Sources in CDA said that health ministry after receiving the letter of CDA had requested the civic agency to waive off the payment against land.

However, CDA informed the health ministry that as per prevailing policy and regulations, exemption/relaxation corresponding to land cost to any organization is not offered as all the land is acquired by

CDA and compensation is paid to those whose land had been acquired by CDA and they are entitled to get payment/plot from the CDA.

Therefore, CDA turned down the request of the health ministry. Subsequently, the health ministry through a summary took up this matter with Prime Minister Office, requesting for taking up this matter before the federal cabinet to grant waiver to ministry.

Sources said that in the summary, the health ministry pleaded that its overall public sector development programme funding for 2024-25 stands at Rs24.7 billion, therefore, paying the said amount in this fiscal year is not feasible for it.

However, before moving forward, the PM office through ministry of interior sought comments of CDA on summary of health ministry.

"In our rules and regulations, there is no provision of free land as we procure land from land owners and we had shared same views with the health ministry," said an officer of CDA.

He said when CDA refused to health ministry, they took up this matter with federal government to place their summary before the federal cabinet.

"In coming days, we will share our view points on this summary, right know, I can't say what would be our stance, but one thing is clear

that we have to pay to land owners against the acquired land," said an officer.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the Jinnah Medical Complex was performed by the prime minister on July 21, 2024. The multi-billion medical complex is funded by the federal government and executed by the CDA.

According to the Planning Commission, the project will be completed with an estimated cost of Rs120 billion.

The government has allocated Rs5 billion for the fiscal year 2024-25 under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) to kickstart the project. However, it is also looking at other options such

as public-private partnerships to get this project completed.

Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, while chairing a meeting on the project some months ago, had highlighted that the project's location in Islamabad, near the airport and national highways, made it an ideal hub for regional and international medical tourism.

Mr Iqbal had said that the complex must incorporate green design principles, ensuring that it stood as a sustainable and environmentally friendly structure. The health complex was envisioned as a monumental project for the capital, featuring a self-contained vertical health tower with comprehensive medical services, he had added.



# BUSINESS

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## SBP buys \$3.8bn to repay debt, boost reserves

By Shahid Iqbal

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) purchased about \$3.8 billion from banks in the first four months of the current fiscal year to improve its foreign exchange reserves and repay some foreign debt.

Bankers said the unexpectedly higher remittances provided enough liquidity in the interbank market, encouraging the central bank to buy dollars.

"Between June and October 2024, the SBP's net foreign exchange interventions reached \$3.8bn," said Tahir Abbas, Head of Research and Investment Strategy at Araf Habibullah.

Historically, the State Bank buys dollars from the banking market to keep substantial reserves and stabilise the exchange rate. However, money market experts said that the SBP dollar buying was too big compared to the country's borrowings during the period.

At the end of September 2024, Pakistan received the first tranche of \$1.0 billion under the 12-month \$7bn Extended Fund Facility from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), while the SBP bought \$1.8bn from the domestic currency market in June-October 2024.

"This strategic action led to a \$2.1bn increase in the SBP's foreign exchange reserves, while the remaining \$1.7bn allocated

towards managing the country's debt repayments," said Mr Abbas.

The SBP governor recently said that most of the debt had already been serviced and the rest would be rolled over. He said around \$5bn would be needed in the second half of FY25.

Bankers believe that the SBP could easily buy \$5bn more from the interbank market if the remittances continue to rise. During the fiscal year's first half, the remittances increased by 33pc to \$17.8bn.

Finance Minister Muhammad Asim Khan recently said that he expected remittances to exceed \$12bn in FY25. This massive increase would allow the State Bank to buy more dollars from the banking market and strengthen the exchange rate, which has been stable for over a year and is a big attraction for foreign investments. However, the political uncertainty is still a hurdle.

Bankers said the State Bank's dollar buying did not impact the exchange rate and would not cause any shortage.

Imports increased in December 2024, but the banker said the trade deficit would remain within the target to protect the foreign exchange reserves and current account. The current account is positive at \$1.2bn, while the government of State Bank said the current account could be plus or minus at 0.5pc by the end of FY25.

## Gold scales new peak, nears Rs300,000 per tola

By Asmir Shalast Khan

KARACHI: The price of one tola of gold reached closer to Rs300,000 on the back of all-time high international prices due to the looming uncertainty over the US trade war with China, Mexico, and Canada and its impact on various countries.

Data released by the All Pakistan Karafa, Gem and Jewellers Association on Wednesday stated that the 10-gramme and one-tola rates (24kar) climbed to new all-time high peaks of Rs275,859 and Rs 299,400, up by Rs4,158 and Rs5,300, respectively, compared to

Tuesday's rates.

International gold prices also swelled to an all-time high of \$2,868 per ounce after a jump of \$53 per ounce. All Karachi Jewellers and Manufacturers Association

President Muhammad Hassan Qureshi said the rising prices were putting the buyers in a quandary whether to instantly buy jewellery or wait for the price to fall.

He said sales of jewellery were also negligible, the rising prices mainly for small and medium-sized jewellers and workmen employed in goldmaking units.

"If the gold rally continues unabated, then a time will come that

the previous metal trade will remain confined to big investors only," he feared, referring to empty shops as a result of dwindling sales of jewellery.

Despite stability in the exchange rate in Pakistan, gold prices were hit by the first Ukraine-Russia and Israel-Gaza wars, and the recent trade war started by the US was also putting pressure on gold prices, he added.

Mr Hassan said even upper-income group buyers were facing difficulties in making jewellery sets of 1-2 tola while gold purchases by low middle-class families have also become a difficult task due to inflation.

In view of the uncertainty over the fixation of local rates, he said they had been demanding the government to form a regulatory authority comprising gold trade stakeholders and government officials for fixing daily bullion rates.

All Pakistan Jewellers Manufacturers Association President Mohammad Arshad said investors were active in the market by lifting one-gram loans to one-tola bars, while the overall sales of jewellery sets were going down with the rising prices. "Besides investors, some rich buyers, who have cash, are also lifting one-gram gold bars," he claimed.



DUTY-FREE cotton and yarn imports surged to near \$2bn in the first half of FY25.—AP/PTI

## Review of GSP+ status stokes fear in industry

European Union's monitoring mission due in June

By Arzad Mahmood

LAHORE: Already hard-pressed by the imposition of an 18 per cent sales tax, the local cotton industry is panicky about reports of a review of GSP+ status by the European Union.

The status was granted by the European Union in 2014, which led to a 108pc hike in Pakistan's textile exports to the EU due to conventional tariffs.

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.

However, during the recent visit of an EU delegation to Pakistan, it was announced that the economic bloc would review this status in June, stoking fears in the cotton industry.

A communication with the local representative of the EU by a concerned businessman revealed that though the GSP had been extended until Dec 31, 2027, new regulations are likely to enter into force much earlier than that.

"GSP monitoring is a continuous process. The inter-service monitoring mission is expected in mid-2025 as part of the ongoing process," the EU representative said in response to a query on Feb 2.

The businessman from the textile indus-

try, who requested not to be named, apprehends that any negative review of the GSP+ status could further plunge the sector into crisis because, in the hope of sending more textile products' export consignments to Europe after winning handsome contracts to the recent textile fair in Germany, textile mills have purchased duty-free cotton and cotton yarn in large quantities from abroad.

As the import of cotton and cotton yarn is duty-free, while there is an 18pc tax on local cotton, the millers have been importing the commodities in large quantities from abroad this year at the cost of growers, spinning and spinning sectors.

The data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics reveals that the country spent a record \$1.91 billion on the imports of cotton and yarn in the first half of FY25, a surge of \$0.61bn over the same period last year.

Reports suggest that large shipments of cotton and cotton yarn are also expected during January-March 2025 at the cost of previous foreign exchange.

Cotton Ginners Forum Chairman Ihsanul Haq says that though total domestic cotton production this year has been about 50pc less than the target and 34pc less than the last year's production, there is an increase in cotton stocks in ginning factories. As of Jan 31, at least 486,000 bales of cotton are lying with the ginning factories, 114,000 bales or 31pc more than last year.

He says that textile mills have so far purchased only 4,978m bales from local ginning factories during the ongoing season, which is a record 2.7m bales or 10pc less than the purchases of last year during the same period.

## Exports to central Asian states fall 17pc in July-Dec

By Mubarak Zeb Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's exports to five central Asian countries (CAs) contracted 17 per cent during the first half of 2024-25.

The country's exports to the region have yet to attain their full potential. Similarly, imports from Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to Pakistan have increased significantly despite regular high-profile visits to balance the trade deficit.

In absolute terms, the value of Pakistan's exports to the five central Asian countries — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan — dipped by 17.6pc to \$90.84 million in July-December 2024-25 from \$109.47m during the same period last year.

Imports from the region increased by \$8.91m to \$136.64m in 6MFY25 from \$127.7m during the same period last year. The majority of these imports came from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

Pakistan's trade with CAs is between \$400 and \$500m annually via Afghanistan. Uzbekistan has already implemented its transit trade agreement with Pakistan. Under the agreement, Uzbekistan has started importing goods under the transit agreement as well.

Last year, Tajikistan imported three trucks loaded with potatoes from Pakistan under the transit agreement.

Pakistan's exports to Turkmenistan stood at \$0.95m in 6MFY25 from \$0.59m over the corresponding months last year, showing an increase of 63pc. Imports from Turkmenistan surged 98pc to \$5.49m during the period under review against \$2.77m over the corresponding months last year.

The export proceeds to Uzbekistan reached \$28.04m in 6MFY25 against \$34.86m over the corresponding months last year, showing a decline of 19.54pc. Imports from Uzbekistan increased by \$4.81m to \$47.91m from \$43.1m over the corresponding months last year.

Kazakhstan has the highest export value, with \$39.43m in 6MFY25 compared to \$56.59m during the same period last year, representing a 30.32pc decline.

The value of imports from Kazakhstan stood at \$72.76m during the months under review against \$0.385m over the corresponding months of last year.

Pakistan's exports to Kyrgyzstan stood at \$2.18m in 6MFY25 against \$4.81m over the corresponding months last year, indicating a decline of 54.67pc. Imports from Kyrgyzstan stood at \$0.30m against \$0.14m.

Exports to Tajikistan stood at \$20.24m in 6MFY25 against \$12.42m over corresponding months last year, showing an increase of 60pc.

The imports from Tajikistan stood at \$10.10m during the months under review against \$1.43m over the corresponding months of last year, showing an increase of \$8.67m.

## Iran calls for unity against potential US oil sanctions

TEHRAN: Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian urged Opec members to unite against possible US sanctions on the major oil producer, after US President Donald Trump said he would seek to drive Tehran's oil exports to zero.

Iranian crude oil exports currently stand at around 1.5 million barrels per day, with the majority going to China. The loss of such a volume, equal to about 14pc of total world supply, would be significant for markets.

Pezeshkian made the comments at a meeting with Opec Secretary General Haitham Al-Ghais. Opec's X account on Wednesday showed Al-Ghais on a visit to Iran, which assumes the rotating Opec presidency this year.

"I believe that if Opec members are united and work together, the US would not be able to sanction and pressure one of them," Pezeshkian said at the meeting with Al-Ghais, according to Iran's state media.

Trump on Tuesday restarted his "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran, aimed at stopping Tehran from

obtaining a nuclear weapon. Iran's oil exports rose to the highest since 2018 during the term of President Joe Biden, despite US sanctions. Iran remains exempt from output curbs agreed to by Opec oil-producing nations.

Iranian oil minister Mahsen Pakrnejad told Al-Ghais that imposing unilateral sanctions on crude producers would destabilise energy markets, the oil ministry's SIHANA news outlet reported earlier on Wednesday.

"Destabilising the oil market is a vital issue for energy security. Imposing unilateral sanctions against major oil producers and putting pressure on Opec will destabilise oil and energy markets as well as harm consumers around the world," Pakrnejad said.

Similar policies during Trump's first term led to a sharp drop in Iranian oil exports to as little as 200,000 bpd in some months of 2020.

In 2018, Opec and allies agreed to boost supply after Trump urged producers to offset losses caused by the sanctions on Iran.—Reuters



A WORKER works inside a section of a wind turbine tower in the workshop of a power equipment company in Liangyungang, in China's eastern Jiangsu province, on Wednesday. Tensions between the US and China have soared in recent days as the world's two largest economies slipped a volley of tariffs on each other's imports, hitting hundreds of billions of dollars in trade.—APF

## Multiple MoUs likely during Erdogan's visit

By Aram Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Turkey are expected to sign multiple memoranda of understanding to expand economic cooperation, including the agriculture sector, during the upcoming visit of President Tayyip Erdogan to Pakistan.

Senior officials of the ministries of national food security and agriculture of Pakistan and Turkey held a meeting on Wednesday to design an action plan for future collaborations in the agriculture and livestock sectors.

Pakistan invited Turkey to invest in livestock vaccination, highlight-

ing the country's 220 million animal population, while Turkey has assured its full support to enhance Pakistan's agricultural production.

President Tayyip Erdogan is expected to visit Pakistan on Feb 12 to co-chair the seventh session of the Pakistan-Turkey High Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) with Prime Minister Shabaz Sharif on Feb 13.

HLSCC is the highest level decision-making forum, providing strategic direction to strengthen economic relations further. The council has seven joint working groups focused on political coordination, trade and investment, energy, banking and

finance, transport and communication, culture and tourism, and education.

During the meeting, the two sides also discussed enhancing cooperation in organic farming, fisheries, water resources, nursery technology, and aquaculture breeding.

Experts from both countries participated in the meeting, where various areas of cooperation were discussed in detail. Both sides agreed to share contact points to facilitate further collaboration and to connect private sector stakeholders from both countries. Turkey committed full support to enhancing Pakistan's agricultural production.

They acknowledged the strong historical and cultural ties between Pakistan and Turkey and emphasised the significance of agriculture and livestock as key pillars of the economy. They agreed to work together on innovative solutions to enhance cooperation.

Despite having vast agricultural land and favourable conditions, Pakistan's farm exports remain below potential. The collaboration with Turkey is expected to improve production and export significantly.

The ministry reiterated its commitment to advancing agriculture and livestock sectors through long-term international partnerships.

## US trade gap swells as Trump renews scrutiny of deficits

WASHINGTON: The US trade deficit widened sharply in December as imports surged to a record high against the backdrop of tariff threats, which might have prompted businesses to rush purchases of foreign-made goods like finished metals and computers.

The report from the Commerce Department on Wednesday showed the United States experienced sizeable deficits with several trade partners, including China, Mexico and Canada, which have been targeted by President Donald Trump's administration for broad or additional tariffs. Trump on Monday suspended a 25pc tariff on Mexican and Canadian goods until next month.

An additional 10pc levy on goods from China went into effect on Tuesday. Though the new administration has mostly explained the tariffs as related to controlling illegal

immigration and movement of illicit drugs, the surge in the deficit could strengthen its argument for a protectionist trade policy.

"The strength of imports appears largely driven by businesses rushing orders ahead of potential tariffs, a trend unlikely to reverse any time soon given there is still the risk of 25pc tariffs on Mexico and Canada next month," said Thomas Ryan, North America economist at Capital Economics. "Even though survey data point to an imminent rebound in exports, this suggests the trade deficit will remain wide this quarter." The trade gap increased 24.7pc to \$98.4bn, the highest since March 2022, from a revised \$78.9m in November, the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) said.

It was the second-largest deficit on record and the monthly increase was biggest since March 2015.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the trade deficit widening to \$96.4bn from the previously reported \$78.2bn in November. The trade deficit swelled 12.0pc to \$99.4bn in 2024, the largest since 2021.

Imports increased 3.5pc to an all-time high of \$164.9bn. Goods imports soared 4.8pc to \$293.1bn. They were boosted by a \$10.8bn jump in industrial supplies and materials, mostly reflecting a \$9.2bn increase in finished metal shapes, mostly from Switzerland.

That raised doubts among some economists that from loading of imports was the whole story behind the surge in the trade deficit.

"Switzerland is pretty far from the top of President Trump's tariff list," said Stephen Stanley, chief US economist at Santander US Capital Markets. "I assume that this is just a

fluky one-off, which means that there is a good chance that the trade gap reaches substantially in January, unless the import-based-of-tariffs dynamic kicked in vigorously last month." A survey from the Institute for Supply Management (ISM) on Wednesday showed services businesses feared higher prices and input shortages from tariffs in January.

Some providers of professional, scientific and technical services reported "the threat of tariffs is causing prices to rise," adding that "the threat of unstable international markets is resulting in shortages for various materials." Businesses in the real estate, rental and leasing sector said the "concern going forward is the cost of materials and project work, if any tariffs go into effect." The ISM's manufacturing PMI slipped to 52.8 last month from 54.9 in December.

Steve Miller, chair of the ISM Services Business Survey Committee, said "poor monthly conditions were highlighted by many respondents as importing business goods and production." Stocks on Wall Street were trading higher. The dollar slipped against a basket of currencies. US Treasury yields fell.

Weak exports

The trade report showed capital goods imports increased \$1.1bn, lifted by computers as well as computer accessories. But imports of civilian aircraft fell as did those of automotive vehicles, parts and engines.

Consumer goods increased \$2.2bn, driven by toys, games and sporting goods, cell phones and other household goods.

Exports fell 2.6pc to \$296.5bn. Goods exports fell 4.2pc, the most

since May 2020, to \$170.2bn. They were pulled down by a \$1.8bn decline in consumer goods.

Exports of industrial supplies and materials, which include petroleum, dropped \$1.8bn. Capital goods exports declined \$1.4bn while those of automotive vehicles, parts and engines fell \$0.9m. The goods trade deficit jumped 18.2pc to a record \$123.0bn. Adjusted for inflation, the goods deficit widened 15.4pc to \$111.9m. The goods trade deficit with Canada increased \$2.9m to \$2.9m in December. While the goods trade gap with China narrowed in December, it increased to \$295.4m in 2024 from \$278.1m in 2023. The shortfall with Mexico contracted to \$15.2m from \$15.4m in November.

Services imports increased \$1.0bn to a record \$71.8bn, while exports rose \$0.4bn to an all-time high of \$96.3bn.—Reuters

## BJP projected to win election for Delhi assembly

By Our Correspondent

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi assembly polls held on Wednesday could see the BJP returning to power after more than two decades, according to exit polls released for the politically crucial contest.

The Congress is seen as trailing in single digits after it refused to join AAP in a joint fight against the BJP. The winning cutoff is 36 seats in the 70-seat assembly, which AAP had won with two-thirds majority on previous two occasions.

If the predictions come true, BJP will come to power in Delhi for the first time since 1998. Earlier, polling concluded for the high-stakes Delhi Assembly elections at 6pm on Wednesday, with voters deciding the fate of 659 candidates in a contest that could significantly influence the political landscape of the capital, reports say.

Arrival Kargil-led AAP, contesting all seats, is aiming for a hot trick of solo wins, relying on its governance track record and welfare initiatives. The BJP has used its overwhelming lead on the media to label AAP as corrupt while also sending commensurate polarising signals. Exit polls said the BJP is making a strong bid to regain control of the capital after over 25 years.

The Congress, which governed Delhi for 15 years until 2013, is hoping for a revival after failing to secure a single seat in the last two elections.

Although exit polls do not always provide precise results, they offer insights into voter preferences and potential outcomes. But they have often enough missed the ball completely. The final election results will be declared on Feb 8. Delhi has approximately 15.4 million eligible voters.

Chauhan Strategies exit poll, not different from others, predicted the BJP would win 39-44 seats, AAP will likely win 25-28 seats.

## War crimes tribunal monitoring DR Congo situation

**AMSTERDAM:** International Criminal Court prosecutors said on Wednesday they were closely monitoring events in Democratic Republic of Congo, where Rwandan-backed rebels are trying to expand their territory after capturing the city of Goma.

"Credible sources indicate that thousands of persons have been wounded and hundreds killed in and around Goma, including civilians and peacekeepers, following months of clashes between the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the March 23 Movement ('M23') and their allies," ICC prosecutors said in a statement.

They urged all parties to deliver information on possible crimes. ICC Prosecutor Karim Khan said last year he would renew an investigation into Democratic Republic of Congo, focusing on alleged crimes committed in North Kivu province, whose capital is Goma, since Jan 2022. "This investigation is active and continues with urgency and focus," his office said on Wednesday.

More than 2,000 bodies of people killed in last week's conflict regime buried in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo's communications minister said early on Wednesday.—Reuters



A US Air Force aircraft carrying Indian migrants deported from the United States, lands at Amritsar's Guna Ram Das Jai Airport, on Wednesday.—AFP

## US military plane flies 104 illegal immigrants to India

**AMRITSAR:** A US military plane carrying 104 deported Indian illegal immigrants landed in India on Wednesday, authorities said, part of President Donald Trump's immigration agenda a week before he is expected to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Washington.

Migration has been among the key issues discussed by India and the US since Trump assumed office last month, and is also expected to come up during Trump's talks with Modi.

Although illegal Indian immigrants have been deported by previous US administrations, it is the first time Washington has used a military aircraft for the purpose. It is also the farthest destination so far for such flights using a military aircraft.

The US aircraft that landed in the Sikh holy city of Amritsar, in the northern Indian state of Punjab, returned 104 Indian immigrants, said Kuldeep Singh Bhutwal, Punjab's minister for Non-Resident Indian Affairs.

Punjab police said 33 immigrants each were from Gujarat, Modi's home state and the northern state of Haryana, while 30 were from Punjab. They underwent hours of screening at the airport before police escorted them out in small groups in police vehicles. The Indian foreign ministry did not respond to a request for comment.

The Trump administration has increasingly turned to the military to help carry out its immigration agenda, using military aircraft to deport migrants and opening military bases to house them.

This news agency reported on Tuesday that the C-17 aircraft with migrants on board had departed for India but would not arrive for at least 24 hours. The flight did not show up on public flight trackers but local media reported that it was coming from San Antonio in Texas.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio also 'emphasised' the Trump administration's desire to work with India to address "concerns related to irregular migration" when he met Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyan Jaishankar last month.

