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Final call

PTI caravans en route to Islamabad amid arrests, clashes

Violent clashes across Punjab, Islamabad as PTI workers attack police; hundreds arrested; Protest paralyzes Islamabad, Rawalpindi; roads blocked, internet suspended

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): As PTI convoys from across the country were enroute to Islamabad on Sunday for the party's much-touted powershow — despite a court order and government warnings against it — the party claimed its workers were being arrested and dispersed using teargas.

On Nov 13, Imran Khan issued a "final call" for nationwide protests on Nov 24 (today), denouncing what he described as the stolen mandate, the unjust arrests of people and the passage of the 26th amend-

ment, which he said has strengthened a "dictatorial regime".

The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has ruled that PTI's planned protest is unlawful and directed the federal government to take all necessary measures to maintain law and order in Islamabad without disrupting public life, particularly as the Belarusian president is scheduled to arrive over the weekend with a high-profile delegation.

As PTI supporters, who had set off on their journey earlier in the day, began reaching Islamabad

despite government warnings of arrests, the party claimed the police was detaining its workers and using teargas to disperse them.

In a post on X at 7:10pm, the PTI shared what it said were "visuals of the extreme shelling by fascist regime against own citizens at Islamabad Express".

INP adds: In response to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protest in Islamabad, authorities have completely sealed the en-

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ISLAMABAD: Paramilitary soldiers alert at the D-Chowk in the Federal Capital ahead of PTI protest in the Federal Capital.

PM holds consultation meeting on PTI's protest

LAHORE (INP) Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chaired a consultative meeting held in Model Town Lahore on Sunday and discussed the current political situation.

According to media reports, National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan also participated in the meeting.

The situation after the final call of protest by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was also discussed in the meeting. During the meeting, Prime Minister

Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif directed to remove the reservations of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has also formed a committee to settle matters with the PPP.

Political issues can only be resolved through dialogue constitutional supremacy, not force: Mehmood Achakzai

ZHOB (ANN): Chairman of the Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party and head of the opposition alliance

any promise for the future. He emphasized that political issues can only be resolved through dialogue and



"Tehreek Tahaffuz-e-Aeen Pakistan," Mehmood Khan Achakzai, has stated that military operations have neither delivered positive results in the past nor hold

constitutional supremacy, not force.

Speaking at a two-day Pashtun National Jirga in

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Two more polio cases surface in Balochistan increasing tally of cases to 26 during 2024

QUETTA: Two more polio cases of poliovirus have been surfaced in Balochistan increasing the tally of cases of crippling disease to 26 during the current year 2024.

According to the National Institute of Health, the Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication confirmed detection of three new cases of wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) in the country including two from Balochistan bringing the total number of polio cases in the country to 55 in 2024.

The Laboratory identified the cases in Zhob and Di Khan, where female children were affected, and in Jaffarabad district, where a male child contracted the vi-

rus. It may be mentioned here that this is third case of polio reported from Zhob this year and second case of the year surfaced in Jaffarabad. This marks a significant resurgence of WPV1 in the country and that in Balochistan. Out of total 55 reported cases, 26 are from Balochistan, 14 from KP, 13 from Sindh and one each from Punjab and Islamabad. Earlier, six cases have been reported from Killa Abdullah in Balochistan while three cases reported from Quetta with two each from Chaman, Zhob, Killa Saifullah and Pishin.

Similarly, one each case of polio has been reported from Dera Bugti, Chaghai, Jhal Magasi, Kharan, Noshki and Loralai.

Governor meets Saeed Hashmi; discusses political situation

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail met his long time friend and senior politician, Saeed Ahmed Hashmi in Quetta on Sunday.

During the course of meeting, the matters of mutual interests including political situation of the country were discussed.

The latest development in the country's politics and pleasant relations between the federal government and provinces were also discussed during the meeting.

Both the leaders also discussed prospects of bringing improvement in the lives of people of the province.

BA session to resume today

QUETTA: The session of Balochistan Assembly is scheduled to resume today (Monday) in Quetta.

According to the agenda shared by the Provincial Assembly's secretariat for today's session, the draft law of Balochistan Employees Social Security institution would be tabled.

The Minister Labour and Manpower would table the draft law.

In addition to this, the call attention notice would also be tabled in the session. The Member of Provincial Assembly belonging to National Party, Mir Rehmat Saleh Baloch would table the call attention notice about handing over the TTC Kharan to private set up.



ISLAMABAD: Police taken to arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers towards prison van.



SUI: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti talking with tribal elites and different delegations.

PTI leaders courting arrests to avoid participation in 'illegal' protest: govt

Ministers blame PTI for disrupting country's economic progress by spreading "chaos and violence"; Strict action to be taken against miscreants as per law: Naqvi; State will not permit "mob attack" on Islamabad: Asif.

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Strongly reacting to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's "do-or-die" protest in Islamabad, the federal ministers have termed it an "illegal and unnecessary", claiming most of the opposition party leaders and workers are "courting their arrest to avoid their participation in the so-called final call".

During his visit to different areas in Islamabad on Sunday, Information Minister Ataulah Tarar said that as per information came from Punjab and Islamabad, most of the former ruling party's top and low tiers leaders were voluntarily surrendering to the police for their arrest to avoid

participation in the Islamabad protest.

"One thing is pretty clear that the PTI's leadership does not want a release of their leader [Imran Khan] from the jail," he added.

He said the PTI had only one demand which was to get an NRO-like concession for the release of their leader from the jail, but the government cannot do anything in this regard.

This is the domain of the courts where the PTI is supposed to argue and fight for the release of their leader who has been facing different charges, he added.

"Life in Islamabad is normal as people are taking strolls in parks and children are playing various sports

at different places, but some major highways have been closed to maintain law and order in the city," he noted.

He held the PTI responsible for the roads' closure and inflicting financial damage to traders and businessmen. The PTI did not only want to derail the economy but was also hell-bent on damaging the foreign relations of Pakistan with friendly countries.

Tarar said the PTI had a track record of creating chaos and anarchy, and vandalising public properties. He added the PTI had orchestrated the May 9 arson and vandalised the sensitive installations and me-

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QUETTA: Provincial Education Minister Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani and Chairman Higher Education Commission Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed in a group photo with Vice Chancellors of Universities of Balochistan after conclusion of meeting at BUIITEMS.

Politics of protest bleeding a staggering Rs190bn daily: Finance Minister

ISLAMABAD Pakistan suffers a whopping loss of Rs190 billion daily due to the closure of roads and shutdowns triggered by opposition's protest calls, said Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb.

The minister's comments come as the opposition party is marching towards Islamabad to stage "do-or-die" protest at Islamabad's D-Chowk on the call of PTI founder Imran Khan.

The opposition party announced staging a protest against the "illegal" incarceration of Khan, other party leaders and workers, "stolen mandate" in February 8 general elections and 26th Constitutional Amendment.

Speaking to a private tv

channel, Aurangzeb said that tax collections decrease due to lockdown and protests while exports are disrupted in business.

"The protests cause additional expenses on security in a bid to maintain peace," said the finance minister, adding that the IT and tech sector also suffered losses.

He said that the Ministry of Finance has also prepared a report on the losses incurred due to the protests, according to which, the GDP suffers an estimated loss of Rs144 billion daily.

"According to the report, the decrease in exports due to the strikes causes a daily loss of Rs26 billion," said the finance minister.

Interior Minister receives high-level Belarusian delegation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi warmly welcomed a 68-member high-level delegation from Belarus upon their arrival in Islamabad on Sunday. The delegation included Belarus' Foreign Minister, Minister for Energy Minister, Minister for Justice, Minister for Transport, Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Emergency Situations, and Chairman of the Military Industry Committee. Moreover, 43 prominent business personalities from Belarus are also part of the delegation.

The Interior Minister also met with Foreign Minister of Belarus, Maxim Ryzhenkov, and Energy Minister. He welcomed the delegation to Islamabad and expressed that the government and people of Pakistan are eagerly awaiting the visit of Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. Mohsin Naqvi emphasized that the president's visit is crucial in strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries.

Interior Minister stated that Pakistan greatly values its relations with Belarus and aims to enhance cooperation in various sectors. He highlighted that the said visit will further promote cooperation between the two countries in industry, trade, and other sectors.

Bugti visits Sui; concedes death of martyrs, pays homage:

Equal development of Balochistan, prosperity of masses top priority: CM

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Bugti visited Sui on Sunday.

During the visit, Chief Minister expressed condolence the death of commander of Peace Force, Sadruddin and Allah Rakhya with their bereaved families, and offered fataha for their departed souls.

Meanwhile, paying homage to the martyrs, Chief Minister said that they (martyrs) rendered sacrifice of their lives for restoration of peace and survival of the nation.

He said that the sacrifices of martyrs would always be remembered.

He also expressed sympathy and solidarity with bereaved families of the martyrs.

He also assured every possible measures for the welfare of families of martyrs.

Later, Chief Minister visited Pakistan House

where he met the general public and heard their problems.

He also issued immediate instructions for resolving the issues of people.

Speaking on the occasion, Mir Sarfaraz Bugti said that development of Balochistan and prosperity of the people is top priority of the government, and for the purpose, all resources would be mobilized.

He also assured to lay network of the equal development.

He said that the provincial government is taking steps for the public welfare. As a result of which, new era of development and prosperity would be started in the province benefitting the people, he maintained.

Meanwhile the Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Bugti visited the residence of President Peoples Lawyers Forum, Behram Khan Tareen here on Sunday.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi receiving High Level Belarusian delegation on their arrival.