New Delhi has since said it will take back such illegal immigrants after verifying their details. The US is India's largest trading partner and the two countries are forging deeper strategic ties as they look to counter China. India is also keen to work with the US to make it easier for its citizens to get skilled workers visas.—Reuters

## Federal judge blocks Trump's birthright citizenship order

Judge sided with rights groups and pregnant women who argued their children were at risk of being denied US nationality

**WASHINGTON:** A federal judge on Wednesday blocked Donald Trump's attempt to restrict birthright citizenship in the United States in a blow to the president's bid to end a right enshrined in the Constitution for more than a century.

US District Judge Deborah Boardman in Greenbelt sided with two immigrant rights groups and five pregnant women who argued that their children were at risk of being constitutionally denied US citizenship based on their parents' immigration status.

The judge, an appointee of Trump's Democratic predecessor Joe Biden, issued a nationwide preliminary injunction blocking Trump's order from going into effect nationwide as planned on Feb 19.

"The denial of the precious right to citizenship will cause irreparable harm," District Judge Deborah Boardman was reported as saying

during the hearing at a Maryland court. She noted that Supreme Court precedent protects birthright citizenship, adding that Trump's order "conflicts with the plain language of the 14th Amendment," the Washington Post reported.

"No court in the country has ever endorsed the president's interpretation," she said. "This court will not be the first." The injunction adds to a 14-day stay on enforcement of Trump's executive order issued in January by a federal judge in Washington state.

**Relief for Trump's opponents**

"Today, virtually every baby born in US soil is a US citizen upon birth," Boardman said. "That is the law and tradition of our country. That law and tradition are and will remain the status quo pending the resolution of this case." Boardman's order provided longer-term relief to opponents of Trump's policy than an earlier, 14-day pause imposed on Jan 23 by a Seattle-based federal judge.

That judge, John Coughenour, called Trump's order "blatantly unconstitutional." Coughenour is set on Thursday to consider whether to likewise issue a preliminary injunction that would remain in effect pending the resolution of the litigation.

Birthright citizenship is enshrined in the US Constitution under the 14th Amendment which decrees that anyone born in US soil is a citizen.

Trump's order was premised on the idea that anyone in the United States illegally, or on a visa, was not "subject to the jurisdiction" of the country, and therefore excluded from this category.

Lawyers for the immigrant rights groups CASA and the American Refugee Advocacy Project argued that Trump's order violated the right enshrined in the citizenship clause of the US Constitution's 14th Amendment that provides that anyone born in the United States is a citizen.

Their lawsuit is one of at least eight filed around the United States by Democratic state attorneys general, immigrant rights advocates and expectant mothers challenging Trump's order.

They have cited an 1898 US Supreme Court ruling in the case of a Chinese-American man named Wong Kim Ark, who was denied reentry to the United States on the grounds that he was not a citizen. The court affirmed that children born in the United States, including those born to immigrants, could not be denied citizenship.—Agencies

## French PM Bayrou survives no-trust vote

**PARIS:** French Prime Minister Francois Bayrou survived an initial no-confidence vote in parliament, called for by the far-right, after the far-right National Rally (RN) and centre-left Socialists did not back the motion.

On Wednesday, 128 lawmakers voted in favour of the first motion, well short of the 289 votes that were needed.

Far-left lawmakers have introduced two no-confidence motions against the prime minister after he invoked special constitutional powers to force through the 2025 budget.

The tool, known as Article 49.3, allows the minority government to pass the legislation without a parliamentary vote.—Reuters

## Musk creates new power base in Washington with takeover of agencies

**WASHINGTON:** Elon Musk's rapid takeover of two US government agencies has enabled the South African-born billionaire to assert unprecedented control over America's 2.2-million-member federal workforce and begin a dramatic reshaping of government.

The world's richest man and ally of President Donald Trump, Musk, 53, has in two weeks created a new centre of power in Washington as he executes Trump's longstanding initiative to reduce the size of the US government.

The CEO of Tesla and founder of SpaceX, Musk has acted swiftly

since Trump's Jan 20 inauguration, deploying teams of current and former employees of his companies as his agents. Musk's actions have fostered a sense of panic among government workers and public protesters in Washington and at times have threatened to overshadow Trump's own agenda.

Musk's efforts are part of a massive government restructuring by Trump, who has fired and sidelined hundreds of civil servants in his first steps toward downsizing the bureaucracy and installing more loyalists.

Americans are witnessing "an extraordinary centralisation of

power in someone who lacks a top-level security clearance and has not been subject to any Senate confirmation process," said Don Meyer, a professor at the Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan. "Musk has unprecedented and centralised control of the basic plumbing of government," he added.

Asked who they are more worried about when it comes to the prospect of being fired, an employee of the General Services Administration that manages federal property and services said: "Musk. No one is really talking about Trump." Trump

has got Musk in charge of what both sides call the Department of Government Efficiency.

Despite its name, it is not a department, Musk does not draw a government salary, and DGE's creation immediately drew lawsuits from government unions, watchdogs and public interest groups. Exactly who makes up DGE is unclear. The Trump administration has not released a list of DGE employees. Nor has it said how they are being paid, how many have entered each agency, and whether they are government workers.

That raises questions about who

they are answerable to — Musk or Trump as head of the executive branch. Musk and his DGE lieutenants have taken over the Office of Personnel Management and the General Services Administration along with their computer systems. OPM is the human resources arm of the US government, overseeing 2.2 million government workers.

From there, emails have been sent out in the past week offering federal employees financial incentives to quit. The GSA oversees most government contracts and manages federal property.

At least four current and former

Musk aides are part of a team that has taken over OPM, shunting out some senior managers from their own computer systems, sources said.

Michael Linden, a senior official during the administration of former President Joe Biden at the Office of Management and Budget, a powerful agency that oversees the federal budget, said the access by Musk's aides to payment systems gives them extraordinary potential power.

"They could get to pick and choose which payments the federal government makes," Linden said in an interview.—Reuters



**MANCHESTER:** A statue of the suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst graces St Peter's Square.—Reuters

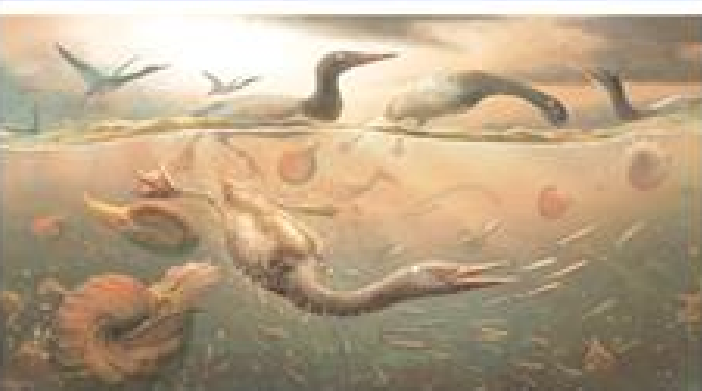


**CIUDAD JUAREZ:** Mexican authorities inspect a covert, which they believe is used by people to illegally cross into US from Mexico.—Reuters



**RIYADH:** An untitled painting by Saudi sculptor and poet Abdulrahman Radei on display at Sotheby's Contemporary art exhibition ahead of its international auction.—AFP

## NEWSMAKERS



An artist's illustration shows Vegavis, a Cretaceous period bird, diving for fish in the shallow ocean off the coast of the Antarctic peninsula.—Reuters

## Loon-like waterfowl from dinosaur-era is oldest 'modern' bird

**VEGA ISLAND:** Near the end of the age of dinosaurs, a bird resembling today's loons and grebes dove for fish and other prey in the perilous waters off Antarctica. Thanks to a nearly complete fossil skull, scientists now have identified this waterfowl as the oldest-known member of the lineage spanning all birds alive today.

The new fossil unearthed on Vega Island near the Antarctic Peninsula of the ancient land named Vegavis lived about 69 million years ago, approximately three million years before the asteroid strike at the end of the Cretaceous Period that wiped out the dinosaurs, aside from their avian descendants.

Fossils of Vegavis were first described two decades ago. But without sufficient cranial remains its place on the bird family

tree had remained ambiguous. The researchers now were able to diagnose Vegavis as nesting among the anatomically modern birds based on two cranial characteristics — the bones of its upper beak and the shape of its brain.

"Both of these features are observable in the new Vegavis specimen," said evolutionary biologist Chris Torres of the University of the Pacific in California, lead author of the research published in the journal Nature.

Vegavis was an early waterfowl, a group that also includes ducks and geese. Vegavis appears to have been ecologically specialised to pursue fish and other prey underwater in a shallow marine ecosystem. Antarctica at the time was not the desolate land of snow and ice that it is today, but rather a forested landscape with a temperate climate.—Reuters



**NAGOUR (India):** Camel owners gather with their animals at the Ramdhar Gaffa Fair, on Wednesday.—AFP



**ROME:** Activists belonging to the Italian Democratic Party hold placards with slogans reading 'Meloni, the patriot on the run' in protest against the government's decision to free and repatriate Osama bin Laden, a Libyan war crimes suspect. He was arrested under a warrant issued by the International Criminal Court.—Reuters

# Karim Aga Khan — Imam of the atomic age

Continued from Page 1

Shah also married his daughter to Hassan Ali Shah, linking the subcontinent's Muslim religious leaders to the Qajar royal house, and earning them the title of 'prince'. Hassan Ali Shah would in 1844 leave Iran for the subcontinent, settling in Bombay, now Mumbai, permanently in 1852.

## A global journey

Prince Karim, known to his followers as 'his highness' or the more reverential 'Mawlana Hazir Imam', continued the mission of his grandfather Aga Khan III of equipping his marathi (followers) with the tools necessary to adapt to life in the modern world. His flock, said to number between 12 and 15 million people as per community sources, live across a vast geographic area.

From the Pamirs of Central Asia to the coastal cities of East Africa, Nizari Ismailis have maintained communities in these locales for decades if not centuries. There are of course populous concentrations in the west-coast, including Pakistan, where members of the imam can be found in Karachi and along Sindh's coastal towns, Quadian, Chitral and Hunza. Moreover, new streams have struck roots wherever South Asian immigrant communities can be found in the 'new world', for example in the great metropolises of the US and Canada.

Karim Aga Khan's link with Pakistan was a strong one. For example, one of Karachi's top hospitals,



THE Aga Khan greets South African President Nelson Mandela in Maputo, Mozambique, on Aug 11, 1998. (Right) The Aga Khan, wearing the traditional robe of the Chancellor of Aga Khan University, arrives for the convocation ceremony in Karachi in 1995. —Courtesy archival material / AKDN



founded in 1983, bears his name while the Aga Khan University Education Board, started in 2003, offers qualifications up to the intermediate level. He visited the country on several occasions and various organisations linked to him are active throughout Pakistan, particularly in the health, education and socioeconomic sectors.

## Socioeconomic impact

A major focus worldwide of Karim Aga Khan's work for his own followers as well as other communities was on health, education and socioeconomic uplift. He established a web of

agencies and organisations that implemented his vision of human development.

These include the Aga Khan Foundation, the Aga Khan Development Network and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

The AKU maintains campuses in Pakistan, East Africa and the UK, while under Prince Karim's watch the Institute of Islamic Studies was established in London in 1997. Furthermore, the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations was established by the AKU in 2002, while the University of Central Asia, with campuses in the ex-Soviet

Central Asian States of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, was established in 2002.

Another of Prince Karim's achievements was the adoption of a constitution for his community in 1986. His grandfather had started this endeavour by giving his followers in East Africa a similar document in 1905. But Prince Karim's constitution was supposed to apply to his marathi across the world.

Karim Aga Khan also oversaw a vast portfolio that included his own personal wealth, as well as funds dedicated to his imam. In fact, a 2012 article in *Forbes* dubbed him

'Venture capitalist in the Third World', due to the investments he made in what can be termed emerging markets. Much of his personal wealth was inherited from his grandfather, while the 'institutional wealth' he oversees comes from the donations and religious taxes paid by his marathi. Apart from his religious funds, he had invested in several businesses, including media, hospitality, banking and insurance.

In the realm of culture, Prince Karim's Aga Khan Trust for Culture supported hundreds of projects across the globe. Some of the prominent restoration projects included

Lahore's Walled City, Humayun's tomb in Delhi, as well as the gardens of Badshah's mausoleum in Kabul.

The late Aga Khan married twice and had four children: Princess Zahra and Prince Rahim, Humayun and Ali Muhammad. He appeared to be a man of contradictions — a global-travelling aristocrat who belonged to a tradition dating back to one of the oldest scholars in Islam, an 'imam of the atomic age' for his followers. His successor, Prince Rahim, will be the 50th Nizari Ismaili Imam. No doubt, the new 'Hazir Imam' will have to guide the flock through even more complex times.

## Iran is willing to give diplomacy 'another chance'

US president says work on new Tehran nuclear deal should begin 'immediately'

DUBAI Iran is ready to give the United States a chance to resolve disputes between the arch foes, a senior Iranian official said on Wednesday, a day after President Donald Trump restored his "maximum pressure" campaign on the country.

Earlier, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said that US concerns about Iran developing nuclear weapons were not a complicated issue and could be resolved given Tehran's opposition to weapons of mass destruction.

"The clerical establishment's will is to give diplomacy with Trump another chance, but Tehran is deeply concerned about Israel's sabotage," said the senior official. The official said Tehran wanted the United States to "join in Israel in Washington is seeking a deal" with the Islamic Republic.

Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran includes efforts to drive its oil exports down to zero in order to stop Tehran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. Tehran has long said it is a nuclear programme is entirely peaceful and it has no intention to build nuclear weapons. But with its regional allies either dismantled or severely weakened since the start of the Hamas-Israel conflict in Gaza in Oct 2023, and mounting discontent among many Iranians at the state of the economy, analysts say the clerical establishment has few options other than to strike a deal with Trump.

The fall of Bashar al-Assad in Syria in December, a crucial ally of Tehran, has severely disrupted Tehran's "Axis of Resistance", a network of regional armed groups, militants and allied states, to counter Israel and the United States, while asserting its influence throughout the Middle East.

The official also said Tehran disagreed with "any displacement of Gazans, but Iran-US talks are a separate matter", referring to Trump's remarks

that the US would take over conflict-stricken Gaza and create a "Revolution of the Middle East" after resettling Palestinians elsewhere.

"Iran does not agree with any displacement of Palestinians and has commented this through various channels. However, this issue and the path of Iran nuclear agreement are two separate matters and should be pursued separately," the official said.

## 'Verified nuclear peace agreement'

Trump on Wednesday called for a "verified nuclear peace agreement" with Iran, after withdrawing from a similar deal in his first term and instituting a so-called "maximum pressure" policy. On Tuesday, ahead of a meeting with Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu, Trump signed an order reinstating the "maximum pressure" policy against Iran over allegations the country is seeking a nuclear weapons capability.

"I want Iran to be a great and successful Country, but one that cannot have a Nuclear Weapon," he said in a post on his

Truth Social platform. "I would much prefer a Verified Nuclear Peace Agreement, which will let Iran peacefully grow and prosper." The post echoed a similar message in his press conference a day earlier with Netanyahu, who also said Tehran could never have a nuclear weapon.

Trump dismissed reports that the United States was working with Israel "to blow Iran into smithereens" as "CREATIVELY EXAGGERATED". "We should start working on it (the agreement) immediately, and have a big Middle East Celebration when it is signed and completed," he said. "God Bless the Middle East!"

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told reporters he believed Trump's maximum pressure policy "is a failed experiment and trying it again will turn into another failure." He also reiterated that Tehran was not pursuing nuclear weapons. "If the main issue is that Iran does not pursue nuclear weapons, it is achievable and is not much of a problem," Araghchi said. —Agencies

## Argentina follows Trump, quits WHO

BUENOS AIRES Argentina said on Wednesday it will pull out of the World Health Organisation, following in the footsteps of the United States and citing similar complaints over the UN body's management of the Covid-19 pandemic.

President Javier Milei's spokesman announced the decision two weeks after President Donald Trump, an ideological ally and hero of the Argentine leader, announced Washington's planned exit from the agency.

Milei's decision was based on "deep differences regarding health management especially during the pandemic," spokesman Manuel Adorni told reporters, adding Argentina would not "allow an international body to interfere in our sovereignty." He cited the "urgent lockdown in the history of humanity" and "a lack of independence (at the WHO) in the face of the political influence of some states," without naming names.

Adorni insisted the measure gave Argentina "greater flexibility to implement policies adapted to the context" locally, while ensuring "greater availability of resources." WHO data shows Argentina contributed some \$8.25 million in membership fees to the organisation across 2022 and 2023 — 0.11 per cent of the total budget. It is slated to contribute \$8.25 million for the two-year 2024/25 cycle. —AFP



**'In all of the climate-affected communities I have worked in, it is clear that climate change and complex emergencies affect women and children absolutely differently'**



## NEHA MANKANI

Maternal Health & Climate Change Specialist

As extreme weather events, food insecurity, and displacement intensify, women and children bear the heaviest burden. On Friday 7 February 2025 at 1:45 PM in the Women & Climate Change session at Breathe Pakistan, Neha Mankani, a Pakistani midwife and public health specialist dedicated to maternal and neonatal care will shine a light on how climate disasters uniquely impact women's health, safety, and livelihoods.

Founder of the Mama Baby Fund, she has supported over 15,000 families, particularly during disasters like the 2022 Sindh floods. She focuses on the intersection of climate change and maternal health. Recognized as U.S. Mission Pakistan's 2023 Women of Courage and among BBC's 100 Women in 2023, Neha holds a degree from UMS and a master's from Columbia University. An advocate for midwifery, she continues to champion accessible healthcare for underserved communities. Let's change the climate of conversation to ignite bold action.

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A GENDER RIGHTS ACTIVIST FROM CONSERVATIVE CHITRAL

## KARISHMA ALI

Hailing from the climate-ravaged Hindukush range, Karishma Ali is more than just a footballer—she's a champion for gender equality and climate resilience. In a region where opportunities for women in sports are scarce, she has defied norms to pave the way for young girls to play, dream, and lead.

Karishma Ali will be sharing her insights on Friday 7 February 2025 at 1:45 PM in the Women & Climate Change session at Breathe Pakistan.

Karishma Ali, from District Chitral, is the founder of the Karishma Ali Foundation (KAF), a women-led organization promoting leadership, social change, and women's empowerment, particularly in marginalized communities. She made history by pioneering a female football team, breaking barriers and promoting physical activities, art therapy, and awareness of climate change, women's rights, and gender-based violence. In 2024, KAF launched the "Gamechangers for Climate Justice" initiative to educate young girls about climate change, featuring stories from Chitral's climate-impacted communities. Karishma has earned numerous accolades, including Forbes Asia 30 Under 30 (2019), the "Tell Her Story" award (2020), the Pride of Pakistan Award (2022), and the Sports Positive Next Generation Trailblazer Award (2024). She is also a member of UN Women's 30 for 2030.

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## SPORT

## Simeone double helps Atletico make semi-finals

MADRID: Atletico Madrid manager Diego Simeone's son Giuliano scored twice in the first half to help them to a resounding 5-0 home win over Getafe in the Copa del Rey quarter-finals on Tuesday.

Simeone opened the scoring after eight minutes with a close-range header from just outside the six-yard box off a Javi Galan cross, before bagging his second with a first-time effort nine minutes later.

Visiting goalkeeper Jiri Lstivak denied Simeone's attempt from close range with a great save before the half-hour mark, but the Brazilian managed to make it 3-0 in the 42nd minute after brilliantly cutting inside a defender in the box.

Giuliano thought he had scored a hat-trick after the break, but his 69th-minute goal was ruled out for offside before he left the field to a standing ovation on the hour mark.

"I'm very happy tonight, it's been crazy. I want to thank the team because we've made a huge effort," the Argentine winger told Teledeporte.

"I'm happy for the goals, I think about the things I have to improve day by day. I still have many flaws and details that I want to improve to keep growing."

Substitute Angel Correa then scored with a superb low shot from distance in the 78th minute, before setting up Alexander Sorloth, who also came on in the second half, to seal the rout four minutes from time.

Having secured a spot in the semi-finals for the second consecutive season, Atletico will turn their attention to La Liga where they face leaders Real Madrid in Saturday's derby.

"Today was a very tough game, so we need to rest, prepare well and go for it all on Saturday," the 22-year-old Simeone added. Atletico coach said that his side controlled the game from the start which led to a comfortable win.

"The team started very well, playing at such a high speed... we took control early on," said Diego Simeone, who added that his son had to continue his rich vein of form.

"He's in a very good moment, the fans recognise it, they will demand a lot more from him and he has to maintain this level," noted the Atletico coach.—Agencies



MADRID: Atletico Madrid's Giuliano Simeone scores during the Copa del Rey quarter-final against Getafe at the Metropolitano Stadium.—AFP

## Alcaraz battles through in first match since Australian Open

THE HAGUE: Spanish tennis star Carlos Alcaraz battled through against local hero Boris van der Zandvoort at the Rotterdam Open on Tuesday, his first match since quarter-final heartbreak at the Australian Open.

The top seed had to dig deep to overcome the wildcard-ranked 81 places below him, eventually coming through the first-round clash 7-6(7-5), 3-6, 6-1 in nearly three hours.

"It was a really difficult match. I had to get through some really difficult moments," Alcaraz said.

"I started the match a little bit nervous, making some mistakes. I let him dominate the match, play his style," added the Spaniard.

Van der Zandvoort stormed Alcaraz with a straight-sets win at last year's US Open and the

higher-ranked man initially struggled to find his range on the slow Rotterdam indoor surface.

A series of uncharacteristic errors handed the Dutchman several breaks of serve and Alcaraz became increasingly frustrated, chattering at his boss and the chair umpire.

Van der Zandvoort had a set point at 5-4 but contrived to serve a double fault, Alcaraz snuffed an opportunity and he brought the match back on level terms at 5-5 with a powerful forehand drive.

The set felt destined for a tie-break and sure enough, the pair were soon locked at 6-6. Alcaraz saved his best form for the key moment, unleashing several winners to take the tie-break 7-3.

The second set was also hard-fought, going on serve until the

sixth game when an errant Alcaraz backhand gifted Van der Zandvoort a break and a 4-2 lead.

The local favourite served for the set at 5-3 and levelled the match at one set all as Alcaraz hit yet another forehand wide to the delight of the partisan home crowd.

Two double faults and a wild forehand swung the match back in the Spaniard's favour in the decisive set as he broke at the first time of asking, racing into a 3-0 lead.

The break seemed to knock the energy out of Van der Zandvoort and he lost his serve again to give the top seed the chance to serve out at 5-1.

Alcaraz sealed the match with a delicate forehand drop shot vol-

ley, the relief palpable on his face as he shook hands at the net.

"A bit up and down on my side. I have to work to see where my weaknesses were in this match to be better in the next round," he said.

Alcaraz is looking to become the first Spaniard to triumph in Rotterdam but there are several obstacles potentially in his path, notably former champion here Daniel Medvedev.

The Russian number two seed came through a gruelling encounter with veteran three-time Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka on Monday. Another former Rotterdam champion who advanced with little difficulty was Russia's Andrey Rublev as he beat China's Zhang Zhizhen 6-3, 6-4.—AFP

## Halep retires after home defeat

BUCHAREST: Former tennis world number one Simona Halep announced her retirement on Tuesday after her first-round defeat at the WTA Cluj-Napoca tournament in her native Romania.

The 33-year-old lost 6-1, 6-1 to 72nd-ranked Italian Lucia Bronzetti.

"I don't know if it is with joy or sadness that I speak to you but I made this decision in my mind and conscience, I have always been here. My body no longer follows, but today I wanted to play and say my goodbyes on the court," Halep told the Romanian crowd.

The two-time Grand Slam champion, who had been working to re-establish herself after a doping ban, pulled out of Australian Open qualifying last month citing pain in her knee and shoulder.

Halep returned to tennis in March last year after her career had been on hold since October 7, 2022, after testing positive for roxadolol at the US Open.

The winner of the 2018 French Open and 2019 Wimbledon singles titles was then caught up in a second affair, over "irregularities" in the data of her biological passport.

She was handed a four-year ban by the ITIA, but successfully appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), arguing her positive test for roxadolol — used to treat anaemia and banned as a blood doping agent — was the result of a tainted supplement.

She denied knowingly doping and her ban was reduced from four years to nine months.

But she never managed to regain the level that allowed her to rise to the top of the world rankings. In October 2023, a position she occupied for a total of 64 weeks in her career.

Halep won 24 WTA titles over her 15-year career including the French Open in 2018 and Wimbledon in 2019.

She also played in three other Grand Slam finals — the French Open in 2014 and 2017 and the Australian Open in 2018.—AFP



ROMANIA'S Simona Halep waves to the crowd at the end of her Transylvania Open match against Italy's Lucia Bronzetti.—Reuters

## PSG, Brest and Dunkerque advance to French Cup last eight

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain eased into the French Cup quarter-finals on Tuesday with a 2-0 win over La Marse as Dunkerque shocked Lille on penalties and Brest earned a last-gasp 2-1 win over Troyes.

Defending champions and title Ligue 1 leaders, PSG lined out with an overhauled side ahead of a busy February in which they are also through to the Champions League knockout phase play-off.

Brest boss opened the scoring after 25 minutes after poor La Marse defender Fabrice Ferrelley Barcola scored in the second after 71 minutes.

France international defender Presnel Kimpanda made his return after a two-year injury absence coming onto the pitch after 81 minutes.

Although winter recruit Khvicha Kvaratskhelia still needs time to adapt to Luis Enrique's game, the Parisians lived up to their tag as favourites to lift their 16th French Cup trophy.

Meanwhile, Ligue 1 side Lille lost a match that they dominated largely due to spurned chances against Dunkerque, fourth in Ligue 2.

Andre Geron had put Lille ahead after 85 minutes before Dutch striker Kay Tejan equalised after 96 minutes of play to force a penalty shootout.

An enormous performance from Dunkerque goalkeeper Owen Jacobson earned a 5-4 penalty win to put the northern pair side through.

Elsewhere, Brest are also through with Abdellah Sima scoring the winner for the Brittany side.

Israelien Salah had opened after 49 minutes but Hugo Magnien bundled into his own net to throw Troyes a lifeline six minutes later.

Sima sealed victory for Eric Roy's men in added time by taking a free kick with the outside of his foot.—AFP

## Pakistan Junior Amateur Golf tees off

LAHORE: The Pakistan Junior Amateur Golf Championship teed off at the Rawat Golf Course in Malir on Wednesday, with five young golfers making a strong impression on the first day.

Saad Hafeez Malik of DHA led the pack with a stunning six-under-par score of 66, while Rawalpindi Golf Club's Akmal Moin Khan was close behind with a four-under-par total of 68.

Three other golfers also played under par rounds, including Defence Raja's Mohammed Abdullah Khan (70), Loralu-ur-Rohman of Peshawar (71) and Irtiza Hussain of Mangalia Greens (71).

Other notable performances came from Sharan M. Durrani, who scored a par round of 72 and Sharan Ali Khan, Shauheen Malik, and Ahmed Sharif Chaudhary, who all scored 73.—Sports Reporter

## Undav sends Stuttgart into German Cup final four



STUTTGART'S Denzil Undav (L) vies for the ball with Frank Onyiah of Augsburg during their DFB Pokal quarter-final match at the MHP Arena.—AFP

STUTTGART: A 25th-minute goal from VfB Stuttgart striker Denzil Undav was enough for a 1-0 home win over Augsburg on Tuesday, sending them through to the German Cup semi-finals.

"It wasn't our strongest game but at the end it was enough," Undav told Germany's ARD of the "dirty" win.

Stuttgart coach Sebastian Hoeneß, who has turned the club's fortunes around since arriving in the middle of a relegation battle in April 2023, also praised his side's fight.

"With all the games we've played, it certainly wasn't a performance to boast, but the win was deserved."

Stuttgart, surprise runners-up in the Bundesliga last season a year after narrowly avoiding relegation, were sloppy early as underdogs Augsburg looked to reach the semi-

for just the second time.

The hosts began to warm into the game, with Angelo Stiller chipping the Augsburg defence and finding his Germany team-mate Undav, which was denied by visiting keeper Nedilko Radevski with 26 minutes gone.

Undav put the home side in front three minutes later when he played a clever one-two with former Augsburg striker Ermedin Demirovic, before blasting through.

Kevin Schuster back to legs and into goal.

Undav, who made his loan from Brighton and Hove Albion permanent in the summer, now has 10 goals in 24 games in all competitions.

Augsburg lacked class going forward and created few chances, outside of Mort Komor forcing Stuttgart goalie Alexander Nustel into a des-

peration save with 71 minutes gone.

The victory came after three straight defeats in all competitions for Stuttgart, including Wednesday's 4-1 home loss to Paris St-Germain which ended their Champions League campaign at the group stage.

Threetime winners, Stuttgart last lifted the German Cup in 1997 and have not won a title since the 2006-07 Bundesliga.

The other quarter-final is set to be contested between holders Bayer Leverkusen host bitter derby rivals Cologne.

The remaining quarter-finals will be held late in February, with RB Leipzig — who have won two of the past three German Cups — host 2015 winners while six-time champions Werder Bremen travel to third-division Arminia Bielefeld.—AFP

## Race against time to complete contested Milan-Cortina bobsleigh track

CORTINA, ITALY: With a year to go until the start of the Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics, organisers are racing against time to ensure the sliding events are held in Italy and not moved over 6,000 kilometres away to Lake Placid.

Twelve gold medals will be awarded for bobsleigh, luge and skeleton, events held on a track which is costly and difficult to build and has frequently earned headlines for organisers of the 2026 Winter Games.

In Cortina d'Ampezzo in the Dolomite mountains, where the women's alpine skiing

events will also be held, 190 workers are working around the clock, seven days a week, to deliver a winding 1,650-metre (5,413-foot) track with 16 bends and complex refrigeration systems in time for an approval deadline in March.

Milan-Cortina's winning bid for the Olympics included the refurbishment of the Eugenio Monti track as part of its broader strategy to make use of existing sites.

But the old concrete structure, built in 1923 and immortalised in the 1980 James Bond film "For Your Eyes Only", hasn't been in use since 2008 and no longer conforms

to environmental and safety regulations.

## IOC SKEPTICISM

Italy was left without an initial bidder for the complicated renovation project and with no active bobsleigh track in despite Turin hosting the Winter Olympics in 2006.

The president of the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI), Giovanni Malagò, unwittingly set off a political firestorm by announcing in October 2023 that the sliding events would be held outside the host nation.

Italy's hard-right government made a patriotic politi-

cal stand against Malagò's announcement, with deputy prime minister Matteo Salvini insisting that the sliding events be held in Cortina.

Italian construction company Pizzarotti ended up being the only bidder for a second tender launched by Salini, the Games' construction delivery company, worth around 120 million euros (\$124.4 million).

The decision was heavily criticised by the International Olympic Committee, which pointed out that a bobsleigh track had never been built in such a short space of time, and local environmental groups

who blasted the felling of hundreds of trees and questioned the track's usefulness after the Olympics.

Regardless work began in February last year, with Salini, the Games' organisers, the IOC and the bobsleigh and luge federations carrying out nervous monthly inspections.

Last month organisers and Salini admitted that getting the track ready for the start of ice-making at the beginning of March and the pre-homologation of the track at the end of March was "tight and challenging".

However on Friday, Salini told AFP: "We are on sched-

ule, the pre-homologation will take place over March 24-30."

Olympic Games Executive Director Christophe Dubi was also positive, telling AFP that "nothing indicates that they will not get it done on time".

"But time is running out, they are completing little more than 150 metres of track per day," Dubi added.

A source with access to the inspection reports, who spoke under condition of anonymity, also told AFP that "pushing back the pre-homologation of the track to April is a possibility".

However organisers have also had to prepare a back-up

plan that could be implemented in the event that the Cortina track is not completed on time, as required by the IOC, with Lake Placid in New York state surprisingly picked ahead of Innsbruck and St. Moritz, which are both a stone's throw from Italy.

"It's the most economically practical solution (...) because the other tracks needed a firm commitment from us as early as last year in order to undertake renovation work," Milano Cortina 2026 boss Andrea Geron explained to AFP.

"But we're pretty sure and optimistic that there will be no need for any Plan B."—AFP



## KARACHI

Sunset 06:21 pm  
 Sunrise (Tomorrow) 07:11 am  
**NEXT 24 HRS**  
 Minimum 15°C  
 Maximum 28°C  
 Humidity 38%  
 Outlook Mostly Sunny

## METRO South



**Aaqib rules out changes in Champions Trophy squad**

Pg.18 SPORT



(CLOCKWISE from left) Activists belonging to the Jamaat-i-Islami, Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan and Pakistan Peoples Party stage their separate rallies in Karachi and Hyderabad to express solidarity with the people of Kashmir, on Wednesday. —(Shakil Agha / PPI / Umar Ali)



## Rallies, seminars held across Sindh to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day

Dawn Report

KARACHI/HYDERABAD: Political and religious parties, human rights organisations and government institutions organised rallies, seminars and other activities across the province to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day on Wednesday, vowing to continue their support to the people of the Indian-held territory, and urging the global community to play their role to bring the injustice and violence in the occupied region to an end.

In Karachi, a ceremony was held at Sindh Government to pay tribute to the unrelenting struggle of the Kashmiri people and said that self-determination is their fundamental right and the Pakistani nation supports their struggle.

Governor Kamran Tessori urged the international community to take notice of Indian aggression in the illegally occupied territory. The ceremony was also attended by consul general of different countries, leaders of minority communities and others, said a statement.

At an event organised by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) at its head office, Karachi Mayor Saad-ul-Munir Maroof Wajid addressed the participants after a rally and said that the nation stands shoulder to shoulder with the Kashmiri people in their struggle and the whole Pakistan is observing Kashmir Solidarity Day to pay tribute to their courage and bravery.

Government institutions also organised rallies, events, and gatherings in this regard.

One of the rallies started from the People's Secretariat and concluded at the Maqam-e-Qasbi. It was followed by a central ceremony led by Sindh Minister for Education and Mines & Mineral Development, Syed Sardar Ali Shah.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that based

## Students heave sigh of relief as university teachers set to resume classes today

• Decision indicates teachers' sincerity towards education: Fapusa • Association to boycott ruling party lawmakers, ministers and bureaucrats 'at every level' as teachers-govt standoff continues • Plans to move court against controversial law that allows non-PhD bureaucrats to become VCs

By Faiza Ilyas

KARACHI: Students of public sector universities across Sindh, who have suffered the most due to the government teachers' stand-off over a controversial law, heaved a sigh of relief on Wednesday when the Federation of All Pakistan Universities Academic Staff Association (Fapusa) decided to "resume" classes from Thursday (today).

While lauding the Sindh government responsible for the academic loss of thousands of students, the association said the "decision to temporarily resume activities indicate teachers' sincerity towards education".

Teachers belonging to Fapusa had boycotted for more than two weeks academic activities at 17 institutions of higher learning in Sindh and staged protest demonstrations against a controversial law that allowed the provincial government to appoint bureaucrats as vice chancellors of public sector universities.

The teachers reacted to a strike on Jan 16 following a decision of the provincial cabinet to change the criteria for appointment of vice chancellors and allow non-PhD bureaucrats to

head universities. Later, the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party used its majority strength in the Sindh Assembly to get passed the controversial amendment to the universities' law last week despite strong opposition.

'A new phase of resistance'

On Wednesday, the Sindh chapter of Fapusa held an online meeting that took several key decisions to sustain the public and the media pressure on the government.

Sources said that these steps included challenging the "the unconstitutional law" in court and holding boycotts of MPAs, ministers, and bureaucrats from the ruling party at every level.

"Every visit of these officials to universities will be observed as a black day to protest their anti-education policies," shared Fapusa-Sindh president Dr Ikhtiar Ali Ghumro.

Describing the new mode of protest as a strategic shift in teachers' struggle, he said: "From tomorrow (Thursday), our struggle will mark a new phase of resistance, where teachers will conduct classes by wearing black armbands every day. Every lecture will include awareness sessions

on the catastrophic implications of this amendment."

The teachers, he said, also decided to suspend all academic activities at 11 noon on Feb 11. They would organise protests rallies in their respective universities, he added.

"We will be engaging national and international academic bodies to expose the Sindh government's assault on higher education. There will be general body meetings in coming weeks in Karachi, Hyderabad, and Khairpur to further mobilise faculty and students," he said.

The association would also hold press conferences, protests and rallies across Sindh while its central body would be asked to observe another "black day" in coming days in universities across the country, he added.

On behalf of the association, he regretted students' loss due to teachers' strike and said the decision to temporarily resume activities indicate teachers' sincerity towards education.

Teachers regret academic loss

On behalf of the association, Dr Ghumro regretted students' loss due

Continued on Page 14

## Couple, PN employee run over, killed by garbage truck

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: Three people, including a man and his wife, were run over and killed by a garbage truck on the Rashid Minhas Road in Gulistan-i-Jauhar on Wednesday, officials said.

The Edhi Foundation stated that over the past five days, 14 people, including five children, were killed in road accidents in the metropolis.

The officials added that the incident occurred after the brakes of the truck, belonging to the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB) reportedly failed and the vehicle "went out of driver's control".

DC-Traffic Ahmed Nawaz Cheema told Dawn that the SSWMB truck was crossing the Jauhar Flyover at around 5:30pm when it hit three motorcycles and two cars.

The bodies were taken to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC).

An Edhi Foundation spokesperson identified two of the deceased as Maryam Zahra, 45, and her husband Kamran. Police Surgeon Dr Summaya Syed said that Maryam was brought dead while her husband Kamran died during treatment at the JPMC.

The third victim was identified as Mohammed Farooq, an employee of the Pakistan Navy.

The truck driver escaped after the accident leaving behind the vehicle.

Bus driver kills mother and child

In Khokhrapar, a woman and her infant son were killed while three others were injured when a bus crashed into a house.

DC Cheema said that the contract carriage bus was parked at Khokhrapar-4. When its driver tried to start the bus at 5pm, it did not start. However, when the vehicle got started it suddenly crashed into the house, hitting several people, killing a woman and her child.

## DCs told to ensure every child gets polio vaccine

KARACHI: Commissioner Syed Hassan Naqvi has directed all deputy commissioners (DCs) to ensure that every child under five receives polio drops during the ongoing immunisation drive.

In a statement, he urged everyone to play their part in making polio-eradication efforts successful.

During his visit to Central and Malir districts, he stressed the importance of vaccinating children to prevent lifelong disability and encouraged parents to get their children vaccinated.

He asked DCs to engage community elders to get their cooperation to ensure vaccination to all children.—Dawn Report

## Murad asks Chinese firms to invest in transport, energy projects

CM holds talks with top firms during China visit

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has met top Chinese companies in Beijing and invited them to invest in Karachi's transport system, highlighting the need for early completion of the much-awaited Karachi Circular Railway (KCR) project.

The chief minister, along with Sindh ministers Sharjeel Memon and Nasir Shah, was accompanying President Arif Ali Zardari on his five-day official visit to China.

A CM House spokesperson said that Mr Shah on Wednesday met chief executives of major Chinese companies in Beijing and discussed important infrastructure projects such as KCR and fast rapid transit (BRT) system.

He said that the collaboration was aimed at modernising the city urban transport system.

He said that the chief minister told the Chinese companies that the work on various BRT lines was in progress while two of them — Green Line and Orange Line — were already operational.

The project would become more fruitful when the KCR, the main

feeder of the BRTs, would be made operational, he added.

The chief minister told the Chinese companies that the KCR project had been pending approval from the Chinese authorities since 2016.

The press statement issued from CM House said that in a significant step towards economic cooperation, the delegation comprising Senior Minister Sharjeel Memon, Energy Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Senior Minister Murtaza Wahab, and Pakistan's Ambassador to China Khalid Hashmi and others met top executives of Chinese companies and discussed major infrastructure and energy projects "paving the way for enhanced bilateral partnerships".

The Chinese companies included Norinco, Beibei Trucks, China North Vehicle Company, and Jiangsu Trade Electro-Mechanical.

The chief minister discussed with Chinese companies several key projects designed to boost Sindh and Pakistan's economic growth.

"Partnerships were explored to further develop Thar Coal resources and expand Pakistan's energy capacity."

The chief minister informed the Chinese companies that projects like electricity, coal to gas, coal to diesel and coal to urea projects, could be developed.

The chief minister discussed the

introduction of electric buses and taxis to promote cleaner and efficient public transport.

He expressed strong optimism about the potential of these collaborations, saying: "These projects represent not only significant progress for Sindh, but also a crucial contribution to Pakistan's national development agenda. The Karachi Circular Railway, Thar Coal development, and the adoption of modern electric transport will dramatically enhance public services and stimulate economic activity."

He emphasised the importance of leveraging China's technological expertise to accelerate the province's development and create numerous job opportunities.

These partnerships, he concluded, would lead to multiple joint ventures, fostering sustained economic and industrial growth for both Sindh and Pakistan.

Meanwhile, Senior Minister Sharjeel Memon met a Chinese EV bus manufacturer in Beijing and invited them to invest in the province.

According to a statement issued here, during his visit to the Chinese capital, he formally invited the Chinese company to establish an EV bus manufacturing plant in Karachi.

Energy and Planning & Development Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah was also present at the meeting.



آغا خان یونیورسٹی  
THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

## Convocation Pakistan Postponed

The Awards Ceremony and Convocation in Pakistan, originally scheduled for 7 and 8 February 2025, have been postponed.

New dates for these events will be announced soon.



Moreover, they strongly condemned VC Dr Zabala Khan Shireen's definition of the federal minister's directives as the last only approved the release of a single month's provision, out of six months' rationing.

During a meeting following the protest, attendees denounced in haste as their assemblies as a violation of their constitutional right and warned that if the restrictions was not lifted, they would be forced to hold their meetings on University Road in Dhaka Report.

"However, the Seattle government has shown more concern for students' education, refusing to negotiate despite clear warnings. Our protest is not a bid to negotiate but a principled stand against unfair decisions. We have chosen to



He instructed the DC-South to coordinate with the police, wildlife department and customs board to completely eliminate illegal animal trade and shops in Nallur area and submit a report in the regard within 15 days. —APP

In line with the manifesto of the Pakistan Peoples Party, Mayor Wahid reiterated that the party would continue to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the institutions responsible for delivering basic services in Karachi, striving for a better and more sustainable future for the city.

Contact Person	
1. Mr. Muhammad Bilal	2. U. Jingyuan
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responsibilities in certain great nations, namely in the education of youth. Youth, great men say, is the only force sufficient to a result of reforms planned or any achievement of the big destiny, otherwise no ending or any achievement.



## Man booked for slapping polio worker

By Our Correspondent

**NAWABSHAH:** Nawabshah police on Wednesday booked a man for manhandling and slapping a woman polio worker during ongoing vaccination drive in the province. Ms Tahira Parveen lodged an FIR (No.40/2025) at B-Section police station under Sections 353, 504, 34, 337 F2 and 307 A1 PPC against Rajat for attacking and slapping her and issuing threats of dire consequences to the polio team.

Sources said the incident took place in Kakapota Colony on Wednesday morning when the health officials' team reached there for administration of polio drops.

The suspect allegedly refused to get the drops administered to his child, issued threats to the team and later attacked and slapped the polio worker Ms Parveen.

## Protesters block road in Mirpurkhas

By Our Correspondent

**MIRPURKHAS:** Hundreds of people, including women, blocked main ring road opposite Mehra police station on Wednesday in protest against suspension of water and gas supply to their localities.

The protesters from Mafki Colony, Sheedman town and Sufi town raised hurdles on the road, bringing all vehicular traffic to a halt.

Mehra police station's SHO Amin Marii rushed to the protesters and held negotiations with them, assuring them that he would ask the authorities concerned to get water and gas supplies resume to their areas.

After an hour, the protesters dispersed and opened the road for traffic.

# Several police officials seek long leave in protest over lawyers' action

Lawyers call off protest after talks with DIG

By Mohammad Hussain Khan

**HYDERABAD:** Several policemen, including SROs and in-charges of various cells have expressed their inability to perform duties in protest over lawyers' barging into SSP's office on Tuesday, and sought 30-day leave for "recovery from this shock".