All educational institutions to remain closed across Balochistan today

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Colleges, Higher and Technical Education Department, Government of Balochistan has announced to close all the educational institutions including schools, colleges and universities in the province today (Monday).

According to an official notification issued here by the Colleges, Higher and Education Department, the educational institutions would remain closed across the province in anticipation of closure of the transport

on the highways.

The notification mentioned that the decision has been taken to save the students from the inconvenience that may be caused to them due to closure of the public and other transport on the highways.

It may be mentioned here that the All parties and traders organizations have already announced to observe wheel jam strike on all highways of the province against non-recovery of the child kidnapped from Quetta on November 15, 2024.

Nov 24 protest call 'end of PTI's political saga': Muqam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister and President Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Khyber



Pakhtunkhwa Engineer Ameer Muqam, referring to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) November 24 "final protest call" at D-Chowk Islamabad, predicted that it would mark the 'end of PTI's political saga,' describing the agitation as purposeless and damaging.

Muqam speaking at a press conference, strongly criticised PTI on Sunday, accusing the party of engaging in politics of chaos to destabilise the country's economy and disrupt public life.

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Over 1,000 passengers stranded amid railway employees' protest

QUETTA (INP): Quetta Railway Station turned chaotic as over 1,000 passengers were stranded due to a protest by railway employees. According to reports, demonstrators blocked tracks, delaying key trains, including the Chaman Passenger, Jafar Express, and Bolan Mail, for up to four hours.

The protest was sparked by the alleged demolition of employee housing boundaries on

Zarghoon Road during a road expansion project.

Passengers, already frustrated by limited transport options, expressed their struggles, with one traveller lamenting, "Even trains aren't reliable now."

Railway unions accused project officials of unlawful actions and called for judicial intervention. After negotiations, the protest was paused for two days, allowing train services to resume.

Zimbabwe outplay Pakistan in rain-hit first ODI by 80 runs

Pakistan, chasing a modest target of 206, struggled at 60/6 when the downpour halted the match

Sports Desk
HARARE: Zimbabwe claimed an 80-run victory over Pakistan via the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern (DLS) method in a rain-shortened first ODI at Queen's Sports Club on Sunday, taking a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Pakistan, chasing a modest target of 206, were struggling at 60/6 when a downpour halted play. The rain, initially light, intensified, forcing the match to be called off as the venue lacked floodlights to extend play into dusk.

Skipper Mohammad Rizwan was unbeaten on 19 with debutant Amir Jamal yet to score when the interruption occurred.

Pakistan's chase faltered early, with openers Abdullah Shafique and Saim Ayub dismissed within five overs, leaving the team at a precarious 17/2. Kamran Ghulam partnered briefly with Rizwan, but fell to Sean Williams in the 13th over as Pakistan slumped to 40/3.

Subsequent dismissals of Salman Ali Agha, Haseebullah Khan, and Muhammad Irfan deepened the trouble, with minimal contributions from the middle order.

Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza, Blessing Muzarabani, and Williams took two wickets each, executing a disciplined bowling performance that left Pakistan with a steep DLS-adjusted deficit.

The win boosts Zimbabwe's confidence heading into the remaining games as Pakistan looks to recover from a disappointing start in the series.

Earlier, Zimbabwe was bowled out for 205 in the first ODI of the series, setting Pakistan a target of 206 to win at Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo.

The hosts started their innings aggressively, with their openers trying to build a solid foundation. However, they lost early wickets, and the pressure mounted.

At 40 runs, Zimbabwe's first wicket fell when Jorlond Gumbie was run out for 15 by Abdullah Shafique. Soon after, Dion Myers fell for 8, leaving Zimbabwe at 58/2.

Captain Craig Ervine (6) and Tadiwanashe Marumani (29) also struggled to get going, with Ervine dismissed cheaply and Marumani falling after a brief partnership.

Sean Williams (23), Brian Bennett (20), and Brdandon Mavuta (1) could not provide significant contributions either, as Zimbabwe's middle order faltered under pressure.

The collapse continued with the loss of key wickets, including that of Sikandar Raza, who was dismissed for 39 by Faisal Akram. Raza had earlier formed a strong partnership with Richard Ngarava, adding 62 runs for the eighth wicket.

Ngarava (48) played a determined knock, hitting 5 fours and 1 six, but lacked support from the other end as Zimbabwe were all out for 205.

Pakistan's bowlers delivered an excellent performance, with Salman Agha and Faisal Akram each picking up 3 wickets.

Agha finished with figures of 3/29 from 7 overs, while Akram took 3/24 in 8 overs. Haris Rauf, Aamer Jamal, and Mohammad Hasnain also chipped in with a wicket each, ensuring Zimbabwe could not build any significant partnerships in the latter stages of their innings.

Zimbabwe's team captain, Craig Ervine, expressed confidence before the match, saying the team was determined to get a win on home soil against Pakistan.

With Pakistan needing 206 runs to win, the match is finely poised, and the visitors will be favorites to chase down the target given the dominant performance from their bowlers.



ISLAMABAD: A view of Constitution Avenue decorated with portraits of Pakistani Prime Minister, Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, President Asif Ali Zardari and Belarus President Aleksandr Lukashenko on a green belt in connection with President of Belarus visiting at Pakistan, in the Federal Capital.

Bilawal expresses deep concern over deteriorating law, order situation in Kurram

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has expressed deep concern over the deteriorating law and order situation in the Kurram district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, urging that the safety and security of citizens be ensured immediately.

In a press release issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP stated, "On one hand, the Kurram district is burning in the fire of unrest, and on the other, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is absent from the scene." He pointed out that in the last few days, 80 citizens had been killed in Kurram, and people are not even safe in their homes.

"The government's silence during this turmoil is tantamount to being an ally of the terrorists", he said.

Nov 24 protest call 'end of..'

Continued from page 1

He claimed that PTI's protests have led to significant economic losses, shutting down businesses and leaving millions struggling. "The [PTI leadership] aim to paralyse the entire country, causing billions in losses to the national exchequer," he remarked, questioning PTI's commitment to patriotism.

He dismissed claims of mass mobilisation, challenging PTI's assertion of leading nine lakh people from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) to Islamabad.

"KP is grappling with worsening law and order, yet the provincial chief minister is busy fuelling protests instead of addressing the province's crises," he said.

Muqam criticised KP's leadership, particularly Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, for allegedly misusing provincial resources and involving government employees in political demonstrations.

Highlighting recent violence in Kurram, where dozens have lost their lives, Muqam condemned the provincial government for neglecting the affected communities.

Political issues can only be...

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Zhob, organized as a follow-up to decisions made at the Bannu Jirga, Achakzai expressed his concerns over the ongoing violence in Pashtun regions, including terrorism and sectarian strife in areas like Kurram. The jirga was chaired by Nawab Ayaz Khan Jozgezi and hosted by the party's General Secretary, Abdul Rahim Ziaratwal, with significant participation from tribal elders, political representatives, and other stakeholders.

Achakzai criticized global powers for turning Afghanistan into a battleground for their geopolitical and economic interests over the past five decades, using local agents to fuel their agendas. He held the so-called civilized nations responsible for Afghanistan's destruction and called on them to take accountability by contributing to the country's reconstruction and peace-building efforts.

He remarked, "The world has become a global village where shared prin-

Developing nations call \$300 bn COP29 climate deal 'an insult'

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Countries at the United Nations climate conference (COP29) in Baku, Azerbaijan, adopted a \$300 billion a year global finance target on Sunday to help developing nations cope with impacts of climate change, a deal it's intended recipients denounced as 'an insult', according to the U.N.

Developing countries, who had sought over \$ 1 trillion in assistance to truly address the complexities of the climate crisis, expressed their deep disappointment at the outcome of the talks which came to a contentious end.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also indicated in a social media post his disappointment, saying that he "had hoped for a more ambitious outcome, on both finance and mitigation, to meet the great challenge we face."

He said, "The agreement is a base on which to build. It must be honoured in full and on time. Commitments must quickly be made cash."

After adoption of the agreement, speakers from one developing country after another assailed the document in furious state-

ments. "Chaotic, poorly managed, and a complete failure in terms of delivering the ambition required."

After two weeks of intense negotiations, delegates at COP29, formally the 29th Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), agreed to provide this funding annually, with an overall climate financing target to reach at least \$1.3 trillion by 2035.

That is the amount they say must be invested in the energy transitions of lower-income countries, in addition to what those countries already spend, to keep the planet average temperature rise under 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Beyond that threshold, scientists say, global warming will become more dangerous and harder to reverse.

Countries also agreed on the rules for a UN-backed global carbon market., the UN said. This market will facilitate the trading of carbon credits, incentivizing countries to reduce emissions and invest in climate-friendly projects.

These were among the big-ticket issues decided

upon as the summit, which has been going on since November 12 at the enormous Baku Stadium in the Azerbaijan capital, went into double overtime. Another was the extension of a programme centered on gender and climate change.

This summit had been dubbed the climate finance COP, and representatives from all countries were seeking to establish a new, higher climate finance goal.

The target, or new collective quantified goal (NCQG), will replace the existing \$100 billion goal that is due to expire in 2025.

In the closing days at COP29, negotiating teams from the developed and developing worlds were deadlocked over a final deal, with reports that representatives for least developed countries and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) had walked out of the talks.

For some vulnerable nations, it represents a glimmer of hope—but only if commitments translate into swift action. Commitments must quickly become cash, the Secretary-General stressed, urging all countries to work together to meet the upper end of the new financial goal.



SIALKOT: Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif is listening the problems of people at his residence.

PTI leaders courting arrests....

Continued from page 1

memorials of martyrs, just to create chaos and anarchy. "Our responsibility is to ensure security in Islamabad," he said, adding the miscreants would be dealt with iron hands.