The policemen gathered in SSP office on Wednesday to submit their leave applications and reports that agitating lawyers have demanded transfer of SSP Dr Farukh Ali for his refusal to remove Shariq Nagar police station's SRO who had booked Advocate Ali Raza Bader on Monday for using tinted glasses and fancy number plates.

Hyderabad Range DIG Tariq Razvi Dharejo rushed to the SSP office to calm the police officials down and persuaded them to resume duties. They included; in-charge CIA Karim Abbas, in-charge investigation cell at SSP office, Kashif Bajwa; SHO Pignari Sajid Arain, in-charge 15 City, Raja Rahail, Cantonment police station SRO Abdul Razak, Market police station SHO Masir Abbas et al.

They said in their applications that Tuesday's episode had demoralised police and tarnished their image.

The Hyderabad police's reaction appeared to be a repeat of police protest when several SROs had expressed their inability to perform duties after their KIP Masruiq Khan's house was raided by Rangers before Capt Sahar's arrest in



POLICE officials in civvies pack a corridor in Hyderabad SSP office on Wednesday as they submit application for leave in protest.—Photo by Umar Ali

October 2020 from a hotel in Karachi.

Lawyers call off protest

Lawyers called off their protest earlier on Wednesday morning after DIG arrived in SSP office where they had continued their sit-in till late Tuesday-Wednesday night.

Karachi Bar Association (KBA) president Amir Warrach, General Secretary Rehman Kori, Hyderabad District Bar Association (HDBA) Ziauddin Sheikh, general secretary Shukir Shar and

former HDBA leader Faizal Mughal, who led the sit-in, demanded transfer of the SSP to which the DIG replied that it was beyond his powers.

The DIG said that he could present their demand to police high-ups. "It took us 90 minutes before DIG agreed with us that SSP will be transferred," said Sheikh while talking to Dawn.

Sources said that DIG had told lawyers that he could ask the SSP to proceed on two days leave but he could not make a promise to get him transferred. If the SSP was at least then the matter could be got probed through an

inquiry committee, he said.

KBA president had announced in presence of DIG: "It has been agreed that the SSP will be transferred and the DIG will visit HDBA to normalise the situation". A video clip of the occasion showed the DIG watching Warrach making such announcement but he did not appear to agree or disagree with his point.

Later, the DIG told Dawn that police had expressed restraint despite the fact that lawyers trespassed into the SSP offices. Police had so far avoided registering cases for

this act as police tried to defuse the situation through talks, he said.

He said that the car had been returned under some legal provision to HDBA president Ayaz Tariq but another group of lawyers had taken a different position on the issue.

Lawyer Faizal Mughal said that lawyers had told the DIG that lawyers had many complaints against the SSP. "We did tell the DIG lawyers will have agreed to normalise the situation but SSP apologised but now the demand is for his transfer," he said.

## Projects for six 'strategic' canals not tabled in Ecneec: Khuhro

By Our Correspondent

**LARKANA:** Pakistan Peoples Party Sindh president Nisar Ahmed Khuhro has said that the issue of six canals has not even been tabled at the ECNEC or any other relevant forums and hence Sindh is raising its voice against it, which should be heard.

Mr Khuhro said at a press conference at Larkana Press Club on Wednesday that the six canals would certainly get water from Indus River but where would they get water from when the Indus River System Authority had already pointed out water shortage in the system.

He said that in civilian governments, all decisions were routed through DDWP, CDWP, ECNEC, NEC and CCL. But the issue of canals was not even tabled in the ECNEC or any other forums, he said.

Mr Khuhro, who also heads the Public Accounts Committee of Sindh Assembly, called on the fed-

eral government to restart construction of the remaining portion of Right Bank Outfall Drain (RBOD) on which work had started in 2021 at a cost of Rs14 billion.

The work on the RBOD had been stalled since 2016, he said and asked the centre to pump funds to complete the project. Sea was fast eroding vast patches of land in Thatta, Badin, Sujawal, Sanghar and other areas due to water scarcity, he said.

He disclosed that sea had swallowed up 1.5 million fertile land and stressed completing RBOD and repairing Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD).

He said that rise in population and shrinkage of fertile land could seriously threaten 'food security'. Irra had failed to implement the Water Apportionment Accord, he said.

He cited Prime Minister's claim that inflation had dropped by three per cent and said the end sufferer was the population connected with agriculture that bore the brunt of soaring prices.

He said that peasants, growers and agriculturists had been left at the mercy of market which had given birth to a host of difficulties for them. The government had not hence fixed support price of wheat, paddy, cotton or other crops, he said.

He urged the government and private entrepreneurs not to import wheat in future and criticised fixing separate support prices for wheat in Sindh and Punjab.

He claimed that due to climate change the rice production had reduced by half. Rice was a cash crop which earned foreign exchange but this time the losses would go down by 50 per cent, he said.

He said that it was a cumulative economic loss where the role of politicians was disastrous for agriculture.

Khuhro was outspung over what he called weak pace progress on the construction of houses for flood-hit people.

## Rallies, seminars held across Sindh to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day

Continued from Page 13

on geographical realities, Kashmir is a part of Pakistan. "Despite years of oppression and greedy tactics, India has not succeeded in gaining the support of the Kashmiri people because they have consistently refused to accept Indian dominance," he said.

The rally was also attended by Chief Secretary Sindh Asif Haider Shah, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Sindh Najam Ali, Haryana leader from Anar Kashmir Syed Muhammad Naeem Yousaf Bakhar, Karachi commissioner, political leaders, civil society representatives, social figures, students, and a large number of other citizens.

The rallying Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) staged a rally outside the Karachi Press Club where its leaders, Waqar Mehmood, Provincial Minister and President of PPP Karachi Division, Naeem Ghani, General Secretary Javed Nageer, and President of PPP Anar Kashmir Sindh Zameer, Sardar Zulfikar Ali, addressed the participants and urged the United Nations to open its eyes and ears and fulfill its promise to hold a plebiscite for the Kashmiri people in accordance with its approved resolutions.

They emphasised that the Kashmir issue, which has remained on the UN's agenda for 75 years, is the longest-standing unresolved issue in South Asia. The global community, they stated, must end its double standards now.

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) organised a ceremony at a park adjacent to its headquarters in Rahimabad. Addressing the participants, MQM-P Chairman Dr Khalid Mahmood Siddiqui said that his party has historically been committed to resolving the Kashmir issue.

"Our narrative is about Kashmiri freedom, which is a central component because until Kashmir is free, Pakistan's freedom will not be complete," he said. "The decisions related to Kashmir at the global level have been stalled and are yet to be implemented. Pakistan's embassies and consulates should have been more proactive in presenting Kashmir's case to the world."

A large number of people marched on the New M. A. Jinnah Road in a rally organised by the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI). Carrying placards and banners, they chanted slogans against Indian brutalisation in occupied Kashmir. People from all walks of life participated in the rally. A large number of women and children were also part of the rally. The march was taken out from Jail Chowrahi to the Mausoleum of Qasim-i-Anam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Addressing the rally, senior party leader Liaquat Baloch said that the global community needs to realise that Palestine belongs to the Palestinian and Kashmir belongs to the Kashmiris. The crimes in Kashmir have deprived hundreds of thousands of people of their economic rights, he said and demanded the government, the army and other policy making institutions to dismiss the impression that Pakistan has sold out Kashmir and come up with a strong response over the unresolved issue.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) also staged a "special ceremony" near Mazar-e-Qasim. PTI Sindh chapter president Haleem Adil Sheikh while addressing the ceremony said that the struggle of the Kashmiri people is just, and Pakistan's stand in complete solidarity with them.

"Imran Khan is not only the ambassador of Pakistan but also of Kashmir, yet he has been unjustly imprisoned," he said. "It is because of Imran Khan's efforts that the United Nations issued a charge sheet against India. We will continue our struggle for Imran Khan's release and will keep raising our voices for the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people," he added.

Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences & Technology organised a walk along with the students was also attended by PPP leader Shahida Rehman, Jinnah Town chairman Mirwan Abdul Sami, in-charge Campus and Dean of Science at Federal Urdu University, Dr Mohammad Zahid, Registrar Dr Saadia Khattil, and faculty members of the varsity.

Like other parts of the country, rallies were also staged in Hyderabad to express solidarity with the people of the field valley.

The district administration organised a rally on Thandi Sarak to condemn barbaric measures of the Indian government to suppress the Kashmiris.

The Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan also brought out a rally from Kohistan Chowk to the local press club where the PTI Hyderabad chapter organ-

ised a protest.

JUP (Noorani) held a rally also participated by the Tahreek-e-Lahab-e-Pakistan (TLP) local chapter to support the cause of Kashmir. The Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) staged a separate rally from Station Road to the press club.

The Markazi Muslim League held a public meeting at Hyder Chowk while Sindh Agriculture University (SAU), Tandojam, staged a big rally.

In Sukkur, the district administration held a big rally in which the participants were carrying placards inscribed with slogans "Freedom for Kashmir".

Separate rallies were taken out by the JI and the Sunni Rabita Committee, along with the district administration in Jacobabad, on the Kashmir Day.

Shah Abdul Latif University in Khairpur also observed the day to express unwavering support to the Kashmiri people and their right to self-determination. Rallies were also organised in Nawabshah, Nasirabad, Farooq and Sanghar with national enthusiasm.

The JI, Muttahida-Watan Organisation, Sunni Rabita Council and other social bodies also took out rallies.

A programme was organised in Rahimnagar Cadet College besides a rally.

Similar rallies were taken out in Sakrand, Qari Ahmed, Sanghar, Tando Adam, Shahpur Chakar, Shahdadpur, Kandhara, Moro, Padinah, Tharshah, Mehranpur and other towns.

The district administration of Dadu organised a rally on the occasion.

In Mirpurkhas, most of the markets and business centers remained closed to express solidarity with the Kashmiris. Different political parties, social organisations and trader associations and district administration held rallies.

District chapters of the MQM-Pakistan district chapter, JI, Pakistan Markazi Muslim League, Sunni Rabita Council also took out protest rallies in the city.

A protest camp was established by the district administration of Mirpurkhas, Anjuman Tajir Mirpurkhas, Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mirpurkhas etc, at the Post Office Chowk.

Different political parties and social organisations also took out protest rallies in Mirwah Gorchani, Digri, Tando Jan Muhammad, Kot Ghulam Muhammad, Jhokla, Narkot, Sindri, Jhangron, Thalhyppoon etc.

In TandoAllahyar, the district administration and social organisations took out a rally.

Activities of political and religious parties, government officials, members of human rights bodies, journalists and civil society organisations came together in a procession to express solidarity with the people of the occupied Kashmir.

Protests were also staged in all other small and big towns of the district, including Mafki, Tando Bago, Talhar, Goharchi and others.

### Khawaja Zafar Hassan

26th September, 1921 - 6th February, 2019

He walked with quiet strength,  
his words measured, his actions true.  
He taught us to stand firm,  
to choose honesty when no one was watching.  
His kindness was not loud,  
but steady, unwavering.  
Even now, in his absence,  
we find him in the choices we make,  
in the path he showed us long ago.

Please recite Surah-e-Fatiha and  
remember him in your prayers

Nevine, Iqbal, Rabia

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Tender Schedule : Date and Time			
Tender Issue From	Tender Issuance till	Tender Submission	Tender Opening
10 FEBRUARY 2025	24 FEBRUARY 2025	25 FEB 2025 11:30 am through EPADS	25 FEB 2025 12:00 am through EPADS

Bidding documents can be obtained or downloaded from EPADS (www.portal.sindh.gov.pk) or ICCBS website (www.icbs.edu). Bidding documents (signed & Stamped) along with earnest money must be submitted through EPADS as per the above schedule. The Original Bid Security Pay Order must reach the Purchase Department ICCBS before the deadline for submission of bids.

The tender fee of Rs. 1,000/- (non-refundable) must be deposited in United Bank Limited Account No. 1146-291497304 entitled "International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences Tender Account". The original Deposit Slip / Online Deposit Receipt must be submitted along with the bid.

Earnest Money equivalent to 2% of the bid value must be submitted in the form of a Pay Order in favour of the "International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences Tender Account" at the ICCBS Purchase Office.

An alternate bid/offer should accompany a separate pay order for earnest money. The Procuring Agency may reject all or any bid subject to the relevant provision of SPP Rule No. 25.

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Tel # 111-222-292 (198, 108, 108), 02134819011  
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(I.C.B.S.)

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Maximum 20°C  
Outlook Sunny

METRO  
North

**Aaqib rules out changes in Champions Trophy squad**

Pg.18 SPORT



CITIZENS participate in a rally at D-Chowk in Islamabad on Wednesday to express solidarity with the Kashmiris facing atrocities at the hands of the Indian security forces. — AFP

## ‘Fault’ in CDA underpass raises questions, concerns

Sharp loop inside underpass eats up one lane; official claims no flaw in design of loop

By Kashif Adnan

ISLAMABAD: A sharp loop in the newly constructed Jinnah Avenue underpass has raised question marks on the design of the project, as motorists are worried about the potential road clogs due to such a flow in which three-lane road abruptly becomes a two-lane road after entering the underpass.

Jinnah Avenue, if one is moving from F-10 towards D-Chowk, has three lanes but the newly built underpass has eaten up one of the lanes. One lane has been used to build a loop for an exit towards 9th Avenue. The loop itself is problematic because of its dog-leg bend and a concrete wall right after it.

It is apparent that heavier vehicles will not be able to use this smoothly. “I fear whenever heavy vehicles, such as school buses and emergency cranes, will use this loop, their tail end will badly disturb the speedy traffic on this road,” said Syas Khan, a motorist.

It may be noted that in all other projects, the CDA builds an extra lane for loop to ease the flow of heavy traffic, but in this project, it has surprisingly reduced one lane.

A former government official, who lives in F-11 and uses this road for commute, said the CDA should look into the issue as after the construction work at the F-10 roundabout, the flow of traffic would increase which could lead to traffic congestion in the underpass. This is not the first time that a CDA project has had a design flaw. The civic agency made a blunder in the design of the roundabout outside the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) in H-8/4. This roundabout has created at least three points where traffic coming from different directions converges and it is often facing traffic mess during rush hours.

The said underpass of Jinnah Avenue



A SHARP loop eats up one lane of the underpass which may cause traffic congestion or lead to a mishap. — Photo by Mohammad Asim

was completed in 42 days. It is part of the Jinnah Avenue interchange project worth Rs4.1 billion, which has two components — an underpass (already completed) and a flyover, which is underway. According to the CDA, the flyover will be completed on February 14.

Separately, a CDA statement said Chairman Muhammad Ali Randhawa along with the relevant officers visited the Jinnah Avenue interchange project and reviewed various construction activities, including the under-construction flyover bridge and road infrastructure.

The press release said that, during the briefing, it was highlighted that asphalt work was progressing rapidly on the roads surrounding the Jinnah Avenue Interchange project, and construction on the proposed U-turn being built on 9th

Avenue adjacent to the project was also moving ahead.

The CDA chief was briefed about the construction of a protected U-turn at the F-10 roundabout and adjacent F-10 road. It was further informed that the construction activities at the F-10 roundabout would be completed this month and speed to traffic. The chairman stated that consultants and resident engineers should ensure the highest quality of construction work on-site and guarantee its timely completion.

CDA's member engineering Syed Nafazat Raza, while giving a detailed version, said there is no flaw in the design of the loop.

“The width of the loop is 10 feet with no height restriction. All types of vehicles can use it smoothly,” he said, adding

that the loop was designed in accordance with international engineering standards.

“It is not the way people look at this loop-turning radius is safe,” Mr Raza said, adding that the CDA and traffic police will have to ensure speed limit and for this loop, the speed limit is 50km per hour.

“We are also going to take safety measures which include separate debanking of lanes, direction boards, signage etc. We will take all precautionary measures,” the CDA member engineering said.

When asked why an extra lane was not constructed for the loop, Mr Raza said: “I have already said, the loop and underpass were constructed in accordance with international standards, there is no need to be worried.”

## Police suspect honour killing in runaway girl case

By Mohammad Aagha

RAWALPINDI: A young girl who reportedly ran away from her home died shortly after being brought back home by her parents and was laid to rest in the Jall area, raising suspicions in the police that she might have been killed over ‘honour’.

A detective foot constable posted at the Jall police station reported on Tuesday that he was on duty near Syed Akkha when he received information that a 17-year-old girl, who was a first-year student (college student) and resident of Syed Kauran, had been missing from her home.

In a statement, he further said that after her parents knew that she had been missing, the girl's father and uncle launched a search and finally she was found at the Syed Akkha.

She was brought home by her parents who suspected that she had belittled someone and attempted to run away from home. The DFC further said that the news of the girl's death spread in the area as the deceased was laid to rest in a local graveyard at about 12pm on Tuesday.

Police will file a request in the court of law to get permission for the exhumation of the body to ascertain the real circumstances and the cause of her death. A senior police officer confirmed that the incident had come to their knowledge and police were investigating it. According to the postmortem report, the legal proceedings will be initiated accordingly.

Last week, the Jall police arrested four suspects after the exhumation and the initial report revealed that the 21-year-old girl had been poisoned by her sister's in-laws to cover up her rape. The orphan girl was sexually assaulted for months allegedly by her brother-in-law and his accomplice who killed her and laid her to rest in the Jall area.

## Court orders transparency in CUI rector's appointment

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has ruled on the controversy related to appointment of the Rector of Comsats University Islamabad (CUI), emphasising the need for transparency and procedural compliance in public sector appointments.

The case was filed by Dr Shahid Khattak, who challenged the appointment of Professor Dr Shahid Munir as Rector CUI through a notification issued on Sept 23 last year.

The petitioner, who was ranked as the top candidate by the university's Senate, argued that his appointment was unjustly overlooked in favour of Dr Munir, who was ranked second. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, while disposing of the petition, highlighted the legal obligation of appointing authorities to provide valid reasons for deviating from merit-based recommendations.

The court noted that the Ministry of Science and Technology or the President's Secretariat failed to justify out of turn appointment ignoring the top-ranked candidate. The ruling reinforced that discretionary powers must be exercised fairly and within defined legal limits.

The court cited a precedent from the Supreme Court (2021 SCMR 1000) and underscored that the top candidate has a legitimate expectation of appointment unless compelling reasons dictate otherwise.

During the hearing, government representatives informed the court that a fresh selection process had already been initiated for the rector's appointment following new directives from the President's Secretariat. The court acknowledged this development and ruled that Dr. Khattak should be reconsidered in the ongoing selection process.

“The petitioner's credentials, already available with the Search Committee and Senate, must be fairly evaluated alongside other candidates,” Justice Kayani stated in the verdict. — Malik Asad

## Health ministry wants cost of land for Jinnah Medical Complex waived

PM Office seeks CDA's point of view over ministry's summary

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Office has sought Capital Development Authority's (CDA) point of view over a summary of health ministry seeking waiver of land cost for proposed Jinnah Medical Complex.

CDA in November asked the health ministry to arrange Rs19.7 billion funds to lease 600 kanal of

land for the Jinnah Medical Complex to be built in Sector H-10. A few days ago, the civic agency in a letter to the health ministry offered a 33-year lease on 600 kanal for the medical complex. The lease is extendable for two terms of 25 years and the ministry has been asked to pay Rs19.7 billion for it.

Sources in CDA said that health ministry after receiving the letter of CDA had requested the civic agency to waive off the payment against land.

However, CDA informed the health ministry that as per prevailing policy and regulations, exemption/waiver corresponding to land cost to any organization is not covered as all the land is acquired by

CDA and compensation is paid to those whose land had been acquired by CDA and they are entitled to get payment/plot from the CDA.

Therefore, CDA turned down the request of the health ministry. Subsequently, the health ministry through a summary took up this matter with Prime Minister Office, requesting for taking up this matter before the federal cabinet to grant waiver to ministry.

Sources said that in the summary, the health ministry pleaded that its overall public sector development programme funding for 2024-25 stands at Rs24.7 billion, therefore, paying the said amount in this fiscal year is not feasible for it.

However, before moving the matter to the PM office through ministry of interior sought comments of CDA on summary of health ministry.

“In our rules and regulations, there is no provision of free land as we procure land from land owners and we had shared same views with the health ministry,” said an officer of CDA.

He said when CDA refused to health ministry, they took up this matter with federal government to place their summary before the federal cabinet.

“In coming days, we will share our view points on this summary, right know, I can't say what would be our stance, but one thing is clear

that we have to pay to land owners against the acquired land,” said an officer.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the Jinnah Medical Complex was performed by the prime minister on July 23, 2024. The multi-billion medical complex is funded by the federal government and executed by the CDA.

According to the Planning Commission, the project will be completed with an estimated cost of Rs120 billion.

The government has allocated Rs5 billion for the fiscal year 2024-2025 under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) to kickstart the project. However, it is also looking at other options such

as public-private partnerships to get this project completed.

Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, while chairing a meeting on the project some months ago, had highlighted that the project's location in Islamabad, near the airport and national highways, made it an ideal hub for regional and international medical tourism.

Mr Iqbal had said that the complex must incorporate green design principles, ensuring that it stood as a sustainable and environmentally friendly structure. The health complex was envisioned as a monument project for the capital, featuring a self-contained vertical health tower with comprehensive medical services, he had added.



Fajr	05:40
Zuhar	12:26
Asr	04:07
Maghrib	06:45
Isha	07:14

66 RETURNS OF HAND  
BUT RESPECTABLE  
LABOUR OF A CRAFT OR  
PROFESSION, THOUGH  
SMALL IN QUANTITY,  
ARE BETTER THAN THE  
WEALTH WHICH YOU  
AMASS THROUGH SIN  
AND WICKEDNESS. 72

**INJURY**—A man was found murdered in a wooded area at E-11, police said on Wednesday.

**DILLAMARAD:** A man was found murdered in a wooded area at 12-11, police said at 10:45 Monday.

The incident came to light when some passersby spotted the body lying in a wooded area near from Avenue, 12-11/3, and informed the police. After getting the information the police ran along the spot and shifted the body for pending identification and further legal procedures.

Mark of strangulation around the neck of the body, wounds on the nose and blood stains on his clothes were found.

The man was not yet so clearly identified as he believed to be in his early 30s and nothing was known from him to help with his identification. Additionally, police also searched the spot where the body was discovered.

Preliminary investigation suggested that he was strangled somewhere else and later the murderers brought his body at the wooded area and dumped it.

Following recovery of the body, a murder case has been registered at Southern police station against an unidentified person. The police started investigation.

—Staff Reporter



#### By Our Correspondents

**TAKILAS** Member of district monitoring committee and former provincial minister Jabangir Khattak has said that Rs11 million would be spent this fiscal year on road infrastructure development in 14 union councils in (UCs) of tehsil Harra.

He expressed these views while addressing the inauguration ceremony of a road project in Shahdhar on Wednesday, which was attended by Pakistan Minister, Lower North (PML-N) Bader

The project was completed with an Rs1 million which would provide better communication facilities to the public and improve transportation of agricultural products, especially vegetables from field to markets in Bages, Attock, Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

followed for execution of different projects like construction of roads, streets, re-landscaping, sewerage and drainage lines to improve the civic facilities in rural and urban areas besides improving the living standard of the cooperative areas.

Khananda said that under the leadership of Pongalal chief minister, the provincial government is taking concrete steps under the rural development package to ensure the progress and prosperity of Attock district.

He said involving public in the work was the government's intention.

He added that despite financial constraints, the government launched numerous development projects during the past one year.

"People had rejected PFI's policy of agitation and confrontation, which is aimed at destabilizing the country," he said.

He urged people to reject the political leaders who were responsible for bringing the country on the verge of economic disaster or dictation of international financial institutions.

**ISLAMABAD:** A roundtable discussion on Wednesday pondered ways to strengthen collaboration between corporate and development sectors for achieving impactful partnerships.

organised by the Human Resources Development Network (HRDN), a membership-based network of national and international NGOs and individual professionals.

Officers (CEO) of Asia Foundation Manufacturing and HIRON CEO Roberto Baragash.

The CEO of Asia Foundation, Manafatullahi said that there was not much synergy between the corporate and development sectors, and that it is not easy to

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan needs to promote vocational education in universities through modern tools such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) to strengthen its economy, the International Society of Actuaries (ISA) Managing Director (MD) Andy Peterson said on Wednesday.

**ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan needs to promote actuarial education in universities through modern tools such as Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) to strengthen its economy, the International Society of Actuaries (ISA)'s Managing Director (MD) Andy Peterson said on Wednesday.

The actuary professional said to integrate actuarial concepts into business curricula, the country needed awareness and outreach programmes.

"Actuaries are key to a country's growth, enhancing insurance stability, risk management and public policy decisions. Their expertise in data drives decision-making and efficient risk assessment helps economic stability and sustainable development," Mr Peterson said.

He added that actuaries also support financial inclusion through microinsurance and takaful and play a crucial role in designing pension systems and healthcare systems for long-term social welfare.

The ISA MD said that academics and the industry have to extend financial support, such as scholarships and exams discounts, to enhance accessibility for actuarial studies.

"Industry-academia partnerships and professional upskilling can align education with global standards and industry needs, driving growth," he said, adding that Pakistan has made progress in actuarial sciences, with growing student interest.

He said nearly 400 Pakistani members enrolled in the ISA Affiliate Membership Programme as of 2024.

However, Mr Peterson added that the challenges persist, including limited awareness, high costs and underdeveloped industry integration.

He said that efforts should expand outreach, enhance affordability, integrate actuarial sciences into curricula, foster industry collaboration, and leverage actuarial expertise in public policy.

Responding to a question about developing countries like Pakistan taking benefit from fostering actuarial skills in their academic, professional and policy-building structures, he said that fostering actuarial skills will benefit Pakistan by expanding the insurance sector, enhancing risk management through predictive analytics and supporting economic stability.

"Initiatives like ISA's Global Access Pilot Programme can help improve access to actuarial education and Pakistani actuaries hold prominent roles across the Middle East and South Asia, showcasing how nurturing local talent can drive regional influence and economic growth," the MD SAO added.

He also suggested that parents should consider career options for their children in this sector as the actuarial profession in Pakistan offers excellent job prospects, competitive earnings and global mobility.

Actuaries play key roles in insurance, banking and public policy, using analytics to manage risks and solve complex problems.

"It has a strong demand both locally and internationally. It has a strong problem financial stability, intellectual challenge and the opportunity to work globally," Mr Peterson added. — Kabir Ali

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**CORRECTION:** Chartered Accountants Certificate in Accounting and Finance (CAF) Examination Certificate issued to Muhammad Abdulah Tahir S. Bener Aras, CAF-101119 has been lost. Any Person who finds the above may kindly return it to: Mr. Muhammad Abdulah Tahir, Address: House No. 30-01, Hader Al Street, Muscat, Oman. Telephone: Contact No. 991 0000045 0234362733434

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 ATTORNEY

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 Court Commissioner / Collector  
 Division Hoque, Muhammad Ghani  
 Khan versus Muhammad Syed  
 Application for Khawala No. 1042/09  
 Khawala No. 1034, Minors Musa Khan  
 vs. Yehal Hazari, Ghafar Attah, T. A.  
 Muhammad Salamani son of Muham-  
 mad Razaq Khan alias Amin, resident  
 Muhammad Ahsan Ull Ghar Khan  
 You are directed to appear before  
 the Court in person or through any  
 representative or through counsel  
 on 20-02-2020 at 9 am failing after  
 an experts will be noticed against  
 you. Assistant Commissioner Hoque  
 (2002775694)

*The Hon. Charles de Trollope, M.P., Chairman of  
the Joint Committee on the Administration of Justice*

gari, Sulaiman, M.A.P.C. Year 2004, to Saira Nuzairi wife of Shafiq Khan, daughter of Hajj Marook versus Shafiq Khan, To. Shafiq Khan son of Amarul residents of Mahabub Khan, Baghat Kuppur Tehsil Dargai. We are directed to appear before the Court on person or through legal representatives or through counsel on 07-02-2008 if it is being shown that experts will be ordered against you.

Cash, valuables looted

**TAXILA:** Robbers deprived people of cash and valuable worth millions of rupees in commercial and residential areas in Taxila and Wah on Wednesday.

Three armed men in Wah Saddle police area snatched a motorcycle, two mobile phones and cash worth Rs100,000 from Ali Raza, Javed and Danish.

In the same police station limits, two armed robbers snatched a motorcycle from Abdul Mannan on G.T. Road near Bilal mosque and fled.

Two armed robbers snatched Rs10,000 and a mobile phone and fled.

Apparently, three masked men snatched cash and a mobile phone from Mohammad Arain in the same police station limits and fled. — *Correspondent*

 Government of Pakistan  
PAKISTAN TELECOMMUNICATION AUTHORITY  
www.pta.gov.pk

Notice No. PTA/AB/2009/001

## INVITATION TO BID

**Provision of Security Services at  
Pakistan Telecommunication Authority  
(PTA) Zonal Office, Abbottabad**

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Zonal Office Abbottabad invites electronic bids from well-regarded, experienced and license holding private Security Companies / Firms registered with SECP / Registrar of Firms, Income Tax & Sale Tax Department and who are on Active Taxpayers List of the Federal Board of Revenue / Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRRA) for provision of Security Services at PTA Zonal Office Abbottabad for a period of Three (03) years.

Bidding documents as per regulations, containing detailed terms and conditions, specifications and requirements etc. are available for the registered bidders on EPADS at <http://epads.gov.pk>.

The electronic bids must be submitted by using EPADS on or before 27<sup>th</sup> February 2009 by 10:30 AM. Manual bids, shall not be accepted. Technical bids will be opened on the same day through EPADS at 11:00 AM. This advertisement is available on KPRRA website at [www.kprra.org.pk](http://www.kprra.org.pk) and PTA website [www.pta.gov.pk](http://www.pta.gov.pk).

Notification of the GRC constituted in terms of rule-46 of KPRRA Rules, 2004 is provided on EPADS at <http://epads.gov.pk> and on [www.pta.gov.pk](http://www.pta.gov.pk).

  
**Abdul Wahid Khalil**  
Zonal Director  
PTA Zonal Office, House # 226, Aamir  
Shaheed Road, Sikandarabad Abbottabad  
Ph: 0992-339666, 416055  
Email: [wahid@pta.gov.pk](mailto:wahid@pta.gov.pk)

Advertisement No. 10/2009



Kashmir struggle to continue till logical conclusion, says Mushaal

By Hishar A. Khan

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussain Malik, the wife of jailed Kashmiri separatist leader Mohammad Yasin Malik, on Wednesday said that the Kashmiri freedom struggle will continue till its logical conclusion.

She was speaking as chief guest at an event held on Kashmiri Solidarity Day observed across both sides of the line of control and elsewhere in the world to urge world powers and the UN to action resolve the Kashmiri dispute.

The event was organised by the Pakistan Cultural Forum to express support for the Kashmiri people's struggle to achieve their right to self-determination.

"The Indian government, notorious for its oppressive policies, has turned the once heaven-like valley into hell through decades of systematic oppression and suppression," Mushaal stated.

Prominent figures from various walks of life, including politicians, intellectuals and artists participated in the event.

Earlier, Mushaal, who is also the Chairperson of the Peace and Culture Organisation, led a Kashmiri Solidarity Walk with members of civil society from Kashmir International Hospital to D-Chowk.

The walk aimed to highlight the policies of the Narendra Modi-led Indian government, including forced disappearances, torture and extrajudicial killings in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Mushaal emphasised that the day serves as a reminder to the global community of its responsibility toward the oppressed Kashmiri people. She urged the United Nations (UN) to honour the promises made to the Kashmiris 78 years ago and to support their struggle for the right to self-determination.

The separatist leader emphasised the need for collective action to raise awareness about the plight of the Kashmiri people and to pressure the international community to intervene in resolving the longstanding dispute.

She also paid tribute to the sacrifices of Kashmiri martyrs and vowed that they would continue their struggle until a just resolution of the Kashmiri dispute is achieved, in accordance with the UN-agreed formula and the aspirations of the people of the entire valley.

Mushaal urged the international community to break its silence and take immediate notice of the human rights abuses perpetrated in occupied Kashmir.

She emphasised the importance of collective action to halt the bloodshed and work towards a durable, peaceful resolution of the protracted conflict, aligning with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people and UN resolutions.

The chairperson highlighted the Indian atrocities and inhuman acts inflicted upon prisoners, particularly her husband Yasin Malik, and others.

Mushaal said that the international community's silence on the Kashmir issue was deafening, as despite the gross human rights violations, forced disappearances, torture and extrajudicial killings, the world failed to take any action.

"The so-called human rights organisations remained tight-lipped and observed criminal silence over the unabated war crimes being committed by the supremacist Indian government."

Mushaal said that her husband has been languishing in the notorious Tihar Jail, in India, for years.

She expressed concern about his health and well-being, fearing that he may be awarded a death sentence in politically motivated cases.

The Islamabad police expressed strong support for Kashmiris' struggle on the Kashmiri Solidarity Day on Wednesday.

According to a statement, Islamabad Inspector General of Police (IGP) Syed Ali Naeem Rizvi said Islamabad police stood in solidarity with the brave Kashmiri people, acknowledging their sacrifices and unrelenting struggle for freedom.

He further said that the department was ensuring comprehensive security for the events and rallies held in connection with Kashmiri Solidarity Day.

Additionally, he said over 1,500 officers and personnel were deployed for security duties.

Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Islamabad, Jawad Tariq, overseeing security measures, the statement read.

Moreover, Islamabad police officers were actively expressing solidarity with the oppressed Kashmiris suffering under Indian occupation, he added.

Pakistani herbal medicines popular in Kazakhstan: envoy

By Ihtam Juraev

ISLAMABAD: Kazakhstan Ambassador Yurhan Kizafin has proposed collaboration in the herbal medicines sector as medicines are highly popular in his country.

He was speaking to participants of an awareness session held in connection with World Cancer Day at Maud International Hospital.

Mr Yurhan Kizafin reaffirmed Kazakhstan's interest in strengthening ties with Pakistan in healthcare, medical research and pharmaceutical development.

He highlighted the potential for joint investment in hospital infrastructure, digital health technologies and exchange programmes for doctors and medical students.

Dr Yasser Rehman, a UK-trained oncologist at the hospital, delivered a presentation on cancer prevention, early diagnosis and treatment advancements.

Speaker Haroon Nasser highlighted alarming statistics, revealing that Pakistan records over 185,000 new cancer cases annually, with breast cancer being the most prevalent, affecting one in nine women.

He stressed that timely screening and lifestyle modifications could prevent up to 40 percent of cancer-related deaths.

He emphasised the importance of cross-border collaboration between Pakistan and Kazakhstan in healthcare. He outlined key areas for cooperation, including medical education, partnerships between universities in both countries, establish nursing schools to enhance professional training and joint cancer research and initiatives.

Constable killed in accident

ISLAMABAD: A constable of Islamabad police was killed in an apparent hit-and-run accident late on Tuesday, the police said.

The constable was identified as Mohammad Amir, deployed with the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of the Islamabad police.

According to the police, the victim, riding a motor cycle reportedly stopped at a traffic signal at G-10 waiting for the traffic light to turn green when a lorry, a speeding car appeared and hit the constable.

As a result, Mohammad Amir sustained critical injuries, while the driver of the car sped away with the vehicle.

Later, he was taken to hospital where he was pronounced dead. Meanwhile, the funeral prayers of the constable were offered at the Police Lines Headquarters in Islamabad. — Staff Reporter



GOVERNMENT OF GILGIT-BALTISTAN  
Office of the Divisional Executive Engineer Works Division,  
Education Department Diamer-Astore Division.

No.D.E.E-OMR-AST-Edu-1QY2024-25

Dated:- 6th February, 2025

Work Division Education Department Diamer-Astore Division invite tenders in sealed envelope for the following approved ADP schemes from contractors who have renewed this registration from PEC for financial year 2024-25 with relevant category and code C-10 on the basis of above/below from CBR 2022. Tender form (MT) and bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the Executive Engineer Diamer-Astore sub-office Diamer during office hours. PPRR rule single stage two envelope (SSTE) bidding procedure will be followed, in 1st phase Technical bids will be opened and the constitution procurement & purchase committee will decide the eligibility of firm/contractors after reviewing/evaluation of technical bids, in 2nd phase financial bids of only eligible/technically responsive bidders will be opened and the financial bids of the firm/contractors who have not been declared eligible for opening of financial bids, will be returned unopened. Attached the call deposit receipt (CDR) with technical proposal.

Details of works as follows:-

SRO ADP No	Name of Scheme/ Work	Engineer Estimate of Cost in (Rs)	Estimated Money (Rs)	Cost of Tender Form (Rs)	Scheduled Date			
					Tender Date and Time of Closing		Tender Date and Time of Opening	
					Date	Time	Date	Time
<b>Technical Bidders</b>								
668	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	9.192	184000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
669	Const. of Girls Primary School at Farash Dar, Tangir.	10.967	228000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
670	Const. of Girls Primary School at Kachhi, Tangir.	9.893	198000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
671	Const. of Girls Primary School at Dardik, Bala	10.967	228000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
672	Up-gradation of Primary School at Pashy, Bala MS.	14.899	294000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
673	Const. of 80 Nos Primary School at Tangir.	24.285						
674	Const. of Boys Primary School at Kachhi, Tangir.	11.541	230000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
675	Const. of Boys Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.497	230000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
676	Const. of Boys Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.167	223000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
677	Establishment of BPS at Dardik, Dardik.	9.768	188000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
678	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	23.590						
679	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.169	243000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
680	Const. of Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.421	227000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
681	Up-gradation of Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	56.948						
682	Up-gradation of BPS at Mushahar, Tangir.	28.217	56000/-	10000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
683	Up-gradation of Boys Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	28.748	57000/-	10000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
684	Construction of 80 Nos GPs and 80 Nos BPS at Bala-16	134.757						
685	Const. of Girls Primary School at Lachi, Tangir.	12.168	243000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
686	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.341	247000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
687	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.148	242000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
688	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.733	255000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
689	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.273	245000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
690	Const. of Boys Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.213	245000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
691	Const. of Boys Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.191	243000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
692	Const. of Boys Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.137	243000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
693	Const. of Boys Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.281	243000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
694	Const. of Boys Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.333	246000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
695	Const. of Boys Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.013	240000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
696	Const. of 80 Nos GPs and 80 Nos BPS at Bala-16	49.184						
697	Const. of Boys Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.190	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
698	Const. of Boys Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.284	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
699	Const. of Boys Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.183	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
700	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.447	248000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
701	Const. of 80 Nos Girls Primary School at Tangir.	107.812						
702	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.916	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
703	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.890	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
704	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.724	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
705	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.932	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
706	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.326	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
707	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.083	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
708	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.971	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
709	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.990	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
710	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	12.090	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
711	Construction of 80 Nos Boys and Girls Middle School at Mushahar, Tangir.	124.356						
712	Const. of Boys Middle School at Mushahar, Tangir.	26.726	535000/-	10000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
713	Const. of Girls Middle School at Mushahar, Tangir.	26.619	534000/-	10000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
714	Const. of Boys Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.886	244000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
715	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.973	238000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
716	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.788	235000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
717	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.764	235000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
718	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.731	234000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
719	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.029	238000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
720	Const. of 1 PS each in Mushahar, Tangir.	24.836						
721	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.612	232000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
722	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.612	232000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
723	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushahar, Tangir.	11.612	232000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM

MANDATORY AND OTHER CONDITIONS REQUIRED TO GET TENDER DOCUMENTS(MT).

1. Attached copy of GMR and PEC duly renewed for financial year 2024-25 must be attached with application.
2. Tender copy shall be issued to original contractor in person or owners of the firm, whose names are listed in PEC registration, fee of tender form will be paid non-refundable.
3. Present of original CDR copy of two security prepared from any scheduled bank and MCB, is necessary before issuance of tender copy and the original CDR must be attached with technical bids.
4. Contractors/firms who are in litigation with education Department in any court, or who have left the work in complete halt or whose progress is not satisfactory tender copy will not be issued to those contractors.
5. Once tender copy shall be issued to each contractor/firm, tender copy will not be issued to those contractor who are already work in hand and 75% physical work has not been completed if completed 75% and above contractors whose concerned progress must be attached with application. Furthermore, contractors whose progress is not in previous year and security must, but due to unsatisfactory performance, execution of already awarded work could not be initiated by the contractor at site and the work is still suspended delayed, in such circumstances tender copy will be issued to those contractors.
6. Executive Engineer Diamer-Astore Division reserves the right to accept or reject one or

all the tenders as per PPRR, rule 2004/2011.

7. Criteria for evaluation of technically bids of contractors is also fixed with tender documents, based on the attached criteria technical bids will be evaluated, if there any local bidder of due to unavoidable reason, tender could not opened on a date same tender will be opened on next day.
8. If tender cost of bidder is twenty percent (20%) less or less than twenty percent (20%), fifty percent (50%) of the difference amount (between Estimated cost and bid amount) in shape of CDR from any scheduled bank as an additional performance security must be attached with financial bids, in case non attachment of additional performance security or less tender will be rejected.
9. Tender should be sealed, insert number of each page of brochure, make note of necessary documents, signed with stamped, if found in missing, tender will be rejected.
10. Cost of tender documents shall be deposited through treasury challan (TR-06) Head No G-03518.

ICGB-9795

Engg Naiman Ali  
Divisional Executive Engineer  
Works Division Education Department  
Diamer-Astore Division.

## LAHORE

Sunset 05:43 pm  
 Sunrise (Tomorrow) 06:50 am  
**NEXT 24 HRS**  
 Minimum 8.0°C  
 Maximum 23.0°C  
 Outlook Sunny  
**AGI**  
 Maximum (Yesterday) 26.0

METRO  
Central

**Aaqib rules out changes in Champions Trophy squad**

Pg.18 SPORT



CIVIL society members light candles to pay a tribute to martyrs at Liberty Chowk on the Kashmir Solidarity Day. — White Star

## On mandatory training, well-connected bureaucrats retain key positions

CS says officials are working on 200 initiatives

By Mansoor Malik

LAHORE: Some politically well-connected bureaucrats in Punjab continue to hold their current positions despite being on a four-month National Management Course at the National School of Public Policy in breach of clear instructions that the provincial government is bound to relieve such officers "on their selection for training course without fail".

The prime minister's directive also says the provincial governments shall make stopgap arrangements, as the nominated officers are not required to attend their offices while undergoing training.

Non-compliance of the directions of the Prime Minister can attract disciplinary proceedings under the Civil Servants (Disciplinary) Rules, 2020.

The NMC, which started on Jan 13 and ends on May 16, is being attended by finance department secretary Mujahid Shorshi, secretary services (S&GAD) Shaukat Ali, forestry, wildlife and fisheries secretary Muddassar Wahid Malik, social and taxation department secretary Masood Mukhtar and industries, commerce, investment and skills development secretary Usman Bhutta. Mr Bhutta, however, was transferred and posted as member P&D Board.

While the government spends Rs2.2 million fee for each trainee for the course — which is mandatory for their promotion from RS-20 to RS-21 — the bureaucrats will manage their "lucrative" postings to ensure that they should not surrender

their perks and privileges.

The Punjab government and the NSPP have also closed their eyes and violating prime minister's directions as well as NSPP's own instructions — notified in officers' nomination notifications.

Similarly, Punjab health secretary Nadia Raziq, implementation and coordination (I&C) S&GAD secretary Rafiqat Ali and finance department (Budget and accounts) special secretary Syed Muhammad Masood Numan are attending Senior Management Course (SMC) while holding their administrative posts. The SMC is mandatory for the officers for their promotion from RS-19 to RS-20 and the government is paying a course fee of Rs350,000 each for their boarding and lodging at the National Institute of Management, Lahore.

The course, being run from Jan 27 to May 16, has notified similar conditions

that the officer attending the SMC will be relieved and not required to attend their offices while undergoing training.

Sources in the bureaucracy say lobbying is playing a major role in facilitating these bureaucrats, which is generally visible in the posting of "favourite" bureaucrats against important positions, while others are sidelined.