He said the PTI had only one demand which was to get an NRO-like concession for the release of their leader from the jail, but the government cannot do anything in this regard. This is the domain of the courts where the PTI is supposed to argue and fight for the release of their leader who has been facing different charges, he added.

Tarar said the PTI had a track record of creating chaos and anarchy, and vandalizing public properties, citing the sit-in of 2014 when their workers torched the Parliament and injured many policemen including SSP Asmat ullah Junejo.

He categorically said that nobody would be allowed to disrupt the economic progress achieved in the last eight months which witnessed a substantial increase in remittances that jumped to \$8.8 billion in the first quarter.

The interest rate has been reduced to 15 per cent and KIBOR stood at 13 per cent and inflation is down to 6.9 per cent from 32 per cent, he said while warning the PTI of strict action if it tried to derail the economy.

The minister said a high-level official and business delegation is arriving in Islamabad from Belarus to invest in the national economy, while its President will also be in Islamabad the day after tomorrow.

A warm welcome would be accorded to the Belarus Delegation on their arrival in Islamabad, he remarked.

Nobody will be allowed to challenge the writ of the state, he said, adding there is a full deployment

of police in Islamabad that is ready to arrest if anybody dares to enter Islamabad for disturbing the law and order.

"Life in Islamabad is normal as people are taking strolls in parks and children are playing various sports at different places, but some major highways have been closed to maintain law and order in the city," he noted.

He held the PTI responsible for the roads' closure and inflicting financial damage to traders and businessmen. The PTI did not only want to derail the economy, but also hell-bent on damaging the foreign relations of Pakistan with the friendly countries.

He said the PTI had orchestrated the May 9 arson and vandalized the sensitive installations and memorials of martyrs, just to create chaos and anarchy. This party has again resorted to similar tactics just to achieve their ulterior motives.

"Our responsibility is to ensure security in Islamabad," he said, adding the miscreants would be dealt with iron hands.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that strict action will be taken against miscreants in accordance with the law and assured that the government has taken all possible measures to protect the lives and property of citizens.

Naqvi conducted an aerial visit to Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Attock to review security arrangements in the three cities. He added that the administration, police, and law enforcement agencies are prepared to deal with any possible situation.

In a separate press conference at the federal capital's D-Chowk, the minister vowed action against "miscreants", adding that the police have arrested a number of protesters from the Faizabad interchange.



QUETTA: District Administration and Metropolitan Corporation Departments officials sealed parking hotel during mega crackdown drive campaign against profiteers, at Circular Road in Quetta.



KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Energy Syed Nasir Hussain Shah visiting stall during Sindh Craft Festival at Port Grand.

PTI caravans en route...

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try and exit points of the twin cities, Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

PTI is all set to hold a countrywide protest today on the call of PTI founder Imran Khan.

Containers have been placed on major routes, including Faizabad Flyover, with heavy police deployment in the area.

Key roads such as Murree Road, Motorway, Rawat, T-Chowk, Taxila, Margalla, and Mandraha have been blocked, along with major highways like Murree Expressway, Hazara Expressway, and connecting roads from Punjab.

Over 6,000 police personnel have been deployed across Rawalpindi, with security arrangements tightened.

Police conducted raids throughout the night to detain PTI workers, resulting in the arrest of over 170 activists from various areas. Prisoner transport buses have been brought into the city to manage detainees. Emergency measures have been implemented in hospitals, and rescue agencies have been put on high alert. Additionally, mobile internet services have been suspended in Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and Attock to prevent the spread of protest-related information.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi reached out to PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar following directives issued by the Islamabad High Court.

During their conversation, Minister Naqvi emphasized adherence to the

court's decision, stating, "We are bound by the Islamabad High Court's order. No processions, sit-ins, or rallies can be permitted under the current circumstances."

The minister also briefed Barrister Gohar on the upcoming visit of a high-level delegation from Belarus, led by the Belarusian President.

The 80-member delegation is scheduled to arrive in Islamabad on November 24 and will remain in the city until November 27. The Belarusian President is set to arrive on November 25.

Several policemen have been injured during clashes with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protesters, who resorted to stone-pelting at Dhok Kala Khan and Faizabad.

The injured officers were immediately shifted to a nearby hospital for medical treatment. According to initial reports, the protesters attacked law enforcement personnel as tensions escalated during demonstrations in these areas.

Tensions flared across Punjab and in the capital city of Islamabad as PTI workers clashed with police authorities during protests in multiple cities, resulting in arrests and violent confrontations.

PTI workers pelted police personnel with stones at Faizabad while attempting to enter Islamabad. Due to heavy police deployment, the PTI protesters failed to achieve their objectives and ended up pelting police with stones.

Police have said no miscreant will be allowed to take law into their own hands. Action will be taken against the miscreants as per law, and they will be dealt with with iron hands, they added.

In Gujranwala's Tatlay Aali area, former PTI MNA Bilal Ijaz joined party workers in their march on Islamabad in violation of Section 144. As the police attempted to block their way, the workers started thrashing them and forced them to flee from the spot to save their lives.

Police, however, managed to arrest six workers and shift them to the local station. PTI Central Punjab President Rana Bilal Ijaz and the district president reportedly escaped from police custody during the chaos.

In Attock, the convoy of PTI workers reaching motorway M-1 from Ghazi started pelting stones with police right in the front. The PTI workers also lit a fire on the motorway, as the authorities issued warnings against such acts.

Meanwhile, on the Faisalabad-Sargodha Road, PTI workers pelted police with stones near the interchange. Over 400 individuals, including an MPA, were arrested on charges of violating Section 144 and resorting to stone-pelting.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has highlighted the severe economic impact of calls for opposition-led protests and lockdowns, estimating daily losses of Rs190 billion to the national economy.

Romina lauds Baku govt for successful COP29, pledges to work jointly on climate risks

ISLAMABAD (APP): Azerbaijan for hosting COP29 with an exceptional dedication and hospitality. The administrative arrangements were impeccable, ensuring a conducive environment for meaningful negotiations and collaboration. Ms. Romina commend the COP29 Presidency for its leadership and tireless efforts in steering these critical discussions with inclusivity and fairness, reflecting the spirit of international cooperation on the road from Dubai to Baku and Belem adding the delivery of the UAE consensus and Baku climate unity pact through the next generation of NDCs, NAPs and a decisive shift in the international climate finance architecture requires us to work together to keep 1.5 and global resilience within reach.

PM's aide said Pakistan extends its heartfelt appreciation to the government and people of

degree Celsius", she added. The Coordinator said "We came to Baku with the spirit that our decisions here on critical issues such as new collective quantified goal (NCOG), the global stocktake (GST), and the just transition will put us back on track to achieve goals of the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement". "However, we are leaving Baku with mixed feelings and a heavy heart, we note critical gaps in the decision we all adopted here. Global solidarity is important but the goal put forward by the developed countries does not match with the needs of the developing countries for the implementation of their NDCs and National Adaptation Plans", Romina Alam stated.

PM's aide said Pakistan has faced two devastating floods that displaced millions, glaciers are melting and heat waves have made living impossible.

critical forum for forging global consensus toward the achievement of the goals of UNFCCC and Paris Agreement, especially Paris Agreement's global temperature target of 1.5

critical forum for forging global consensus toward the achievement of the goals of UNFCCC and Paris Agreement, especially Paris Agreement's global temperature target of 1.5



ISLAMABAD: Police bike squad stand alert at D Chowk to tackle any unexpected situation by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers.

All educational institutes in twin cities to remain closed today amid protest

ISLAMABAD (INP): All the educational institutions in Islamabad and Rawalpindi will be closed tomorrow (Monday) amid protest of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in Islamabad.

According to reports, the decision was made in light of the ongoing protests and disruptions in the city.

The district administration of Islamabad will issue a formal notification regarding the closure of schools and colleges.

This closure will apply to all educational institutions across the city to ensure the safety of students and staff amid the ongoing PTI protest.

Authorities have emphasised that the closure is a precautionary measure, taking into account the uncertainty of the situation and potential security concerns.

The decision will help

Omar demands transparent probe into Indian army's torture in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) has called for a transparent investigation into the brutal torture of four civilians by Indian troops in Kishtwar, demanding strict action against those found responsible for the harrowing incident.

According to Kashmir Media Service, four civilians were brutally tortured by Indian troops at the Rashtriya Rifles camp in Chas, Mughal Maidan after being summoned for questioning. The victims, identified as Sajad Ahmad, Abdul Kabir, Mushtaq Ahmad and Mehraj-ud-Din, all daily wage workers from Kuath village, were left in critical condition after

enduring severe physical abuse. Speaking to reporters in Srinagar, Omar Abdullah emphasized the need for accountability and said that if there is evidence against the troops involved, they should be court-martialed and punished.

He recalled previous cases of civilian torture, expressing concern about the repeated nature of such brutalities, and criticized Indian troops for failing to learn from past incidents.

He noted that this is not the first such incident when people have been called to army camps and beaten up, adding, "Earlier, we have witnessed incidents when people were called to police camps and tortured to death"

69 absconders involved in heinous crimes arrested by ICT Police

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police have arrested 69 absconders, proclaimed offenders and target offenders involved in heinous crimes during the ongoing week.

A police spokesperson told APP on Sunday that special tasks were assigned to all senior police officials to ensure the arrest of proclaimed offenders and absconders involved in different criminal activities in the federal capital. He said during the crackdown, the Islamabad Police teams have arrested 69 absconders, proclaimed offenders and target offenders during the ongoing week.