Those tried to seek comments from NSPP Director Dr Jaseem but he did not respond.

Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman responded to the questions and said "We do not want to change the secretaries because Punjab is working on some 200 initiatives. Should we block the massive work going on in Punjab?" he asked.

When asked if their presence was required, they might have been retained

Continued on Page 14

## Cotton industry on edge due to GSP Plus review reports

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Already hit hard by imposition of 18 per cent sales tax, the local cotton industry is panicked on the reports of review of GSP Plus status by the European Union.

The GSP Plus status had been granted by the European Union in 2014 leading to a 100pc hike in Pakistani textile exports to the EU due to concessional tariff.

The status was later extended to 2027 a few years ago.

However, during the recent visit of an EU delegation to Pakistan, it was announced that the economic bloc would review this status in June this year, causing a wave of concern in the entire cotton industry.

A communication with the local representative of the EU by a concerned businessman

revealed that though the generalised tariff preferences (GSP) had been extended until Dec 31, 2027, new regulations are likely to enter into force much earlier than that.

"GSP Monitoring is a continuous process. The latest review monitoring mission is expected to end 2025 as part of the ongoing process," the EU representative said in response to the query on Feb 2.

The businessmen from the textile industry, who requested not to be named, apprehends that any negative review of the GSP Plus status could further plunge the sector into crisis because in the hope of sending more textile products' export consignments to Europe after winning handsome contracts in the recent textile fair in Germany, textile mills have

Continued on Page 15

## Four held in 'swift action' in crime against women

A motor vehicle examiner detained for harassing varsity student; three arrested for gang-rape of teenage girls, two policemen at large

By Asif Chaudhry

LAHORE: The Lahore operations police on Wednesday arrested a staffer for continuously harassing a university student for seven months.

The arrested man is a motor vehicle examiner of the transport department. The complainant even blocked his 70 mobile sims during the last seven months.

In yet another case the same day, the police arrested three

suspects who allegedly gang-raped two teenage girls.

Reports suggested two policemen had 'ruined the house' of a widow and sexually assaulted her daughter and niece.

An official said the first incident took place in Miri Shah where the university student filed a complaint against the transport department official who had been harassing and blackmailing her for long.

As the matter reached DG Operations Faisal Khatun, he ordered the formation of a special team which arrested the accused official, ensuring immediate legal proceedings under the relevant sections of the law.

According to police report, the university student complained the inspector had been harassing her for the past several months. She blocked approximately 70 sims but could not do it.

She said the suspect was well-connected and had no fear of

police and law.

The official said the police team had collected substantial evidence which confirmed the allegations.

The DG Operations confirmed to Jahan the action had been taken under CM initiative of zero tolerance towards crime against women.

He said special units had been established in police stations to ensure swift action against harassment complaints.

He said the women can report harassment instantly through emergency helplines and the Women Safety App, ensuring immediate police response. He said trained units had been deployed in public places and educational institutions to prevent harassment.

About the other incident, the police said the armed men barged their entry into the

Continued on Page 15

## Maryam pays tribute to Kashmiris

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Wednesday laid a floral wreath at a symbolic martyrs of Kashmir memorial at Liberty Chowk to pay tribute to the sacrifices of Kashmiris.

A symbolic moment of silence was also observed during the event.

A special picture wall was displayed at Liberty Chowk, featuring images related to Kashmir. Billboards honouring the martyrs of Kashmir's freedom movement were installed around the Liberty Chowk roundabout.

A symbolic jail was also set up with images of Kashmiri leaders and martyrs behind bars highlighting atrocities committed by Indian forces.

A special song produced by ISPR for Kashmir Solidarity Day was also played during the event.

"Love for Kashmir runs like blood in the heart of every Pakistani. We pay tribute to Kashmiri martyrs who sacrificed their lives to keep the flame of self-determination burning," the CM said.

She urged the United Nations and other international organisations to play their role to stop the ongoing bloodshed and human rights violations in Kashmir.

"Until the Kashmir issue is resolved in accordance with the UN resolutions, lasting peace in the region will remain a dream."

The PM-N also held a Kashmiri rally, led by Khwaja Saad Rafique, on Walton Road.

Speaking on the occasion, Rafique said the world stood in recognition of the Kashmiri people's struggle.

"Kashmir is Pakistan's Balino — a status that Qasid-Azam himself declared. For over eight decades, Kashmiris have endured oppression and brutality. Wars between Pakistan and India have been fought over Kashmir, with countless sacrifices from the people of this region. It is impossible for India to annexe the Kashmiri people forever. Every human being is born free, and Kashmir will not remain in chains," he said.

He criticised Pakistan's Parliamentary Kashmir Committee, stating that it had failed to play its due role.

"Pakistan needs a permanent Kashmir Committee with an independent secretariat that works round the clock."

## Two more human traffickers arrested

By Our Correspondent

GURJAT: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) claims to have arrested two human traffickers, including a suspect wanted in a recent Greece boat capsize tragedy, on Wednesday.

The Gurjat circle FIA arrested Anwar Mahmood, a resident of Zafarwal village, Narowal district. The accused in active connivance of an organised group of human traffickers was involved in the heinous crime of migrant smuggling.

He extorted Rs4.5 million from the family of Ahsan Ali of Mahmood, Jalalpur, Jattan tehsil of Gurjat, under the pretext of securing an employment visa for him, however, later on the intending emigrant was boarded in a vessel going to Greece that capsized near Gavdos, and many migrants died, including the son of the complainant.

Similarly another human trafficker namely Muhammad Awais, a resident of Gujranwala, was arrested. He extorted Rs2.1m from the complainant on the pretext of sending him to Canada on an employment visa.

## Last-minute changes in shrimp tender raise transparency concerns

By Khalid Hagnain

LAHORE: The ongoing tendering amid a corrigendum at the eleventh hour for the procurement of shrimp-related articles has created doubts from some of the bidders, who believe that some "special people" are likely to be "facilitated" allegedly by the Punjab Fisheries Department to win the project.

Fisheries Department Director General Dr Sikandar Hayat is unaware of this development.

The situation turned suspicious after a corrigendum was covertly uploaded on the Spad website on Tuesday night — just two days before tender opening date including Feb 5 Kashmir Day holiday — explaining some changes in specification of certain

items and of other terms and conditions.

The corrigendum modified specifications for certain items and introduced a requirement for bidders to present samples on the opening day.

"In corrigendum, specifications of a couple of items were changed with a direction to also bring samples of these items on the tender opening day — Feb 6 morning," said one of the bidders.

"With changing of specifications, it is not possible to prepare sample due to issues related to import etc. It is also surprising that the condition of bringing samples of the items on the date of tender opening (Feb 6) was not mentioned in the main tender published on Jan 18."

The Punjab Fisheries Department had initially floated the tender through the

Punjab Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) website with a submission deadline of Feb 6. However, the sudden changes have raised concerns over transparency, favoritism, and financial mismanagement.

Historically, tenders issued by the Punjab Fisheries Department and the Fisheries Development Board (FDB) have been criticised for benefiting a select few, creating a monopoly. As new bidders geared up for fair competition, officials allegedly intervened to manipulate the process in favor of pre-selected suppliers.

On Feb 4, the department uploaded a corrigendum altering technical specifications, making it difficult for new participants to qualify.

"Feb 5 is a public holiday, meaning bidders had no time to respond. Yet, the sub-

mission deadline remains unchanged," said another bidder, suspecting deliberate exclusion of competition.

The modifications effectively tailor the tender to suit certain suppliers, ensuring their eligibility while shutting out others. This lack of competition could lead to inflated prices, increasing the financial burden on Punjab's shrimp farming projects and minimising taxpayer money.

"These actions set a dangerous precedent, allowing procurement officials to manipulate tenders and channel contracts to favored entities at excessive costs," the bidder added. Instead of fostering a transparent bidding environment, such tactics discourage new entrants, hindering the growth of Pakistan's shrimp industry.

Ethical and legal concerns loom over

these developments. If tenders continue to be awarded through procedural manipulation, Punjab's shrimp farming expansion plans risk financial instability. The bidder urged Punjab government authorities to investigate these irregularities and ensure future tenders uphold fair competition and the best interests of the industry.

Fisheries Department Director General Dr Sikandar Hayat, when contacted, expressed ignorance on the issue, stating he would take action if anything has happened wrong. "I will check the tender and corrigendum, etc. with the project team. And if anything I find wrong I will either cancel the tenders or extend last date for opening the existing tender for a healthy competition with participation of more and more bidders," he said.

## PRAYER

Fajr	5:27
Zuhr	1:00
Asr	4:06
Maghrib	5:43
Isha	7:04

Prayer time in Lahore

## REFLECTIONS

CC RETURNS OF HARD BUT UNPREDICTABLE LABOUR OF A CRAFT OR PROFESSION, THOUGH SMALL IN QUANTITY, ARE BETTER THAN THE WEALTH WHICH YOU AMASS THROUGH SIN AND WICKEDNESS. — HAZRAT ALI (A.S.) (78/1427)

## On mandatory training, well-connected bureaucrats...

Continued from Page 13

and sent for courses in the upcoming opportunities, the chief secretary said the administrative secretaries, as required by the NSIP and PM directions, do not work as all powers had been handed over to special secretaries as a stopgap arrangement.

"The secretaries, while on the course, have no responsibility. They have been retained so that they should come to the office and supervise whether the CM initiatives are progressing accordingly," the chief secretary explained.

Mr Zaman said the government was not expecting any work from the administrative secretaries on course but wanted them to stay in the picture and continue upon their return.

While several other bureaucrats are also attending the NMC and SMC, Mr Zaman said that no other bureaucrat had been retained.

## Educational institutions observe Kashmir Day

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: The educational institutions on Wednesday organised seminars and rallies to mark the Kashmir Solidarity Day.

The University of Engineering and Technology (UET) organised a rally to express solidarity with the people of Kashmir. The rally, commenced from the VC office and concluded at the Auditorium Complex.

During the rally, participants were carrying placards inscribed with slogans against Indian atrocities and advocating for the freedom of Kashmir.

Vice Chancellor Dr Shahid Munir addressed the rally and stated that the quest of freedom would soon rise in Kashmir.

He emphasised that India must be held accountable for the atrocities committed against Kashmiris and reaffirmed that the Kashmiris were not alone in their struggle for freedom.

He also highlighted India's failure to implement UN resolutions on Kashmir, calling it a reflection of its biased stance.

Dr Munir declared that the completion of Pakistan is not possible without the freedom of Kashmir. The rally included a patriotic performance by Kashmiri students, who sang the national anthem in support of their cause.

PU's Punjab University's Centre for South Asian Studies (CSAS) organised a seminar on the historical roots of the Kashmir issue.

On this occasion, Assistant Professor Dr Mir Waheed Akhbar

from Karakoram International University, Gilgit, was the guest speaker while faculty members and students were also present.

Dr Waheed shed light on the historical roots of the Kashmir issue which are linked to colonial era and Britain's imperialistic policies.

He said the treaty of Lahore and the treaty of Amritsar were glaring examples in the context of the Kashmir issue that show how imperialistic ambitions of the British colonisers aggravated the geopolitical situation in the sub-continent.

He emphasised that Gilgit-Baltistan in the context of Kashmir had a mixed development trajectory. In terms of political empowerment, the situation was gradually improving while in terms of economy the region still needed a lot of effort, he added.

He was of the view that an age understanding and serious engagement with the history of the country, region, and colonial period was very much important to grasp the issues being faced by our country.

He said religious extremism in India, the rise of Hindutva and spread of narratives rooted in such movements was a serious threat which needed to be countered by the academia and especially the young researchers of Pakistani universities.

The participants assured that Pakistan, as well as the people with conscience, had and would always stand with Kashmiri brothers and sisters by extending all political, diplomatic and moral support to their just and legitimate cause of self-determination.



JAMAAT-i-Islami women stage a rally on The Mall to show solidarity with the Kashmiris. — White Star

## Kashmir a tripartite issue: JI emir

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Jamaat-i-Islami Emir Hafiz Nazam-ur-Rahman has declared that Kashmir is a tripartite issue, integral to Pakistan's destiny and completion.

Speaking at a Kashmir March organised by the Jamaat on The Mall to mark the Kashmir Solidarity Day on Wednesday, he warned that anyone who attempts to sell out Kashmir would face the wrath of the Pakistani nation.

He criticised the government policies, stating that the Kashmir cause had been shelved in recent years.

"On this Kashmir Solidarity Day, we announce reorganisation of the Kashmiri freedom movement," he proclaimed.

"Pakistan should not seek trade with India but work to isolate it globally," he said.

The JI leader criticised Islamabad's "apologetic stance" on Kashmir, urging the government to advocate the cause internationally instead. He stressed

that Azad Jammu & Kashmir should be turned into the base camp for the Kashmiri freedom movement, adding that "tolerance on Kashmir is equivalent to supporting Hindutva imperialism and the butcher of Gujarat."

Rahman urged the Pakistan government to condemn Trump's plan to evacuate Gaza and reaffirm support for Palestine. He labelled the US, Israel and India as the three biggest terrorists in the world, stating that "Netanyahu, who has slaughtered 60,000 Palestinians, is now sitting in Trump's lap."

He denounced the plan to "empty Gaza," saying the world had rejected it and warned that the US was facing global isolation for backing Israeli genocide. He also pointed out that India was heading toward diplomatic isolation, with its actions against separatists in the US and Canada angering both nations.

Rahman highlighted India's human rights violations in Nagaland, Himachal, Assam, Punjab and occupied Kashmir

where 100,000 Kashmiris have been martyred, and one million Indian troops continue their brutal occupation.

He urged the Pakistan government to accelerate global diplomatic efforts for Kashmir, instead of discussing trade deals for onions and potatoes with India.

"We are not against the Indian people," he clarified, "but we will not accept any deal with India until Kashmiris get their right to self-determination."

Similarly, he declared, "If any Pakistani ruler even thinks of recognising Israel, the nation will rise against him."

The JI chief also criticised the UN silence despite its 17 resolutions on Kashmir, lamenting that the Pakistan government had also grown silent on the issue in recent years. He said Islamabad was solely focusing on the western border, ignoring Indian aggressions on the eastern front.

He pointed to reports of a Kashmiri deal during former COAS Gen Bajwa's tenure, stating if these claims were false,

"the government and security forces must issue a clear stance and reaffirm support for the Kashmiri freedom movement."

Rejecting the argument that Pakistan's weak economy prevents it from taking a strong stance, he said, "Pakistan is rich in resources. If the economy is weak, it's due to corrupt rulers, not the people."

He also called for a clear explanation regarding reports of Indian intelligence (RAW) operations inside Pakistan.

Rahman urged Pakistan to expose India's crimes globally and mobilise consensus voices to support the Kashmiri freedom movement.

Expressing hope for Kashmiri's liberation, he asserted, "The day is near when occupied Kashmir will be free from Indian rule and become part of Pakistan."

The JI also organised nationwide rallies in solidarity with the people of Kashmir in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Karachi, Quetta, Peshawar, Faisalabad, Multan, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Bahawalpur, Dera, and other cities.

## Woman arrested with 9kg heroin

NAROWAL: Shikoh police have arrested a woman and recovered Rs1 million worth of fine quality heroin from her possession.

Some family members of the arrested are already in jail.

"Police have launched a grand operation in Shikoh to stop the growing business of drug trafficking," District Police Officer Faisal Shikoh told Dawn.

He said several complaints of drug trafficking were received by the Cantt police station. He said a

police team held the "most wanted" drug dealer Komal Jamil and recovered 9kg of heroin from her.

He said a sister and brothers of Komal were already in the district jail for drug trafficking.

The DSP said the police had developed a comprehensive strategy to prevent the drug sale by smothering dealers' networks.

ACCIDENT: Two persons were killed and one injured in an accident on Shikohpur Road.

According to Revenue 1122, the

control room received a call from Qila Bhutta that unknown vehicles had hit a car. The rescue team arrived at the scene and removed the injured from the car with the help of locals.

It said 55-year-old Musht Ali, 46-year-old Haji Zakiaullah and 33-year-old Omar were seriously injured.

Ali and Zakiaullah died on the spot due to a critical condition while Omar was admitted to a local hospital. — Correspondent

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## CHANGE OF NAME

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C/O: 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

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# Another tiger dies at zoo in Bahawalpur

By Our Correspondent

**BAHAWALPUR:** Another rare Bengal tiger died in captivity at the local zoo on Wednesday.

It was learnt that the 20-year-old big cat was brought here in 2010. It was claimed that the tiger fell ill sometime ago and had its one leg crippled (close to the hip joint). Later, it was fed food mixed with

Mohammad Usman Bokhari, Wildlife deputy director of Bahawalpur division who holds the additional charge of the zoo curator, did not respond to Dawn's calls. However, he was quoted as claiming that the Bengal tiger had completed its life cycle and met a natural death.

Due to curator's non-availability, it was yet to be learnt whether the post-mortem examination of the dead tiger was carried out or not.

It was the second tiger death in a few weeks. Earlier, a visually-impaired leopard died of kidney failure.

**ENCOUNTER:** Three tigers were killed in two encounters with Vohari police on Wednesday.

Police said Sajal of

Bargana in Kabirwala tehsil, had shot dead Tahir Nadeem in the line of Things police on Tuesday.

According to Vohari police spokesperson, on receipt of information of Sajal's blocking a road and looting commuters, a police team besieged Sajal's house near Chak 32/WR and exchanged fire with them.

After the mugging of Sajal, he was found killed by his own accomplices firing who fled under cover of darkness. Sajal's body was shifted to hospital and a snatched motorcycle and a pistol were also recovered.

In the second encounter within the limits of District police station, two robbers identified as Muhammad Asif and Saad, residents of Chishtian in Bahawalpur district, were killed while their three accomplices managed to escape. Their bodies were shifted to a hospital for post-mortem examination.

The PRD said both the deceased were involved in over 17 criminal cases and wanted to Bahawalpur, Vohari, Lodhian and Bahawalpur police. A car, arms and robbery tools were recovered from them.

## 57 couples say 'we do' at mass ceremony

By Our Staff Reporter

**LAHORE:** Up to 57 couples tied the knot at a mass wedding ceremony under the Dhi Rami Program in district Khushab on Wednesday.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz launched the Punjab Dhi Rami Programme. Under the programme, Rs100,000 were given as wedding money to each newly-married couple through an ATM. Food was served to 20 guests of each couple and necessary furniture, household utensils, clothes and other daily necessities were also donated.

Punjab Minister for Social Welfare and Rural Mal Sahai Shaukat Butt was the chief guest at the event, while other attendees included local parliamentarians. MNA Muhammad Khan Datta, MPAs Raza Muhammad Saleem Hameed, Barrister Uzma Iqbal, Chaudhry Ziaur Rehman, Asim

Hayat Hira, Raza Bhatti Hussain, Asghar Hayat Hira, former MNA Pir Aslam Raza and government officials.

The minister congratulated the newlywed couples and distributed Dhi Rami Salami Cards among the newlyweds. Each couple received salami of Rs.100,000 and they were also given gifts of a double bed, mattress, mirror, dinner set, cooking utensils, a fan, and other essential household items.

The minister highlighted that initiatives such as the Dhi Rami Card and Dhi Rami program are the foundation of a welfare society.

The event featured a traditional Punjabi dance performance. A lunch was arranged for the newlyweds and all attendees, and the ceremony concluded with prayers.

The event was attended by district administration officials and civil society activists.

## Passenger held with fake documents

By Our Correspondent

**TORA TEK SINGH:** During screening of passengers at Faisalabad airport, FIA immigration staff arrested a Greece-bound passenger for travelling on fake documents.

An FIA official said Muhammad Shohab Asim produced an invalid resident card of Greece while stamps on his passport were also found bogus as there was no record of stamps in the Integrated Border Management System and his travel record in it.

During initial investigation, the accused disclosed that he had paid Rs3.5 million through three agents for preparation of fake travel documents. The accused was handed over to the anti-human trafficking cell for further investigation.

**CAR OVERTURNS:** Three car riders were seriously injured after their car overturned on motorway M-4 near Faisalabad Interchange on Wednesday.

The accident took place when one of the tyres was burst.

The injured persons identified as Yaseen Ahmed, Sahil Ali and

Nasir were shifted to Allied Hospital. Meanwhile, an eight-year-old boy succumbed to his injuries in Allied Hospital on Wednesday.

Yaseen was run over by a car in the locality of Eden Garden on Canal Road some three days ago.

**SEMINAR:** The University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) arranged a rally and a seminar on Wednesday to observe the Kashmir Solidarity Day.

The rally was led by Vice-Chancellor Dr Muhammad Sarwar Khan who also addressed a seminar and urged the United Nations to settle the Kashmir issue as soon as possible.

He slammed Indian aggression in Indian-held Kashmir which is a clear violation of international laws.

A seminar was also held in Faisalabad Municipal Corporation hall with DC retired Capt Nadeem Niaz in the chair.

Former MNA Razi Muhammad Akram Inani, former MPAs Ma Qudus Raza and Mohd Hamid Raza, Additional Commissioner Anwar Raza and ADC Dr Shahab Asim addressed.



MULTAN Underage boys driving motorcycle loaders carrying family members. — APP

## Reluctant families convinced to get children vaccinated

By Our Correspondent

**DERA GHAAZI KHAN:** After 26 families refused to vaccinate their children during the recurring anti-polio campaign, health officials and the district administration have engaged with the parents through awareness efforts.

After convincing all hesitant parents were convinced and their children were administered polio drops.

The campaign has made progress, with 264,962 children under the age of five receiving polio drops on the second day of the drive.

This marks an impressive coverage of 99.29 per cent against the set target of 265,854 children.

Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Usman Khalid, while chairing a review meeting at the DC office, commended the health teams for their dedication.

**PARK CALL CASE:** A case was registered against a resident of the Saltooni area for making a fake call.

Shahid Baksh was booked for making a false call to the emergency helpline 15 at Saltooni Police Station, Tehsil

Rajhan Masari, District Rajpura.