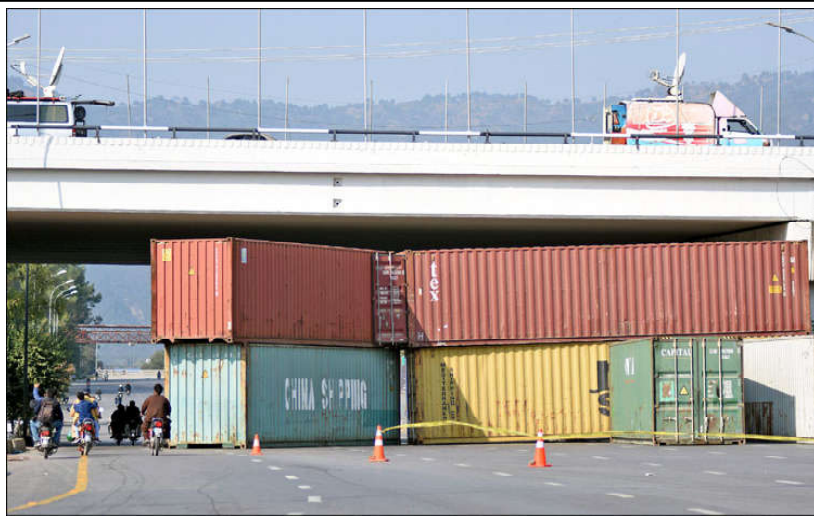
Nation pays glowing tributes to Mariam Mukhtiar on 9th martyrdom anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): November 24, marks the 9th martyrdom anniversary of Mariam Mukhtiar, Pakistan's first female fighter pilot to die in the line of duty where people from all walks of life through media platforms pays glowing tribute to her bravery and sacrifice.

Mariam Mukhtiar was born on May 18, 1992, in Karachi. She joined the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) in 2011 and graduated as a fighter pilot in 2014.

Tragically, her life was cut short on November 24, 2015, when her FT-7PG aircraft crashed near Kundian, Mianwali District, during a routine training mission, PTV news channel reported.

Mariam's actions that day exemplified her courage and selflessness.



ISLAMABAD: Administration open road at Islamabad Expressway at Zero Point for public in the Federal Capital.

193 properties seized in IIOJK since 2023 as part of drive to silence Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) led Indian government has attached at least 193 properties in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) since the start of 2023. The move is widely criticized as punitive action against Kashmiris for their association with the ongoing freedom movement.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the confiscations, involving lands, houses, shops, and offices, have been carried out by India's dreaded agencies such as the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) and Special

Investigation Agency (SIA), along with the paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). Observers view this as part of New Delhi's broader strategy to economically weaken Kashmiris and suppress their aspirations for freedom. Critics argue that the confiscations are carried out under the guise of draconian laws and have escalated since the abrogation of occupied Jammu and Kashmir's special status in August 2019.

Political experts and analysts in Srinagar described the actions as part of a settler-colonial project

aimed at altering the region's demographics by displacing local Kashmiris and facilitating the settlement of non-locals. Properties belonging to prominent pro-freedom leaders and organizations, including those of the late Syed Ali Gilani, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Aasiya Andrabi, and Jamaat-e-Islami, have been targeted. Even the headquarters of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference in Srinagar has been confiscated. Additionally, numerous residential houses, shops, and complexes have been demolished under similar pretexts.

PML-N says: Protests, invasions aren't viable to secure any prisoner release

ISLAMABAD (APP): Reporting to protests and invasions is not a viable way to secure the release of any prisoner, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and Member National Assembly Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said on Sunday.

Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, during a press conference, stressed that such actions do not contribute to meaningful change or progress. He questioned the motives behind PTI's efforts to invade the federal capital, asking what more

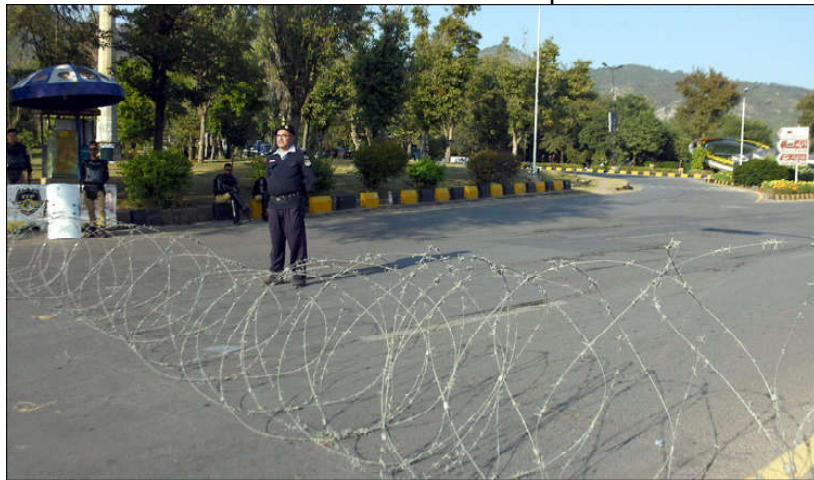
the protesters aimed to achieve when some PTI leaders had already voluntarily offered to be arrested.

He expressed concern that certain politicians are prioritizing chaos over the country's development, warning that this approach endangers both national progress and the future of the youth. Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry further criticized PTI for its role in spreading anarchy, questioning what the party had accomplished during its four years in power.

Legendary poetess Parveen remembered her 72nd birth anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Legendary poetess Parveen Shakir was remembered on her 72nd birth anniversary being observed across the country on Sunday.

Born on November 24, 1952, in Karachi, Parveen Shakir held a master's degree in English literature and served in Pakistan's civil service at a distinguished level. She started writing at a very young age, both in prose and poetry, while contributing her articles both in Urdu and English newspapers.



ISLAMABAD: A view of closed Margalla road with barbed wires ahead of PTI protest in the Federal Capital.

English faculty development program concludes at HEC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The three-day English Faculty Development Program concluded at the Higher Education Commission (HEC) on Saturday.

The program was organized by the National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) in collaboration with the Regional English Language Office (RELO) of the US Embassy, Islamabad.

The program, featuring renowned resource person Dr. Patricia Pashby, focused on three key themes aimed at addressing modern challenges and opportunities in English lan-

guage education. It included Teaching Language through Literature, Exploring Culture in the Language Classroom, and Redesigning Assignments in the Age of AI.

Addressing the closing ceremony, Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed commended the efforts of NAHE and RELO for empowering English faculty members with innovative teaching methodologies and effective language strategies.

The Chairman emphasized the importance of capacity building programs in enhancing the quality of education across higher education institutions.

IRSA releases 95,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 95,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 48,600 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarela Dam was 1502.17 feet and was 104.17 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 23,400 cusecs and 49,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1162.85 feet, which was 112.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet.

Residents of twin cities facing problems due to PTI protests: Dr. Tariq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior Leader of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said that the residents of twin cities facing hardships and problems due to the protests call of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

Addressing at a press conference here on Sunday, he said that due to the misleading role of PTI country's politics facing problems and earning bad name at the international level. He underlined that PTI workers had mistreated with bureaucrats and major political figures in abroad which was a condemnable act.

Fazal blasted PTI's political decline, saying Bushra Bibi's statement laid bare the party's internal chaos, where members are battling for control in a fractured leadership.

He emphasized that Pakistan's strong relations with Saudi Arabia remain unaffected, with recent

agreements serving as proof that such statements won't alter these vital ties. He condemned PTI for accusing the same countries from which they've accepted gifts, calling it a glaring example of their political bankruptcy. Reconciliation, he said, is Pakistan's strength—not a weakness—and protests must operate within the bounds of the Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Act, 2024.**

Dr Fazal Ch issued a stark warning: any attempt to disrupt Islamabad will be met with the same response as actions against anti-state elements. Referring to the 9th May incidents, he vowed that PTI's new attempt to sabotage the Belarus President's visit would fail, just as their disruption of the SCO summit did.

The 26th amendment could be reverse through proper channel from Parliament not from the protest or any other option.



ISLAMABAD: PML-N leader Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry addressing a press conference at PID Media Center.

Khurram warns of severe repercussions for assaulting Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Vice-President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Khurram Dastgir Khan Sunday vehemently denounced the PTI's march to Islamabad, branding it as "Tehreek-e-Intishar" and sternly warned that any attempts to attack Islamabad or coerce the state through terrorist acts will be met with severe repercussions.

In an exclusive interview with a private news channel, he emphasised that such violence-based actions of PTI will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

He expressed fear that PTI's protest may be an attempt to boost terrorism

activities, citing past incidents such as attacks on Parliament, burning trees in Islamabad and the May 9 incident, which are on record and raise questions about the party's intentions.

He emphasised that while peaceful protest is a fundamental democratic right of any political party, PTI's intentions are highly questionable, reminding us of their carrying weapons and harbouring malicious intentions.

He warned that the government will adopt a zero-tolerance policy this time, and will be taking stern action against any disruptions.

DIG Islamabad Raza reviews duty points across district

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police, Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Syed Ali Raza conducted a late-night visit to various duty points across the federal capital on Saturday.

A public relation officer told APP that, during the visit, DIG Raza briefed officers on law-and-order responsibilities, emphasizing the importance of performing their duties diligently and efficiently.

He further expressed hope that the peace-loving citizens of Islamabad would continue to cooperate with the police in maintaining law and order in the city.



ISLAMABAD: Children are enjoying swing during Sunday holiday at a local park in the Federal Capital.

HEC unwilling to break NIHCR begging bowl

ISLAMABAD (INP): Although the Finance Division has revised upward the Indicative Budget Ceilings (IBC) for the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to Rs. 65 billion from an initial allocation of Rs25 billion for fiscal year 2024-25 yet most of the universities, centres and institutes under its control have not been allocated and released sufficient budgets and funds for the fiscal 2024-25.

With the passage of time, annual budget allocations and grants are getting decreased for the universities in general and its recognised centres and institutes in particular. Over the years, particularly since 2018, Centres of Excellence have become beggars demanding bail out packages,

grant in aid and supplementary grants to overcome their financial pendency but in vain.

No doubt, the public sector universities, centres and institutes have been facing a financial emergency because of budget cuts for the past six years. Since then, the HEC decreased funding has failed to keep up with exacerbated house rent ceiling, pay and pension increases and other allowances. Nowadays universities, centres and institutes are facing financial crisis; some of them do not have funds to pay house rent ceilings, salaries and pensions to their staff and pensioners.

One such academic research institution is the National Institute of His-

torical and Cultural Research, Centre of Excellence, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, which has been facing financial crunch since fiscal 2019-20 due to which the staff and pensioners have not been paid House Rent Ceiling since July 2021 at the pretext that the Higher Education Commission had not released funds to the NIHCR.

Hard hit are the NIHCR pensioners who have not so far been paid their house rent ceilings since July 2021, gratuity and leave encashment in toto. The NIHCR authorities hold HEC responsible for not releasing required funds to clear the pensioners' once for all. According to my well-placed sources in the NIHCR, at least five

pensioners are waiting for payment of their pending pensionary dues and house rent ceilings.

Ironically, the NIHCR has not granted 15 percent Adhoc Relief announced in the Budget 2024-25 to its pensioners for non-release of funds by the HEC.

The NIHCR failed to implement the Special Dispensation for the Civil Servants in the Federal Government for the Employees in BPS-01 to BPS-16 effective 01-01-2023 for want of funds from the HEC.

The Institute has not paid 35 percent and 25 percent Adhoc Relief announced in the Budget 2023-24 to its staff and officers, respectively.

Likewise, the Institute failed to pay 25 per-

cent and 15 percent Adhoc Relief announced in the Budget 2024-25 to its staff and officers, respectively, besides payment of medical allowance and medical reimbursement to its staff for lack of funds.

In spite of huge financial pendency, rumours are rife in the NIHCR that some high ups have been granted house building, motor car and motor cycle advances instead of clearing the pending house rent ceilings of lower staff or making payments to the retired staff.

It is need of the hour for HEC to look into the NIHCR financial matters properly and fill its begging bowl to the brim by allocating required funds to clear the backlog once for all.



ISLAMABAD: Heavy machinery being used at the site of under-construction PTCL Chowk underpass project during development work in Federal Capital.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent
Monday November 25, 2024

Short-changed?

The COP29 climate summit in Baku has stretched past the Friday deadline into overtime, with negotiations still underway at the time of writing. Although the final outcome is not likely to be known for some time, suffice it to say that what started with a bang may end in a whimper. The central sticking point at the summit was the establishment of a New Collective Quantified Goal for climate finance over which the Global North and Global South continued to remain at an impasse. Developed countries, historically responsible for the bulk of GHG emissions, were expected to commit to a robust financial framework. Instead, they stalled, with their draft proposals offering placeholder numbers and prioritising private financing over public grants.

Reportedly the wealthy nations have agreed to raise the climate finance figure to \$300bn, while the developing nations want a bigger contribution. The amount proposed by the former is still in huge contrast to the minimum of \$1tr a year needed by 2030 just to meet Paris Agreement goals.

It is particularly concerning given that Pakistan alone faces a climate finance gap of \$348bn by 2030. Whatever the outcome, there will likely remain a deep disconnect between climate reality and wealthy nations' commitments. The fact that developing nations like Sierra Leone were thinking of walking out of the deal speaks volumes for how short-changed they feel. Besides how much must be paid, the question that emerged was who must pay. European nations insist that high-emitting economies such as China and Gulf states share the burden. However, the Global North cannot deflect responsibility for historical emissions. Meanwhile, the recent election of Donald Trump — who believes climate change is a hoax — as US president, cast a pall over the talks. Some of the wealthy nations believe the world's biggest economy will want nothing to do with the finance goal during Mr Trump's tenure.

Pakistan's delegation, led by negotiator Arif Goheer, aptly criticised the draft agreement as "disappointing". Our diplomatic efforts at the summit, including hosting over 40 events, demonstrate our commitment to global climate action. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reiterated the pressing need for grants, not loans, to avoid deepening debt traps. Domestically, Pakistan has taken steps to address climate vulnerabilities, unveiling its National Climate Finance Strategy and launching the Recharge Pakistan initiative to manage flood risks through ecosystem-based solutions. However, these ambitious plans require substantial financial backing. While the eventual target may unlock some funds, accessing them through the current maze of red tape will remain a challenge. As the nations continue to argue, the international community must recognise that climate finance is not merely about numbers — it is about enabling vulnerable nations to survive and adapt to a crisis they did little to create. For now, we remain far from this essential goal.

Abbas Nasir

Against the backdrop of a significant upsurge in violent incidents in KP and Balochistan, which left around 100 people dead in just over a week, what appeared more important to large sections of the media was the statement of the spouse of a jailed popular political leader.

Editorial priorities of large swathes of the electronic media in particular seem to be decided not in the newsrooms but elsewhere and their news running orders reflect the mindset of those pulling the strings and WhatsApping TV 'tickers' to news executives that we see running on our screens verbatim.

News bulletins and tickers taken care of, the attention turns to friendly anchors, YouTubers and analysts whose primary task seems to be to echo the view and thinking of the security state, despite the inconvenient and often bloody truth slapping everyone in the face.

So, in a video mes-

Let's not provoke Indus fury

sage, when Bushra Bibi (and no, her words weren't twisted, in this case at least, as some top PTI leaders have suggested) implied clearly that the Saudis were also instrumental in the removal of the PTI government in 2022, one could have taken her statement in a number of ways.

In recent years, Imran Khan has repeatedly said she is a 'non-political' personality who has nothing to do with politics. Taken at face value, her statement seemed to lend weight to that view. When she plucked out that particular accusation out of nowhere and went public with it, had she been a politician she would have been well aware of the consequences.

But if she was merely being a desperate spouse who wants her husband's more than year-long incarceration to end, then the only thing that would have mattered to her, in her view, would be to build and sustain pressure to secure his freedom. That it would achieve the op-

posite, ie, be counterproductive could only have occurred to a seasoned politician.

Despite the unease of several unnamed PTI leaders and their view that her statement had undermined, rather than provided an impetus to, the campaign to gather sufficient numbers of supporters in the streets of Punjab and KP so that those at the helm would be forced to take notice, it wasn't immediately clear if her statement had impacted the plan at all.

If the protest is not postponed or cancelled, then Sunday (today) perhaps will make apparent whether her words were tantamount to a PTI own goal, as analysts, some among them apparently compromised, are suggesting or whether it had no such impact. You and I will have a fair idea by the time you read these lines.

Anyway, the purpose of this column was not to spend so much time on one statement and its coverage, but to draw attention to perils old and new facing the country,

and the rulers' response — which seems to leave a lot to be desired — to them.

Both Balochistan and KP have seen a rather alarming spike in violence that tragically seems to have made a home in the two provinces because of our policy failures and the incitement of our regional/global adversaries.

Whether it is the 'sectarian' strife in Kurram or the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's terror strikes on our security forces over swathes of the former tribal areas in KP or similar violence perpetrated by Baloch separatists in Balochistan from Quetta to the inner most recesses and the coastal belt of the province, which has drawn the blood of our brave soldiers, paramilitaries and civilians in their dozens, the main response is in words and not policy steps.

From the country's chief executive to his backers to the smallest minion, we have been hearing — from the start — of the resolve to deal with the violence with an

'iron hand' and with other tools at the state's disposal.

I wonder when this hand will come out of the foundry perfectly forged in order to deliver the deadly blow to those who kill our innocent civilians and soldiers alike. Side by side, we also wait for economic and political measures to tackle some of the causes that fuel this insane violence. Given the criticality of the state of play, one hopes this is soon.

But what does impede and dampen hope is the continued arrogance of the policymakers. This arrogance now threatens peace in Sindh too. It can't be stressed enough that the federal government had no business approving Rs260 billion to construct canals from the Indus to irrigate large tracts of barren land in southern Punjab, the Cholistan desert included, where some five million acres of land have been allotted for 'corporate farming'.

It is common knowledge who is driving this

move but what is not clear at all is if anyone has thought through its consequences. Sindh is facing severe water shortages and being the lower riparian, its concerns should be addressed on a priority basis.

There just isn't sufficient water in the Indus river system as is evident from the flows downstream of the Kotri barrage; even a visitor to the area can see the dry, sandy riverbed where once the mighty Indus flowed. The situation further downstream is even worse as the meagre flows mean the sea is pushing into the river and wreaking havoc on the area's ecology.

The PPP has been rightly accused of dancing to the establishment's tune but like it or hate it, it has so far stood between the nationalists and the state. If there is any attempt to ride roughshod over this issue, the buffer the PPP has provided will be wrenched away and a serious security crisis could envelop Sindh as well.

Ahmed Bilal Mehboob

Pakistan's Constitution allows only one avenue to challenge the outcome of an election to the national parliament or a provincial assembly and that is through an election petition to be decided by an election tribunal appointed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Article 225 is quite emphatic in this regard and states: "No election to a House or Provincial Assembly shall be called in question except by an election petition presented to such tribunal and in such manner as may be determined by Act of Parliament."