The suspect had reported that 15 unidentified people had snatched Rs5 million from him at gunpoint in Kacha Chaudhri. However, when the police reached the spot and conducted an investigation, it was revealed that the call was fake and made to trap an opportunist.

The police have registered a case against Shahid Baksh under the Telegraph Act of 1885/29 at Saltooni Police Station for making a fake call.

**PROJECT:** The ninth meeting of the Academic Council of Ghazi University has approved the initiation of digital agriculture projects alongside the establishment of a degree programme in artificial intelligence.

The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Vice-Chancellor (VC) Prof Dr Asif Ali Akbar.

The session, attended by academics and officials from various institutions, focused on enhancing innovation and ensuring high-quality education across all departments.

Registrar Dr Abdul Mahmood Alvi served as the secretary of the meeting,

which saw participation from the additional secretary of the Higher Education Department, representatives from the University of Agriculture Faisalabad, Women's University of Multan, Nawaz Sharif University of Agriculture of Multan, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Islamic University Bahawalpur, University of Education Lahore, and senior faculty members of Ghazi University.

In his opening remarks, the VC welcomed the participants and briefed them on the university's recent advancements. The council then reviewed and approved the proceedings of the eighth meeting.

Several key academic decisions were made, including the introduction of new degree programs, particularly in Artificial Intelligence, and the establishment of a Business Incubation Center and an i-Center. Additionally, digital agriculture projects were approved, aiming to modernize research and teaching methodologies.

These recommendations will be presented to the Syndicate for final approval.

## Cotton industry on edge due to GSP Plus...

Continued from Page 13

purchased duty-free cotton and cotton yarn in large quantities from abroad.

An import of cotton and cotton yarn is duty-free, while there is an 18 per cent trade of local cotton, the millers have been importing the commodities in large quantities from abroad this year at the cost of local cotton growers, spinning and spinning sectors.

The data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics reveals that from July to December 2024, the country imported cotton and yarn worth \$1.93 billion, which is a record \$5.625 billion more than the same period last year.

Reports suggest that large shipments of cotton and cotton yarn are also expected during January-March 2025 at the cost of precious foreign exchange reserves.

Cotton Growers Forum Chairman Ishaq Haq stated that while domestic cotton production this year has fallen 50 per cent short of the target and is 34 per cent lower than last year, cotton stocks in spinning factories have increased. As of January 31, at least 480,000 bales of cotton were held by spinners — 31 per cent (114,000 bales) more than during the same period last year.

Despite this, textile mills have purchased only 4,978 million bales from local growing factories so far this season—35 per cent (1.7 million bales) less than last year's purchases during the same timeframe.

## Complainant faces proceedings under anti-rape law

By Malik Tahaseen Raza

**MUZAFFARGARH:** The first case under the Anti-Rape Act in Punjab has been registered at the Muzaffargarh city police, where a woman initially filed a case against an accused for rape but later retracted her statement in court.

According to police, Asma Ishaq, verified in favour of the rape suspect in the court of additional district and sessions judge and declared him innocent. Subsequently, a case was registered against her under the provisions of the Anti-Rape Act of 2021.

Earlier, she had also recorded statements against the suspect before the medical officer and the area magistrate in connection with the rape case.

According to the first information report, the woman lodged a rape complaint against the suspect at the civil lines police. The suspect obtained presence bail from the court, while the case landed before a local magistrate where Asma recorded a statement against the suspect.

Later, she underwent a medical examination at the district headquarters hospital. On the day of the pre-arrest bail hearing, the police presented solid evidence against the suspect. However, the complainant retracted her statement and testified in favour of the suspect in the court of Additional Sessions Judge Tahira Khaliq, who confirmed the bail.

Following this, the police registered a case against Asma for providing false information and registered a case against her under section 222A-B of the Anti-Rape Act of 2021 and Section 213 of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC).

**CASE RESOLVED:** Police solved a blind murder and robbery case and arrested the alleged kidnappers Wednesday.

The killers turned out to be none other than the victim's nephews, who murdered Ali Hassan on Dec 15, 2024.

Sarawan DSP Muhammad Akbar said the suspects attempted to disguise the murder as a robbery and fled with Rs1.7 million.

The police said Ali was killed in Sarawan after selling land worth Rs1.9 million. The perpetrators took the cash

and killed him.

His son Ghulam Mustafa approached the Sarawan police and registered a case against unidentified suspects under sections 302, 392, 34, and 411 of the PPC.

Police said the suspects had plotted to murder their uncle by luring him to Bahawalpur under the pretext of handing over the land payment.

**CHILD CRUELTY:** A man allegedly threw hot milk on his 7-year-old daughter and locked his wife in a room during a domestic dispute in the Rahbarwala area. The girl suffered severe burns due to the scalding milk.

According to the police, a case was registered at Rahbarwala police station, and the suspect's brother has been arrested while raids are underway to apprehend the main suspect.

Michael threw hot milk on his daughter, Khadija Bibi, following a domestic altercation. The girl sustained burns to the forehead, and the suspect also physically assaulted his wife, Bushra.

Both the women and her daughter were shifted to Muzaffargarh DHO Hospital.

## Gujrat, Bhimbher people make human chain

By Our Correspondent

**GUJRAT:** Scores of people from Gujrat and Bhimbher district of Azad Kashmir region made a long human chain to express solidarity with the India-held Kashmir at the border of Punjab and Kashmir on Wednesday.

The people from both sides, including lawmakers, officials of respective administrations and civil society, gathered at Bala-Kashmir, a monument dividing the Punjab and Kashmir border.

The participants reached there in different rallies and processions from across the region while carrying flags of Pakistan and AJK, banners and placards inscribed with slogans against the Indian occupation in Jammu and Kashmir region.

Gujrat and Bhimbher deputy commissioners Rafiq Virk and Mirza Arshad Jarral, respectively, Bhimbher district council chairman Chaudhry Yousaf, parliamentarians Naveer Abbas Siddiqui, Chaudhry Ilyas and Abdullah Yousaf, Gujrat District Police Officer Dr

Mustafar Atta, Rajwa, Bhimbher SSP Muhammad Ameen and others were also present on the occasion.

The flags of Pakistan and AJK were also hoisted at Bala-Kashmir.

The participants joined hands to make a one-kilometre long human chain whereas a one-minute silence was also observed in solidarity with the Kashmiris.

Slogans were played in the border area. Figures and balloons were also released into the air whereas national anthems of Pakistan and AJK were also played.

Speaking to the participants, the elected representatives from both sides vowed to continue to strive for the freedom of Kashmir.

Meanwhile, an all party conference was hosted by the Gujrat chapter of Jamaat-e-Islami at the Islamic Centre in connection with the Kashmir Solidarity Day which was attended by the local representatives of different political parties as well as the Gujrat Chamber of Commerce and Industry, bar association, traders and doctors.





## PESHAWAR

Sunset 05:51pm  
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 07:04am

## NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 07°C  
Maximum 23°C  
Outlook Cloudy

## METRO North



Aaqib rules out changes in Champions Trophy squad

Pg.18 SPORT



Dogs chase a mechanical hare during a racing competition in Dhaki area of Charsadda. — Photo by Abdul Majeed Goriya

## Govt returns Rs40bn to pension and gratuity fund

CM aide says Sehat Card bills being paid on monthly basis

## Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has managed to return a whopping Rs40 billion to the provincial pension and gratuity fund, which the previous Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government withdrew to finance its development projects, pushing the province to the brink of bankruptcy.

Official sources told Dawn that the previous government had withdrawn Rs36 billion from the pension and gratuity fund between June 2021 and

December 2022 on account of the funds' shortage resulting from an overambitious development policy, which even pushed the province's three-yearly budget into 13.5 years.

Sources told Dawn that out of Rs36 billion, Rs20 billion was withdrawn in just three months of October, November and December of 2022 alone.

They said that current government has recouped and deposited Rs40 billion in its pension and gratuity fund. The sources said that apart from clearing Rs6 billion liabilities out of the Rs20 billion left in Sehat Card, billions of liabilities left for water and sanitation services companies, school municipal administration, other development departments left from the 2018-23, amounting to Rs20-30 billion have also been cleared

by present government.

The sources said that presently there was zero liability on part of the provincial government as it has cleared not just previously left liabilities but also releasing monthly amounts to all departments.

They said on June 22, 2021, the KP Pension Fund had transferred to the provincial government's Account. Similarly, another Rs10 billion was transferred to same account from the pension fund February 11, 2022 while another sum of Rs10 billion was transferred to the same account on Sept 9, 2022. Besides, Rs1 billion was transferred to Account 1 of the provincial government on November 10, 2022 and another Rs9 billion on December 22, 2022.

When contacted, adviser to the chief minister for finance

Musammiil Aslam said that the previous provincial government withdrew Rs36 billion from its pension and gratuity fund to meet its salary and other immediate needs during the post-Covid financial crunch.

Mr Aslam said that the current government had deposited Rs40 billion in the pension fund in two tranches of Rs20 billion each.

He also said that the government had paid Rs35 billion in lieu of Sehat Card expenses and its liabilities over the last 11 months.

The aide to the CM said that not only was the provincial government footing the bill for the expenses incurred on account of Sehat Card but it had also paid Rs7 billion out of Rs20 billion liabilities.

He also said that the government was paying the Sehat Card

health insurance scheme bills on a monthly basis, leaving no liabilities.

Earlier last month, the KP government had announced to deposit Rs30 billion in its debt management fund.

In a statement, the provincial government had stated that it had deposited a substantial amount of Rs30 billion in the debt management fund, with plans to contribute an additional Rs30-40 billion, depending on the financial landscape.

It added that the debt management fund could accommodate up to 10 per cent of KP's total debt of Rs725 billion.

"We [KP] have already initiated transfers and are committed to reducing our financial liabilities, setting a benchmark for other provinces and the federal government," it said.

## Murder of two Tirah traders shrouded in mystery

By Ibrahim Shiwari

KHAYBER: Mystery has shrouded the murder of two Tirah traders here following the issuance of contradictory statements about it by two terrorist groups.

Bodies of Haji Sher Mohammad and his colleague and close relative Ihsan Afridi, with their throats slit, were found in a hilly area of Buzan Sharaf in Tirah valley early on Tuesday after the two remained in captivity of abductors for five days.

Khuzestan Network of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan, a proscribed terrorist organisation, shared a video of the two hostages on its Facebook page after their murder, with Ihsan narrating the details

of their activities on Jan 25 when they met some TTP terrorists. Haji Sher was seen at the scene.

The TTP had accused the two of spying on their men and blamed the subsequent killing of its four activists, including Abdul Aziz alias Qari Ismail and Mehdi.

In a statement issued by Hamdan Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan, the group's leader Hakimullah Mehsud denied the group's involvement in the killing of the two traders.

It claimed that Haji Sher Mohammad, president of Tirah trader association, and Ihsan Afridi were kidnapped by the TTP on Jan 30 over suspicion of involvement in the killing of four TTP members on January 25, but they were freed after

being found innocent after an extensive interrogation-cum-investigation by the state's intelligence wing.

"Some miscreants killed the two traders soon after their release that we condemn as the TTP is not in favour of punishing innocent people."

Deen tried in vain to reach the first members who held talks with suspected terrorists to secure the release of the two hostages as their mobile phones were switched off.

Local sources said that Haji Haroon Khan, local emir of the Jamiat Ulema Islam-Pak, who led the first, went into hiding after the two captives were found dead as he and his colleagues wanted to avoid any interaction with media or government officials.

Meanwhile, the situation in Tirah valley in general and at the Buzan-Markas in particular remained sombre, with most shopkeepers and traders keeping mum over the murder of their leader.

However, no protest was staged by traders or political activists against the killings.

Close associates of Haji Sher Mohammad claimed that the trader leader didn't spring for security forces and remained neutral in the ongoing situation.

They said that Haji Sher was instrumental in the rehabilitation of the Buzan-Markas and revival of trading activities in Tirah while fervently advocating for restoration of durable peace in the valley.

## Midnight attack on Bannu police station foiled

By Our Correspondent

LAKHO MAPMAT: The police on Wednesday claimed to have repulsed a midnight terror attack on a police station in the Township area of Bannu district.

An official said that a group of militants attacked the police station at around 12:30am with light and heavy weapons. "The attack was multi-pronged aiming to take over the building of the police station," said the official, adding that the cops deployed there retaliated effectively and forced the assailants to flee the place.

The official said that an effective response by the law enforcers foiled the militants' bid to breach the police station. He said that all policemen remained safe in the attack.

District police officer Zauddin Ahmed visited the police station, met cops and praised them for exhibiting bravery.

He announced commendation certificates and cash prizes for them from IGP Zulfiqar Hanif.

Meanwhile, police swung into action when armed men attacked the cops escorting a police vaccination team in remote Sarki Lawaghar area of Karak district.

A police official confirmed the attack and said that both the cops and vaccinators remained unhurt. He said that unknown armed assailants opened fire on the cops, who were on an escort duty with vaccinators in the remote and difficult mountainous region.

The official said a heavy police contingent led by district police officer Shahbaz Elahi along with SP investigations Mohammad Ashfaq Khan immediately reached there, surrounded the area and launched a search for the attackers.

He quoted the district police chief as saying that the miscreants targeting policemen performing security duty with police teams would be dealt with sternly. He said the DPO asked the cops to remain alert and vigilant on duty and provide complete security to vaccinators engaged in performing the national obligation of immunising children against the crippling diseases.

## Tehreek-i-Insaf leader gunned down in Nowshera

PESHAWAR: A leader of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf from Nowshera district, Mian Usman Shah, was gunned down by unidentified assailants near Pabbi railway station on GT Road on Wednesday.

An official at the police station concerned said that the deceased, who was president of PTI Dag Bazar area, was travelling in his vehicle along with a friend, Harid Khan, when unidentified motorcycle ambushed them.

Mian Usman died on the spot, whereas Harid Khan received serious injuries, and has now been undergoing treatment at a local hospital. An FIR of the occurrence was registered at the Pabbi police station, wherein Mian Usman Shah, a brother of the deceased, is the complainant.

The complainant has charged some of their rivals for the commission of the offence, stating that they had previous blood feud with the suspects.

He has charged three brothers — Khan Bax, Fyyaz and Zorbas — for the attack. He stated that last month a member of their rival family, Khan Bax, was killed near Jalozai area for which the suspects had been suspecting the involvement of the deceased Mian Usman. — Bureau Report

## World community urged to play role in resolving Kashmir issue

Rallies, walks, seminars and workshops held across KP to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day

By Ali Hameed Sacha

PESHAWAR: Kashmir Solidarity Day was observed across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Wednesday with different political parties, nongovernment organisations and the district administrations organising rallies, walks, seminars and workshops to express their support for the freedom movement of the oppressed people of

Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Participants of the rallies and walks carried banners and placards inscribed with slogans against India for oppressing the unarmed Kashmiris. The protesters shouted slogans in solidarity with the people of the occupied territory.

In Peshawar, a major rally was taken out in the afternoon, which started from the secretariat and ended in front of the Governor's House.

Members of different traders' unions, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf MPAs Humayun Khan, Qasim Ali Shah, Malik Liaquat Khan and students of different educational institutions also participated in the rally led by Khyber



STUDENTS stage a rally in Peshawar on Wednesday. — White Star

Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Karshi, Chief Secretary Nadim Chaudhry, Inspector General of Police Zulfiqar Hanif and Minister for social work

and Peshawar division commissioner Riaz Mehmood also participated.

Addressing the rally, Governor Karshi said that Kashmir and Pakistan were inseparable. He said that the international community must play its role against racism and oppression in IIOJK. "The Muslim Ummah must also unite for Kashmir's rights," he said, adding that Pakistan would stand by the Kashmiri brothers until the liberation of their region in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations.

"By putting aside every political and ideological difference, we are united on the issue of Kashmir. God willing, Kashmir will soon become a part of Pakistan," he declared.

Later Syed Qasim Ali Shah and Kashmiri leader Ishaq Wani also spoke.

Earlier, the traders' leaders, including Malik Mohar Ishaq, Mujeebullah Rehman and Shahid Khan also led processions to express solidarity with Kashmiris.

Similarly, Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, in a message said that the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the government expressed their complete solidarity with the Kashmiri people on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day.

He said the government and people of the province were standing with the oppressed Kashmiris in their just struggle for self-determination as promised to them by the UN.

"Freedom is the fundamental right of the people of Kashmir. We stand shoulder to shoulder with the Kashmiri people in this struggle for freedom. Today, we reiterate our resolve to continue our moral, diplomatic and political support to the people of IIOJK," Mr Gandapur said.

"International human rights institutions should take notice of Indian atrocities on the people. The international community should play its role in implementing the UN resolutions to give the Kashmiris their right to self-determination," the chief minister emphasised.

Mr Gandapur said "We salute the bravery, perseverance and steadfastness

Continued on Page 15

PRAYER	
Fajr	05:45
Zuhar	12:31
Asr	04:12
Maghrib	06:56
Isha	07:15
Starting time in Peshawar	

## REFLECTIONS

CC RETURNED OF HARD BUT RESPECTABLE LABOUR OF A CRAFT OR PROFESSION, THOUGH SMALL IN QUANTITY, ARE BETTER THAN THE WEALTH WHICH YOU AMASS THROUGH SIN AND WICKEDNESS. 33

— HAZRAT ALI (A.S.)  
79A-4427

## PTI holds motorcycle rally

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf activists on Wednesday took out a motorcycle rally to motivate its workers for the public gathering scheduled for February 8 in Swabi.

The rally was also against the conviction of the PTI founder Imran Khan and his spouse, Bushra Bibi.

Lead by minister for higher education Meera Khan Afridi, the rally was taken out from Mir Zakari Bridge on the GT Road and concluded outside the historic Qilla Balahisar after passing through different roads.

The PTI workers were holding party flags and placards inscribed with different slogans against the conviction of Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi.

Addressing the participants, Meera Khan Afridi said that Imran Khan and his wife had been convicted in the Al-Qadir Trust 'without committing' any crime. He said that their protest against the conviction of their leader would continue in different parts of the country. — Bureau Report

## Govt decides to modernise urban development authorities

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to modernise urban areas development authorities and tribal municipal administrations (TMAs) with the purpose to make them financially stable.

For this purpose, new reforms will be introduced in urban areas development authorities and TMAs across the province, according to a statement issued here on Wednesday.

This decision was made during a meeting of local government department held here with Chief Minister Ali Amin

Gondapir in the chair. The meeting was attended by Provincial Minister for Local Government Anshad Ayub Khan, Advisor to Chief Minister for Finance Manzoor Ahmad, Local Government Secretary Dr Anwar Ali, and other officials from local government department.

The meeting was given a detailed briefing on the challenges faced by urban areas development authorities and their solutions. It was decided that new reforms would be implemented in all TMAs and urban areas development authorities by June of the current year. To achieve this, international best practices will be

adopted in these institutions.

The committee of sponsoring organisations of road way commission framework will be enforced in these institutions. Similarly, international public sector accounting standards will also be implemented in TMAs and urban areas development authorities.

The meeting was informed that the new reforms would lead to financial stability and improved performance of TMAs and urban areas development authorities. The authorities told the meeting that reforms were already implemented in the Urban Area Development Authority Kohat, yielding positive results.

Before these reforms, the Urban Area Development Authority Kohat had an annual deficit of Rs49 million, whereas after the implementation of the reforms, it was expected to have a surplus of Rs25.7 million.

The chief minister directed that the model of UADA Kohat should be adopted in all TMAs and urban areas development authorities, emphasising that making these institutions self-sufficient and enhancing their capacity was the need of the hour.

"The provincial government is committed to strengthening and stabilising these institutions", he added.

## Endowment fund set up for needy students at GIK Institute

SWABI: In a landmark step toward fostering academic excellence and equitable access to education for talented and needy students, the Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sciences and Technology and a leading company have established a One-Charter Endowment Fund worth Rs50 million.

A ceremony to this effect was held here on Wednesday, attended by Eng Salim Saifullah Khan, president of GIK Institute's parent body - Society for Promotion of Engineering Sciences and Technology in Pakistan (SOPREST), and others.

The signing of agreement underscores a shared commitment to empowering Pakistan's youth through merit-based scholarships and advancing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The endowment fund will be invested and its income will be utilised to provide an annual scholarship to outstanding students, enabling them to pursue cutting-edge engineering and technology education at GIK Institute.

This initiative, undertaken with the efforts of the GIK Alumni Association, aligns with Pakistan's national development agenda and global sustainability targets, emphasising the critical role of education in driving socioeconomic progress.

On the occasion, Salim Saifullah said: "This partnership is a great gesture and exemplifies our vision to nurture talent and innovation. By bridging industry, alumni, and academia, we are not only investing in individuals but in the future of Pakistan."

Saifullah, chief technology officer of the company, reaffirmed the company's dedication to social responsibility: "Education is the cornerstone of progress. Through this endowment, we aim to create pathways for deserving students to thrive in engineering fields, who otherwise can't afford to study in the educational institutions like GIKI. The beneficiaries will ultimately contribute to Pakistan's technological advancement." — Correspondent

## Govt urged to establish agriculture research centre in Upper Dir

Farmers complain of not being provided certified seed, fertiliser and saplings

LOWER DIR: The farmers of Upper Dir district have demanded of the government to establish an agriculture research centre and arrange training workshops at community level to help them improve their crop yields.

Speaking to this correspondent, they urged the agriculture department to establish coordination with the 'real representatives' of the farmers for their uplift.

Agricultural experts told Dawn that traditional cultivation modes were a big detour to the change in the lifestyle of farmers. They said farmers were suffering from economic hardships due to traditional farming.

Assistant director, agriculture, Upper Dir, Pervez Khan said that depending on the climatic conditions, the soil in the district was suitable for growing all types of crops and fruits. He said the agriculture department was trying to convince the farmers to cultivate cash crops and vegetables using modern scientific methods.

"With the support of the World Bank, the agriculture department developed olive, walnut and Japanese fruit orchards on an area of 380 kanals in different areas last year," he said, adding thousands of applications were received, but due to lack of funds, only 70 gardens were planted. Mr Pervez said 3,000 bags of wheat and 5,000 bags of maize seeds

were given to farmers at subsidised price, though the demand was many times higher. However, Anshad Mohammad, a local farmer, said they did not get seeds, fertilizer and saplings despite the fact that the agriculture department had registered them last year.