It means that the system of election dispute resolution relies exclusively on the election tribunals for a timely outcome of poll petitions. It also means that if the tribunals fail in their duty of timely adjudication, the entire edifice of providing justice to poll contestants, who feel they have been wrongly declared as defeated, crumbles, leading to frustration, street agitation, the further choking of the judicial system, and loss of public faith in the poll-related justice system — all serious consequences for Pakistan's democracy and peace.

Section 148(5) of the Elections Act, 2017, allows a maximum of 180 days to the tribunals to decide each petition, from the date of its filing. Earlier, the tribunals were allowed a maximum of 120 days but this period was increased through the Elections (Second Amendment) Act in August 2023. The timely disposal of poll petitions was the main objective of creating a system of dedicated election tribunals to deal with poll petitions, otherwise the law could have directed the petitioners to directly approach the high courts as is the system in India.

Pakistan has experimented with the tribunals comprising sitting judges of the high courts only and tribunals headed by retired judges. The Elections Act, 2017, provided for sitting high court judges only to act as election tribunals

but an amendment via a presidential ordinance in May 2024, opened the possibility of appointments of retired judges too as election tribunals. Despite having a system of dedicated tribunals, inducting sitting or retired judges as tribunals and fixing a deadline of 120 and later 180 days to decide election petitions, the deadlines have hardly been respected and many petitions linger even till the time the legislatures are dissolved for the next election, thus failing the very purpose for which the elaborate architecture of electoral disputes resolution system was put in place.

The number of election tribunals had also been fluctuating between 31 in 2008 to 14 in 2013 over the past elections. The average case load of the tribunals had been varying from as low as nine petitions per tribunal constituted after the 2008 election to as high as 28 petitions after the 2013 general poll. Each tribunal has a well-defined geographical area of jurisdiction.

The ECP had notified 15 election tribunals in February 2024 soon after the general election as per the norm. Surprisingly, while four tribunals were notified for Sindh, five for KP, three for Balochistan and one for Islamabad Capital Territory, conforming more or less to past practice, only two tribunals were notified for Punjab — way below the size of the province, the expected load of petitions and past number of tribunals.

It is reported that the ECP had requested the Lahore High Court chief justice of the time to appoint nine tribunals for Punjab but he did not oblige. Thus began a long-drawn legal battle between the ECP and LHC, which first led to an amendment in the Elections Act to provide for tribunals comprising retired judges and later litigation over which of the two institutions had the power to finally appoint the tribunals.

Ultimately, the Supreme Court decided the case in favour of the ECP in September this year

Delayed electoral justice**Image of the past****A city in peril****Ayman Zafar**

Cities are an integral part of history and one of the most complex creations of mankind. The architecture of a city is the main tangible evidence of man's intellectual and cultural journey through the past — and Lahore, indeed, is a city where history, art and culture have been woven seamlessly into the lives of its people. Unfortunately, the Lahore we know today seems to be stifled by an unrelenting haze of pollution, neglect, and indifference.

The city gasps for breath, choked by a thick blanket of smog that descends every winter, suffocating its citizens. Pollution is no longer just an inconvenience; it is a health emergency, a manmade catastrophe, fuelled by political apathy, regulatory failure, and unchecked urbanisation.

Imposing illogical bans on people's livelihoods is hardly a solution (in case anyone important enough to take action has stumbled upon this piece). The issue goes far beyond the present crisis. It dates to years of neglect — when activities endangering the environment should have been monitored, when the looming 'environmental crisis' should have been treated with urgency, and when there was still time to reverse the damage caused by the misdoings and sheer failures of those in charge.

Instead, here we are, tangled in the noise of daily politics, fixated on power struggles, prejudiced rivalries, and judicial controversies, while the people of Lahore are left to suffer and quite literally, suffocate.

It's truly baffling that individuals occupying high-ranking positions — armed with de-

grees from prestigious universities and boasting decades of supposed experience — believe they are entitled to those seats, no matter how they were secured: through manipulation, deception, or outright disregard for the public. And yet, despite their credentials and claims of competence, the issues of environmental security are dismissed as unworthy of attention. As disappointing as it is, the mindset, cultural blind spots, and self-serving incompetence of the country's policymakers leave them incapable of understanding the severity of the crisis. But of course, priorities are clear — why focus on the suffocating air millions are forced to breathe when a quick trip to the UK for a throat infection is much more pressing? Meanwhile, the rest of us? Well, we can continue to suffer.

It comes as no surprise to anyone paying attention that environmental degradation has long been the price of so-called development in Pakistan. Successive governments have mastered the art of crafting policies full of promises and impressive jargon, yet the gap between these declarations and implementation is staggering. Take, for instance, the National Environmental Policy 2005, seen as a comprehensive blueprint to tackle environmental challenges at the time. It now gathers dust, undermined by a lack of enforcement and funding, and an even greater lack of political will.

Meanwhile, malpractice continues to thrive in the agriculture, food and water sectors, continuing to expose people to toxic chemicals and creating health crises that remain undressed. Like I said, if one is to examine the country's environmental and climate change efforts diligently, a disheartening pattern emerges: policies churned out over the years like clockwork, each signalled as a breakthrough, but backed by little practical action. We seem stuck in an endless cycle of announcements and photo ops, while the air we continue to breathe, grows increasingly poisonous, and is unfit for life.

Where does the blame lie? It's tempting to point fingers in every possible direction — inept policymakers, uninterested administrators, and industries running wild — but the vacuum of accountability looms largest. In this void, the judiciary often steps in, attempting to address environmental crises through public interest litigation. But let's be honest — judicial intervention is a stopgap, not a long-term solution, which is what is required from the government. The judiciary can issue directives and develop laws, but without political will to enforce them, they are little more than mere words on paper. And as the air continues to thicken with smog and indifference, we're only left to wonder: is it too much to hope for leaders who prioritise lives over optics? Or perhaps this is the reality we must accept: in the grant hierarchy of priorities, the survival of a city and its people will always come second to the persistent pursuit of power.

For now, the sun is out and I'd like to soak it all in — who knows, when we'll get to see it again. My humble advice: do the same while you still can, and demand that those responsible for this crisis finally take action before it's too late.

Muna Khan

I envy my parents for living in Karachi when they did. My father, like others who lived here between the 1950s to Gen Zia's accession, describes a city that sounds alien. He narrates stories about how he would go to Café George (for the patties) after work or take my mother to watch a movie; he remembers watching Cleopatra in 1966. Weekends were spent listening to one of the many live bands, both local and visiting acts from abroad, or at various nightclubs.

My friend Mohsin's earliest memories are hearing his daada tell his mother to get the kids ready, after which he'd take all the children all over the city, on trams — like an adventure. Mohsin also remembers visiting famed tea cafés which were intellectual hubs in Karachi, as a kid with his professor father. I credit Mohsin's endless curiosity to the exposure he got here.

This Karachi was open for everyone; sometimes you needed to pay to get into clubs but it remained egalitarian in its attitude. Now, people with money work hard to keep others out. Signs of 'right to admissions reserved' represent the rot in society.

The beach, parks or spaces like Frere Hall are some spots where the rich and poor cross paths, though I have witnessed efforts to keep poor families out of parks in DHA. We have seen how real estate is trying to gobble up beach land to create exclusive residences.

When we gate ourselves into smaller spaces in the name of safety — I still don't understand what we are in danger of — we lose a sense of a wider commu-

nity which brings with it a sense of belonging, one that you can't get in silos or screens. The mohalla of our elders — which once raised children along with parents and extended family — no longer exists. We don't know our neighbours anymore.

Where can we go to meet each other in the open, except gated parks or arts and literary events, which only occur once a year?

After visiting several of the sites of Karachi Biennale a fortnight ago, and enjoying several interactions with folks from all over the city, I sought out similar experiences. I miss The Second Floor, which Sabeen Mahmud opened in 2007, because it provided a space for us to get together. I enjoyed visiting Pakistan Chowk Community Centre in 2018 when I took my students on a heritage walking tour through the Old Town neighbourhood. I've taken a few friends on this walk which I recommend to get a glimpse of what our city was, and is, like.

Thankfully, last Sunday I went to the renovated Khaliqina Hall on M.A. Jinnah Road to check out the exhibit 'Crafting Resistance' which showcased artisans' work. Here visitors could try their hand at spinning cloth grown from flax, using several blocks to block print, or weave yarn on a portable loom under the advice of the artists. There were other art opportunities for children and adults. Entry is free, even for the qawwali scheduled this evening.

I met three people I hadn't seen in years and would have met more, like the curator of this initiative, if I had stayed longer. I liked being in the space, whose interior

was restored though a collaboration between Numaish Collective and the Karachi Metropolitan Council — in three months, proving that if you have the will, funds and fortitude, anything is possible. I want to mention the brass lighting because one of the civil engineers of this project, Shakeel uz Zaman, discovered during the restoration that the lights were brass and had them restored. I mention this small detail to demonstrate that restoration need not be an extravagant affair. And that restoration purely for the sake of it is pointless if you aren't going to use the building. I appreciate Khaliqina Hall and library are being used for the purpose its founder, Ghulam Husain Khaliqina, intended: a space for literary and recreational pursuits. Incidentally, the architect of this 1906 building was the Iraqi Jewish man from Lahore, Moses Somake.

This was Karachi's diversity. It is not one that is difficult to reclaim. Alas, how do you expect a city to restore its past when it can't seem to manage its crumbling present? It will have to find a way.

Instead of demolishing old buildings to create new ones, either under the guise of cost-effectiveness or to show modernity, I join a chorus of voices — far more knowledgeable than I — beseeching the authorities to restore our buildings, return our city to a semblance of its past. The Numaish Collective has shown us the way.

Look at the Walled City project of Lahore which has done a remarkable job at conserving the city's heritage and helping people connect with it, feel pride in it. Surely Karachiites deserve the same.

Governor Kundi issues directives for TDPs relief in Kurram

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Sunday issued special directives to the Pakistan Red Crescent to extend all possible relief and assistance to the temporary displaced persons (TDPs) in the Tribal District of Kurram.

In response to the ongoing humanitarian needs, the Governor emphasized the urgent need for immediate support to those affected by the displacement.

Following the instructions of Chairman Habib Malik Orakzai, the Emergency Response Team of the Pakistan Red

Crescent has been deployed to the areas of Hangu and Thall for rapid emergency response.

This deployment aims to ensure that relief efforts are swiftly and effectively carried out in response to the needs of the TDPs.

Additionally, Governor Kundi assured that food supplies for the displaced populations in Darsmand and Thall have been secured for the upcoming days, ensuring that no individual is left without essential resources during this challenging time.

Today, in collaboration with the district administration, the

Pakistan Red Crescent conducted a thorough assessment of the situation.

A comprehensive report based on the findings will be submitted shortly to further guide the relief efforts. Pakistan Red Crescent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remains steadfast in its commitment to providing continuous support and assistance to the displaced individuals, ensuring their immediate needs are met with the utmost urgency.

It is worth mentioning here that dozens of persons were died and injured during the ongoing clashes between local tribes.



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Minority Affairs Ramesh Singh Arora in a group photo with Sikh community at Dera Sahib Gurdwara.

Govt committed to safeguarding rights of minorities: Minister

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Minorities Ramesh Singh Arora attended a seminar on "Minorities' Rights & Constitutional Protection" held at the Renewal Centre Auditorium in Youhanabad on Sunday.

The event brought together a diverse group of participants, including Parliamentary Secretary of HR&MA Sonia Asher, former Minister Ejaz Alam Augustine, government officials, religious leaders, and representatives from various minority communities. The seminar served as a vital platform for discussing the protection of minority rights under the Constitution of Pakistan and raising awareness about the importance of safeguarding these rights in

the contemporary social and political landscape.

In his keynote address, Minister Ramesh Singh Arora highlighted the government of Punjab's firm commitment to ensuring the constitutional protection of minorities. He emphasized the provincial government's ongoing efforts to create an inclusive society where equal opportunities and rights are guaranteed for all citizens, irrespective of their religion or ethnicity.

Minister Arora also announced that the government of Punjab will be launching Minority Cards to uplift religious minorities. Additionally, he shared that the Minority Affairs Department is preparing a five-year strategic plan, making it the first-ever provincial.



HYDERABAD: Transgender rights activists holding placard inscribed with slogans for protection of their fundamental rights at a programme in Rani Bagh before holding Sindh Moorat March.

AJK TEVTA chairman emphasizes importance of technical education

MIRPUR (AJK): (APP): Chairman of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Technical Vocational Education Training Authority (TEVTA), Chaudhry Muhammad Farid highlighted the necessity of equipping the youth with technical education to enhance the country's economy and prepare them for global development.

While addressing an awareness session at the Government College of Technology Mirpur on Sunday, he

stated, "Education of latest skills can be promoted through the delivery of quality education in various disciplines." The event also featured remarks from local dignitaries, including Chairman District Council Raja Naveed Akhtar Goga and District Education Officer Muhammad Ishaq Mughal, who underscored the significance of vocational training. Students received certificates for their completion of various courses.



RAWALPINDI: A view of deserted Murree road during road block due to PTI protest in the city.

Kundi pledges ending violence against women

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has vowed his commitment to ending violence against women, calling it a matter of not only human rights but of national progress.

He said this in a special message on the International Day for the 'elimination of violence against women' here on Sunday.

He emphasized that societies and nations move forward when women are empowered and allowed to thrive in all areas of life.

Governor Kundi said that the elimination of violence against women is not merely an aspiration but a fundamental necessity for the development of any society.

He acknowledged that true progress is achieved when women are treated as equal participants in economic, political, and social spheres.

In his message, the Governor highlighted that the silence around violence must be broken and that the systemic norms which perpetuate such abuse need to be challenged.

He stressed that this day serves as a powerful reminder that it is the collective duty of every individual.

One killed, six injured in road mishaps

BUREWALA (APP): A young man was killed while six people sustained serious injuries in two separate incidents reported in the city on Sunday.

According to Rescue 1122 sources, an incident of collision between two motorcycles was reported near Old Post Office Chowk in which a young man was killed and two others sustained injuries.

Meanwhile, two motorcycles collided head on at Jamlera Road due to over-speeding in which four persons received injuries.

The rescue officials said that three injured were reported to be in critical condition after they were shifted to hospitals.



KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Energy Nasir Hussain Shah flanked by Sindh Minister for Culture Syed Zulfiqar Shah talking to media persons on the eve of Sindh Craft Festival organized by Sindh Culture Department.

CM pays tribute to female martyr flying officer

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has paid glowing tribute to Mariam Mukhtiar, Pakistan's first female martyred pilot, on her ninth death anniversary.

In her message, she praised martyred pilot's exceptional courage, patriotism, and unwavering dedication to her country.

"Mariam Mukhtiar proved that the daughters of the nation are second to none in their efforts for the construction and defence of the country," the CM stated.

Recalling Mariam's heroic actions, she highlighted the pilot's selfless sacrifice in preventing her aircraft from crashing into a populated area, thereby saving countless lives.

"She set an eternal example of sacrifice," she remarked, emphasising the lasting legacy of such courage.

The CM also pointed out that martyrs like Mariam Mukhtiar are a source of pride and inspiration for future generations. "Martyrs remain alive forever in the hearts of their people," she

added. In recognition of the broader role of women in national progress, the CM underscored that women are contributing equally alongside men to every sector, displaying immense talent and commitment.

"Every daughter of Pakistan is a source of pride for the country," she affirmed.

The CM said that Mariam Mukhtiar's unparalleled sacrifice serves as a shining example of patriotism and selflessness that will continue to inspire the nation for years to come.

60 shops sealed for smog SOPs violation

LAHORE (APP): The district administration has intensified its crackdown on smog-causing activities, sealing 60 shops and imposing fines amounting to Rs 60,000 on violators over the past 24 hours.

A total of 2,564 shops, markets, and shopping malls were inspected citywide to enforce anti-smog SOPs, with 92 establishments shut down for non-compliance.

Assistant commissioners across Lahore's zones conducted targeted operations. In City Zone, 477 locations were inspected with no violations reported. In Cantt, 250 establishments

were checked, with action taken against seven violators. Model Town saw inspections at 422 sites, resulting in action against 12 violators. Similar efforts in Raiwind, Shalimar, Ravi, Allama Iqbal Town, Wahga, Nishtar, and Saddar zones led to swift penalties for non-compliance, showcasing the administration's commitment to enforcing smog control measures.

Deputy Commissioner Syed Musa Raza emphasized the administration's proactive stance in addressing smog and urged citizens to take necessary precautions, including wearing masks.

Lahore ranks tops list of most polluted cities

LAHORE (APP): The provincial metropolis, despite governments intensified efforts, occupies top position among the list of the most polluted cities in the world.

On Sunday evening, the Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded at 242 that is very unhealthy.

As per the data collected from the IQ Air website on Sunday at 06:52 pm, Dhaka (Bangladesh) ranked second with an AQI of 230 (very unhealthy), followed by Sarajevo (Bosnia Herzegovina) with an AQI of 206 (very unhealthy). The air quality in fourth to tenth-ranked

cities is unhealthy.

Beijing (China) is ranked fourth with an AQI of 180 (unhealthy), closely followed by Delhi (India) and Hanoi (Vietnam) with an AQI of 174 (unhealthy).

Meanwhile, Mumbai (India) is ranked seventh with an AQI of 169 (unhealthy), followed by Kolkata (India) with an AQI of 161 (unhealthy). Tehran (Iran) is ranked ninth while Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) is in tenth place with an AQI of 158 and 151 (unhealthy), respectively.

After reeling under toxic smog for around one month.



FAISALABAD: PTI protestors heading toward the Federal Capital.

Improving waste management for healthy environment

FAISALABAD (APP): Waste management is a critical issue in the fight against pollution as improper handling of waste contributes to environmental degradation and health hazards incurring loss of billions of rupees every year.

As proper waste collection and disposal is a common issue in urban centres of the developing world, the situation is also not different in mega cities of Pakistan where thousands of tons of solid waste remain uncollected.

Faisalabad, a district of over nine million population daily generate around 4000 tons of solid waste with four million Faisalabad city area dwellers alone producing

1600 tons of waste daily – remaining uncollected or dumped openly at landfill sites.

Since proper treatment mechanisms are lacking, the landfill sites release greenhouse gases like methane with plastic waste polluting water courses and harming aquatic life. Open dumping and burning of waste exacerbate air and soil pollution, endangering human health and biodiversity and disturbing the ecosystem.

Although Faisalabad Waste Management Company (FWMC) tries its best to properly dispose of solid waste, yet it lacks capacity to collect all generated waste and its multiple usages.

"The FWMC strives hard to properly handle waste in city areas but it could collect and dispose of 85% of total waste," said a spokesman of FWMC. "FWMC collects 1350 tons of waste daily from city areas with its 200 vehicles and around 3000 workforce," he said.

"However, the company is recruiting more workers and purchasing vehicles to handle total generated waste."

Waste management has become a burning issue due to massive population growth especially in urban areas while non-scientific disposal of waste material pollutes the environment, causes smog during winter and affects human health.