Yar Zaman Khan, a peasant councillor, complained the agriculture department was ignoring them in the distribution of seeds, fertilizer and saplings.

According to the agriculture department's data, the Upper Dir district has a total area of 129,622 hectares, including 31,572 hectares cultivable, out of which 22,371 hectares are irrigated by canals and 9,181 hectares are rainfed. There is a wasteland of 6,177 hectares, while forests exist on 81,323 hectares.

In the Kharif season, maize is cultivated on 6,232 hectares, rice on 4,568 hectares, various vegetables on 1,823 hectares, potatoes on 765 hectares, fruits on 542 hectares, oilseeds on 322 hectares, among pulses on 232 hectares, and mash pulses on seven hectares.

Wheat is cultivated on 2,538 hectares in the Rabi season, barley on 1,500 hectares, onion on 1,725 hectares, vegetables on 227 hectares, fruit on 382 hectares, potato on 1,250 hectares, peas on five hectares and garlic on 10 hectares.

Yasir Faqir, the country distributor of a seed company, said hybrid seeds were the best source of high yield and quality of crops. He said his company trained farmers on the cultivation of hybrid seeds at community level, and convinced them to plant vegetables in their homes. — Correspondent

## Six vendors booked for selling substandard food items

By Our Correspondent

SHANGLA: Alipuri tehsil administration here on Wednesday booked six vendors, confiscated more than 100 kilograms of substandard food items and sealed more than a dozen shops during the ongoing crackdown on substandard food suppliers, and vendors after demise of three children.

The assistant commissioner, Mohammad Hamid Siddiqui, told journalists that crackdown on vendors, suppliers, who used to sell substandard foods, snacks and expired items, would continue.

He said that during first visit to Alipuri, he booked six shopkeepers and confiscated more than 100 kilograms of substandard food items and sealed a dozen shops and restaurants for not maintaining cleanliness.

He said that they conducted joint raids with Balal Foods Authority on the same day in Alipuri, Karana, Kua Kana and Dohal bazzars against substandard kothaba, hotels, fish, meat and tea stalls and also checked milk samples.

He said that four vendors were sent behind bars and six shops were sealed in Kuzikana, Karana and Dohal. He said that the operation would continue and mobile testing laboratory was with them for testing milk.

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## INVITATION TO BID

Provision of Security Services at Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Zonal Office, Abbottabad

Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Zonal Office Abbottabad invites electronic bids from well-reputed, experienced and license holding private Security Companies (Firms registered with SECP / Registrar of Firms, Income Tax & Sales Tax Department and who are on Active Taxpayers List of the Federal Board of Revenue / Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRRA) for provision of Security Services at PTA Zonal Office Abbottabad for a period of Three (3) years.

Bidding documents as per regulations, containing detailed terms and conditions, specifications and requirements etc. are available for the registered bidders on EPRDS at <http://eprds.gov.pk>.

The electronic bids must be submitted by using EPRDS on or before 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025 by 10:30 AM. Manual bids, shall not be accepted. Technical bids will be opened on the same day through EPRDS at 11:00 AM. This advertisement is available on KPRRA website at [www.kprra.gov.pk](http://www.kprra.gov.pk) and PTA website [www.pta.gov.pk](http://www.pta.gov.pk).

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**Abdul Wahid Khalil**  
Zonal Director  
PTA Zonal Office, House # 226, Aamir Shahveed Road, Sikandarabad Abbottabad  
Ph: 0992-339664, 418055  
Email: [wahid@pta.gov.pk](mailto:wahid@pta.gov.pk)

## Centre to revive mega schemes approved in 2017: MNA

MANSHERA: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) central vice-president MNA Sardar Mohammad Yousaf on Sunday said that federal government would revive all mega development projects approved by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and scrapped by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government after 2018.

"Thanks to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who secured soft loans of \$40 million from Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for Manshera's gravity water supply scheme as this project was originally approved by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif in 2017 but it was later on scrapped by PTI federal government," he told a press conference.

The press conference was attended by PML-N leader and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's son-in-law retired Captain Mohammad Saifur, former federal minister Syed Qasim Shah, former Baloch tehsil chairman Javed Ali Qasim, Manshera tehsil chairman Sheikh Mohammad Shafiq and Rafia-Pakhal tehsil chairman Sardar Shah Khan.

Sardar Mohammad Yousaf, who also served as federal minister for religious affairs, said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and a Saudi delegation signed an agreement under which Saudi Arabia released \$40 million for mega gravity water supply scheme, benefiting around 250,000 individuals.

"The prime minister is expected to visit soon Manshera to inaugurate this project as well as the three-year energy project of 880 megawatts Sakhi Kinsari hydro-power project, recently completed under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) initiative in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," Mr Yousaf said.

Retired captain Mohammad Saifur said that the PTI government scrapped the Manshera airport and other mega development projects despite the fact that federal government released Rs1 billion in funds for them.

"Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has been strongly reconsidering revival of these and other such projects," he said.

He said that execution of Manshera-Mansherabad Motorway, natural gas supply to Narra, mega tunnels at Babuser Top and Khaki-Ogha, and laying of a railway track from Harroli to Manshera and beyond would soon commence.

"The federal government has been planning to turn Kaghan Valley up to Babuser Top into an all-weather tourist destination by constructing a long tunnel at Babuser Top, ensuring a constant connectivity between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan via Manshera-Narara-Jalabad road," said Mr Saifur.

He said that Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz also approved Rs10 billion scholarships for students of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to study abroad.

"The Punjab government will also provide financial assistance for treatment of 100 hearing-impaired girls from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa annually and two Danish schools - one each in Hattara division and Peshawar - would be established," said Mr Saifur. — Correspondent

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## BWAAT

In the Court of Additional District Judge (Civil) District Court Swabi.

Case No. 10/2024. Dated: 23/02/2024. Filed: 23/02/2024.

Plaintiff: M/s. A. Khan & Co. (Pvt.) Ltd. vs. Defendant: M/s. A. Khan & Co. (Pvt.) Ltd.

Subject: Recovery of Rs. 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs Only) with interest.

Plaintiff's Advocate: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Defendant's Advocate: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Witnesses: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Verdict: In favour of Plaintiff.

Costs: Rs. 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs Only) with interest.

Execution: To be carried out by the court.

Signature: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Date: 23/02/2024.

Place: Swabi.

Witnesses: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Verdict: In favour of Plaintiff.

Costs: Rs. 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs Only) with interest.

Execution: To be carried out by the court.

Signature: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Date: 23/02/2024.

Place: Swabi.

Witnesses: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Verdict: In favour of Plaintiff.

Costs: Rs. 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs Only) with interest.

Execution: To be carried out by the court.

Signature: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Date: 23/02/2024.

Place: Swabi.

Witnesses: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Verdict: In favour of Plaintiff.

Costs: Rs. 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs Only) with interest.

Execution: To be carried out by the court.

Signature: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Date: 23/02/2024.

Place: Swabi.

Witnesses: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Verdict: In favour of Plaintiff.

Costs: Rs. 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs Only) with interest.

Execution: To be carried out by the court.

Signature: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Date: 23/02/2024.

Place: Swabi.

Witnesses: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Verdict: In favour of Plaintiff.

Costs: Rs. 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs Only) with interest.

Execution: To be carried out by the court.

Signature: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Date: 23/02/2024.

Place: Swabi.

Witnesses: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Verdict: In favour of Plaintiff.

Costs: Rs. 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs Only) with interest.

Execution: To be carried out by the court.

Signature: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Date: 23/02/2024.

Place: Swabi.

Witnesses: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Verdict: In favour of Plaintiff.

Costs: Rs. 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs Only) with interest.

Execution: To be carried out by the court.

Signature: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Date: 23/02/2024.

Place: Swabi.

Witnesses: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Verdict: In favour of Plaintiff.

Costs: Rs. 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs Only) with interest.

Execution: To be carried out by the court.

Signature: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Date: 23/02/2024.

Place: Swabi.

Witnesses: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Verdict: In favour of Plaintiff.

Costs: Rs. 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs Only) with interest.

Execution: To be carried out by the court.

Signature: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Date: 23/02/2024.

Place: Swabi.

Witnesses: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Verdict: In favour of Plaintiff.

Costs: Rs. 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs Only) with interest.

Execution: To be carried out by the court.

Signature: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Date: 23/02/2024.

Place: Swabi.

Witnesses: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Verdict: In favour of Plaintiff.

Costs: Rs. 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs Only) with interest.

Execution: To be carried out by the court.

Signature: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Date: 23/02/2024.

Place: Swabi.

Witnesses: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Verdict: In favour of Plaintiff.

Costs: Rs. 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs Only) with interest.

Execution: To be carried out by the court.

Signature: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Date: 23/02/2024.

Place: Swabi.

Witnesses: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Verdict: In favour of Plaintiff.

Costs: Rs. 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs Only) with interest.

Execution: To be carried out by the court.

Signature: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Date: 23/02/2024.

Place: Swabi.

Witnesses: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Verdict: In favour of Plaintiff.

Costs: Rs. 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs Only) with interest.

Execution: To be carried out by the court.

Signature: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Date: 23/02/2024.

Place: Swabi.

Witnesses: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Verdict: In favour of Plaintiff.

Costs: Rs. 10,00,000/- (Ten Lakhs Only) with interest.

Execution: To be carried out by the court.

Signature: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Date: 23/02/2024.

Place: Swabi.

Witnesses: Mr. A. Khan, Advocate, Swabi.

Verdict: In favour of Plaintiff.

Costs: Rs

Dera farmers' body wants agriculture tax withdrawn

By Our Correspondent

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: The local farmers' association has rejected the agricultural income tax imposed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government under the 'Directives' of the International Monetary Fund, and threatened to launch a protest movement if the levy wasn't withdrawn.

This came during a meeting of the association held here on Wednesday.

MPAs Maslaha Latif Rehman and Iftakharul Minkhal were also present.

The meeting was presided over by Haji Abdul Rashid Durrani.

The participants highlighted the challenges faced by landowners and farmers, condemning the heavy tax on agricultural income.

The meeting decided that key regional figures, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Farid Karim Karim - who heads from Dera Ismail Khan - would be contacted for support.

Speaking on the occasion, Maslaha Latif Rehman, the parliamentary leader of Jamiat Ulama-i-Islam Fard in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, criticised the tax, stating that agriculture was the backbone of the economy, and 'burdening' it would harm the nation.

He emphasised that policy making should be comprehensive and practical, warning that 'further economic destruction' should be avoided. He called the one per cent tax on an income of Rs550 million a 'diservice' to the nation.

He also highlighted that completing the lift canal project would make the province self-sufficient in wheat production.

MPA Iftakharul Minkhal pointed out that 65 per cent of the province's cultivated land was in Dera and Tank. He accused the PTI government of adopting anti-farmer policies, stating that no work had been done on Canal Zam Zam's deterioration, no clearing of irrigation canals had taken place, and heavy machinery was being misused. He also alleged that wheat procurement was deliberately delayed, benefiting certain vested interests.

The protest leaders warned that the sudden approval of the agricultural tax without debate in the assembly was even harsher than IMF conditions. They demanded the withdrawal of tax on Rs5.2 million of income, and revision of the land rent collection policies.

On the occasion, Abdul Rashid Durrani announced plans to challenge the tax in court and called for unity among farmers to safeguard their rights. He criticised Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur for failing to support the farming community.

Other speakers also voiced their concerns over the 'punitive' taxation policies. They highlighted that farmers were already paying taxes on agricultural inputs such as pesticides, fertilisers, and machinery.

Lawyers oppose transfer of land to new cantonment board

By Our Correspondent

SWAT: Khwazakhela Tehsil Bar Association has opposed transfer of land to proposed cantonment board in Swat.

According to a statement issued by Khwazakhela Tehsil Bar Association here on Wednesday, a general body meeting of the association was held with Advocate Khwaz Ali Khan in the chair. During the meeting, lawyers passed a resolution, stating that Khwazakhela tehsil was a densely populated area and members of tehsil bar association firmly opposed the transfer of their limited properties or lands to the cantonment board under any circumstances.

The participants of the meeting demanded of the authorities to immediately cancel the 'illegal demonstration' carried out for the cantonment board without consulting or securing the trust of the landowners.

The resolution emphasised that if the demand was not met, lawyers of the tehsil bar association would pursue legal remedies and initiate protest. Additionally, a special committee was formed during the meeting to hold discussions with presidents of High Court Bar Association, District Bar Association and other tehsil bar associations in that regard.

The committee's objective is to inform these institutions about the 'illegal' annexation of lands and develop a joint strategy for their protection.

World community urged to play role

Continued from Page 13

of the Kashmiri people in achieving their right to freedom. The atrocities of the Indian armed forces in Kashmir are a matter of concern for the international community, especially the United Nations and other human rights organisations," he said.

Another rally was taken out by Jamiat-ul-Islami, which was led by JI Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (central) chief Abdul Wali and Peshawar chapter chief Bahadur Khan Advocate. It started from Badshahi Chowk and culminated on the Ashraf Road.

Another rally was arranged under the aegis of National Commission for Human Rights.

Likewise, a rally was organised by the Youth Movement of Pakistan and Kashmir, Peshawar district, with the participants holding banners expressing solidarity with the oppressed people of Kashmir. Slogans were raised in favour of the Kashmiris.

A large number of youth, children, elderly and women also participated in the rally.

Pakistan Markazi Muslim League also held a rally, with the participants shouting slogans against the Indian occupying forces. They said that the only solution to the Kashmir issue was 'boly war'.

A ceremony was organised at University Public School to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day. An English speech competition was held during the ceremony, in which the speakers condemned the atrocities committed on Kashmiris.

Principal Dr Musir Ahmad distributed prizes among the position holders of the competition.

A ceremony was held at Islamia College Peshawar to mark the Kashmir Solidarity Day. Faculty members, departmental heads, students, representatives of civil society and people belonging to different schools of thought participated in large numbers.

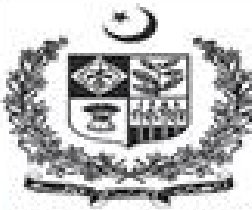
Another rally was taken out jointly by different civil society organisations, which ended outside the Peshawar Press Club.

Jamiat Ulama-i-Islam Fard also organised a Kashmir Solidarity Day rally in front of the Peshawar Press Club.

Party's Peshawar district general secretary Maslaha Ahmad Ali Darwishi, Maslaha Shafiq Khaliq, Iftakharul Minkhal and others spoke on the occasion.

The participants marched on the Sher Shah Suri Road to FC Chowk, where they dispersed after offering collective prayers.

Kashmir Day rallies were also taken out in Lakho Marwat, Bannu, Karak, Maricahra, Haripur, Lower Dir, Kohat, Charsadda, Bajaur, Battagram, Mardan, South Waziristan, Swabi, Abbottabad, Shangla, Dera Ismail Khan, Tank and other small and big towns across the province.



GOVERNMENT OF GILGIT-BALTISTAN  
Office of the Divisional Executive Engineer Works Division,  
Education Department Diamer-Astore Division.

No.D.E.E-OMR-A&T-Edu-1QY2024-25

Dated:- 4th February, 2025

Work Division Education Department Diamer-Astore Division invite tenders in sealed envelopes for the following approved ADP schemes from contractors who have renewed this registration from PEC for financial year 2024-25 with relevant category and code C-10 on the basis of above/below from GBR 2022. Tender form (MT) and bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the Executive Engineer Diamer-Astore sub-office Diamer during office hours, PPRR, rule single stage two envelope (SSTE) bidding procedure will be followed, in 1st phase Technical bids will be opened and the constitution procurement & purchase committee will decide the eligibility of firm/contractors after reviewing/evaluation of technical bids, in 2nd phase financial bids of only eligible/technically responsive bidders will be opened and the financial bids of the firms/contractors who have not been declared eligible for opening of financial bids, will be returned unopened. Attached the call deposit receipt (CDR) with technical proposal.

Details of works as follows:-

ADP No.	Name of Scheme/ Work	Engineer Estimate of Cost in (Rs)	Estimated Money (Rs)	Cost of Tender Form (Rs)	Scheduled Date			
					Tender Date and Time of Closing		Tender Date and Time of Opening	
					Date	Time	Date	Time
District Diamer								
668	Const. of Girls Primary School at Mushkhar, Tangir.	9.192	184000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
669	Const. of Girls Primary School at Farash Dar, Tangir.	10.967	238000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
670	Const. of Girls Primary School Nosh, Tangir.	9.893	198000/-	6000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
671	Const. of Girls Primary School at Dardkh Bala, Tangir.	10.967	238000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
672	Up-Graduation of Primary School Pashy into MS.	14.899	294000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
673	Const. of 80 Nos Primary School at Tangir.	24.285						
i	Const. of Boys Primary School at Kotomir.	11.541	230000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
ii	Const. of Boys Primary School at Haripote, Mushkhar.	11.497	230000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
iii	Const. of Boys Primary School at Haripote, Mushkhar, Astore, Mohallah.	11.187	223000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
676	Establishment of BPS at Dardkh Dardkh.	9.768	188000/-	6000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
679	Const. of Girls Primary School at Samthal Khannhar and Dardkh Bala.	23.590						
i	Const. of Girls Primary School Samthal Khannhar.	12.189	243000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
ii	Const. of Primary School Dardkh Bala.	11.421	229000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
680	Up-Graduation of Primary School Thallikhi & Mushkhar Jall Danner in to MS.	58.948						
i	Up-Graduation of BPS Thallikhi G. Astore in to BPS.	28.217	565000/-	10000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
ii	Up-Graduation of Boys Primary School Mushkhar Danner into Boys Middle School.	28.748	575000/-	10000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
681	Construction of 80 Nos GPs and 80 Nos BPS at Halaq-16 Diamer. I	134.757						
i	Const. of Girls Primary School at Lash, Thak.	12.188	243000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
ii	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	12.341	247000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
iii	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	12.148	242000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
iv	Const. of Girls Primary School at Alam Khano Kama, Thak.	12.733	255000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
v	Const. of Girls Primary School at Darg, Kama.	12.273	245000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
vi	Const. of Boys Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	12.213	245000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
vii	Const. of Boys Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	12.191	243000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
viii	Const. of Boys Primary School at Lash, Thak.	12.137	243000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
ix	Const. of Boys Primary School at Lash, Thak.	12.281	243000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
x	Const. of Boys Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	12.333	246000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
xi	Const. of Boys Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	12.015	240000/-	8000/-	26-02-2025	11:30 AM	26-02-2025	12:00 PM
682	Const. of 80 Nos BPS and 80 Nos GPs at Halaq-16 Diamer. II	49.184						
i	Const. of Boys Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	12.190	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
ii	Const. of Boys Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	12.284	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
iii	Const. of Boys Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	12.183	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
iv	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	12.447	248000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
687	Const. of 80 Nos Girls Primary School at Tangir.	107.912						
i	Const. of Girls Primary School at upper, Bala, Thak.	11.916	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
ii	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	11.890	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
iii	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	11.724	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
iv	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	11.932	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
v	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	12.326	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
vi	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	12.083	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
vii	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	11.971	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
viii	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	11.990	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
ix	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	12.090	245000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
688	Construction of 80 Nos Boys and Girls Middle School Khannhar and Bagridar, Tangir and Const. of 80 Nos GPs at Tangir, Valley.	124.356						
i	Const. of Boys Middle School at Khannhar, Tangir.	26.726	535000/-	10000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
ii	Const. of Girls Middle School at Halaq, Tangir.	26.619	534000/-	10000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
iii	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	11.886	236000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
iv	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	11.973	236000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
v	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	11.788	235000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
vi	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	11.764	235000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
vii	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	11.731	234000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
viii	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	11.929	238000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
693	Const. of 1 PS each in Dardkh, Khannhar and Dardkh.	38.836						
i	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	11.612	232000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
ii	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	11.612	232000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM
iii	Const. of Girls Primary School at Halaq, Thak.	11.612	232000/-	8000/-	27-02-2025	11:30 AM	27-02-2025	12:00 PM

MANDATORY AND OTHER CONDITIONS REQUIRED TO GET TENDER DOCUMENTS(MT).

1. Attached copy of GMR and PEC duly renewed for financial year 2024-25 must be attached with application.
2. Tender copy shall be issued to original contractor in person or owners of the firm, whose names are listed in PEC registration, fee of tender form will be paid non-refundable.
3. Present of original CDR copy of bid security prepared from any scheduled bank and KCB, is necessary before issuance of tender copy and the original CDR must be attached with technical bids.
4. Contractors/firms who are in litigation with education Department in any court, or who have left the work in complete halt or whose progress is not satisfactory tender copy will not be issued to those contractors.
5. One tender copy shall be issued to each contractor/firm, tender copy will not be issued to those contractors who are already work in hand and 75% physical work has not been completed if completed 75% and above contractors whose concerned progress must be attached with application. Furthermore, contractors whose progress is not in previous year and financially sound, but due to unavailability of land/plot, execution of already awarded work could not be initiated by the contractor at site and the work is still suspended delayed, in such circumstances tender copy will be issued to those contractors.
6. Executive Engineer Diamer-Astore Division reserves the right to accept or reject one or

all the tenders as per PPRR, rule 2004/2011.

7. Criteria for evaluation of technically bids of contractors is also laid with tender documents, based on the attached criteria technical bids will be evaluated, if there any local holiday or due to unavoidable reason, tender could not opened on a date same tender will be opened on next day.
8. If tender cost of bidder is twenty percent (20%) less or less than twenty percent (20%), fifty percent (50%) of the difference amount (between Estimated cost and bid amount) in shape of CDR from any scheduled bank as an additional performance security must be attached with financial bids, in case non attachment of additional performance security or less tender will be rejected.
9. Tender should be sealed, insert number of each page of brochure, make note of necessary documents, signed with stamped, if found in missing, tender will be rejected.
10. Cost of tender documents shall be deposited through treasury challan (TR-06) Head No G-03518.

Engg Naiman Ali  
Divisional Executive Engineer  
Works Division Education Department  
Diamer-Astore Division.

ICGB-9795