A study conducted in

KP CM acting as puppet: Bukhari

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari has said that situation in Kurram, Bannu and Bara is sensitive, but unfortunately Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur is busy in making preparations to run over the federation.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, she said that today 12 people were killed in firing incident in Kurram, adding that during last three days in various clash incidents, 75 persons were killed and 80 others injured.

Azma Bukhari said that the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa police and other law-enforcement agencies were rendering sacrifices to maintain law and order.

She further said that KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur should focus on welfare of people instead of acting as puppet of Adiala Jail's prisoner.

Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari said on Sunday that all roads and most markets were open in Lahore, and normal life was going on, while markets are also open in most places in Lahore.

Azma Bukhari visited different areas of the city including Laxmi Chowk, Shimla Pahari, Haji Camp, Railway Station, Lorry Adda, Minar-e-Pakistan and Azadi flyover.

The minister also visited the Walled City, The Mall road, GPO Chowk and Charing Cross chowk. She reviewed the traffic movement and law and order situation in Lahore.

Apparently referring to the PTI, Azma Bukhari said the people of Punjab had rejected the 'chaos' party. "I have not seen a single revolutionary of the PTI in Lahore; the leadership of the PTI was also found nowhere in Lahore," she said.



LAHORE: Provincial Information Minister, Azma Bukhari addressing a press conference in the Provincial Capital.

Franchised PTI collapsed: Marriyum

LAHORE (APP): Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb expressed her gratitude to the people of Punjab and Lahore, stating that the "franchise PTI" has collapsed today as it stands rejected by the public.

She remarked, "It would have been better if internal matters were resolved privately. The people of Punjab are aligned with Pakistan's and the province's progress." She further commented, "'Al-Jihad' has fallen victim to chaos and disruption. Bushra Bibi and Aleema Baji are both

missing, and soon there will be news of Ali Amin Gandapur's disappearance as well."

Marriyum Aurangzeb added that Bushra Bibi and Aleema Baji have sidelined the PTI founder. "The instigator is behind bars. First, he was involved in looting the nation, and now he has been busy spreading unrest. They have always advocated for shutting the country down and acted upon it. Half of their so-called revolution was arrested before it even began, while the other half fled. Neither the revolution arrived.



HYDERABAD: Sindh Taraqi Pasand Party (STP) activists stage a protest against construction of six canals over river Indus outside Hyderabad Press Club.

11 cases against medical stores to be referred to drug court

FAISALABAD (APP): The District Quality Control Board (DQCB) has decided to refer 11 cases against medical stores/clinics of quacks involved in different violations of Drug Control Act, to the drug court for trial. The decision was made by the board during its meeting held with Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Headquarters Qaisar Javid. Inspection report of the drug inspectors relating to 25 cases against the medical stores/clinics were reviewed and decided to prosecute against 11 medical stores, which were

running without drug sale licence and involved in sale of unregistered medicines.

The board adjourned three cases to the next meeting for verification of documents and other evidence in addition to issuing warning to 11 accused. The ADC Headquarters, while reviewing inspection reports of the drug inspectors, ordered for immediate seal of medical stores running without drug sale licence and involved in sale of unregistered medicines. He said that regular supervision of the sealed medical stores be ensured and prompt legal actions.

2023 revealed that total waste comprised 6.6% plastic and rubber material, 1% metals, 7.67% paper and cardboard, 6.53% rags/textile waste, 2.43% glass ceramics, 2.4% bones, 33.81% food waste, 2.34% animal waste, 7.36% leaf, grass and straw, 1.07% wood and 28.7% dust, dirt, ash, bricks and stones waste.

Major portion of solid waste in city areas was organic waste mostly consisting of kitchen waste, food and fruit remains, spoiled and fermented food, leaves and garden waste. The second major part of the waste was paper waste including cardboard, packing material, newspapers, magazines, empty

cigarette-cases and match boxes whereas construction and demolition waste was about 28.7%.

"We need to segregate waste items at its source, separating hazardous waste from organic and recyclable waste that would simplify recycling and reduce the burden on landfill sites," suggested Rana Khushi Muhammad, a retired municipality officer.

"The government can incentivize participation by providing color-coded waste bins and community education programs," he added. "Efficient recycling infrastructure could ensure reuse of plastic, glass and metal material and help reduce the need for raw material extraction."

Ambassador Harerimana says: Rwanda, Pak have huge trade potential; health sector needs to promote bilateral cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Rwanda to Pakistan, Ms Fatou Harerimana on Sunday said that bilateral cooperation between Rwanda and Pakistan in the health sector and public health is inevitable and there is potential on both sides in this sector.

There is a need to further increase the bilateral economic and trade relations between Pakistan and Rwanda, for which the role of the private sector from both sides is very important, the Ambassador said and added that Pakistan and Rwanda enjoy friendly relations underpinned by mutual respect, growing economic ties and cooperation at multilateral fora.

Rwanda and Pakistan,

with a longstanding relationship spanning sixty-two years, actively collaborate in various fields, including trade, health, and investment, she remarked.

She said that Rwanda's real GDP of Rwanda grew by 9.7% in the first quarter of 2024, exceeding the previous year's growth rate of 8.2% and the country has shown remarkable resilience, driven by strong consumer spending in key sectors such as services and industry.

The ambassador said that despite ongoing challenges, Rwanda's labor market experienced a strong recovery, with over half a million new jobs created in the fourth quarter of 2023, marking

the most significant reduction in unemployment since the COVID pandemic.

"The labor market expansion in Rwanda was broad-based, with women benefiting slightly more than men and to leverage its youth demographic, Rwanda needs to expand labor force participation, as only 2.8 million out of 8.1 million working age individuals are employed full time.

She said that Rwanda aspires to become a Middle-Income Country by 2035 and a High-Income Country by 2050.

It plans to achieve this through the implementation of the second National Strategies for Transformation (NST-2).



LAHORE: Petrol Pump on Ravi Road closed due to ongoing protest.

Babood highlights Oman's growing relations with Pak & future trade prospects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of COMEX, Amar A. Babood during his recent visit to Pakistan, underscored the importance of strengthening the economic and cultural ties between Oman and Pakistan.

In an interview with APP, Babood emphasized the shared history, culture, and potential that bind the two nations and also focused on expanding trade, business interactions, and collaborative initiatives.

"This is my first visit to Pakistan, and I've had the opportunity to visit both Karachi and Islamabad," said Babood. "We are close neighbors, with just an hour's distance

from Karachi, and we share a deep connection in history, society, and culture. We have been following Pakistan's developments closely, and now, we are looking to deepen our business and diplomatic relations."

COMEX, one of Oman's leading organizations in the ICT sector, has long been eyeing Pakistan for its untapped market potential. The two countries, despite having a robust cultural connection, have seen relatively low trade volumes, which Babood believes is an area ripe for growth. "Oman and Pakistan have a lot to offer each other," he added. "There is great potential, particularly in sectors like

ICT, where Pakistan has impressive expertise. Oman's Vision 2040 underscores the importance of working closely with global partners to unlock these opportunities, and we are eager to explore ways we can collaborate with Pakistan."

Oman is already working closely with the Pakistani Embassy in Muscat to facilitate business-to-business interactions, with a focus on expanding trade in key areas such as ICT, agriculture, and tourism. Babood also highlighted the ongoing GCC-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement negotiations, which are expected to create new avenues for bilateral trade and investment.



LAHORE: People selecting and purchasing old warm clothes at Empress Road.

China to upgrade 5G to 5G-A network

BEIJING (APP): China has unveiled draft guidelines for country's data infrastructure construction, including upgrading its 5G network to 5G-A standard and promoting 6G-related research, development and innovation.

China will balance the deployment of international communication gateways across its eastern, central and western regions, and expand international submarine and land cable information channels.

A satellite internet that integrates space and ground facilities will also be established, according to the document released by the National Data Bureau.

The guidelines, which were released to solicit opinions, say that China will facilitate large-scale, low-cost, secure free flow of data, and encourage industries and regions to actively explore new technological infrastructure in such areas as blockchain and privacy-preserving computing, with the aim of providing a low-

cost, efficient, reliable data delivery environment for both centralized and decentralized transactions, CGTN reported.

China will also pursue a proper computing resources layout, and accelerate the green development and coordination of general-purpose computing power, intelligent computing power and supercomputing power, according to the guidelines.

The country plans to strengthen the innovative application of emerging network technologies, optimize network billing methods, and reduce the cost of data transmission between its eastern and western regions.

The 5G-A network surpasses the current 5G network in terms of speed, latency, connection scale and energy consumption, achieving a peak data rate level of 10 gigabits per second for downloads and 1 gigabit per second for uploads, as well as millisecond-level latency and low-cost connectivity for the Internet of Things.

Modern furniture designs stressed to capture global markets

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq has stressed the urgent need for adopting innovative and modern designs in furniture manufacturing to attract the international markets in line with their growing demands. Chairing a board of directors meeting here on Sunday, he said by adopting innovative approaches, Pakistan could position itself as a leading exporter of high-quality, stylish furniture, competing effectively in global markets and contributing significantly to the national economy.

He pointed out that Pakistan has a rich heritage of craftsmanship, but its traditional reliance on outdated designs and manual production processes confines its potential on the global.

the global furniture market is rapidly evolving, driven by changing new preferences and technological advancements. To remain relevant and expand market share, Pakistani furniture manufacturers must focus on incorporating contemporary designs, improving quality, and leveraging advanced manufacturing techniques, he added.



MULTAN: Vendors displaying shoes and jackets to attract the customers at LMQ Road.

Gold price surges to Rs286,350 per tola

LAHORE (APP): Gold rates in Pakistan saw another big jump on Sunday as the price of 24-karat gold was recorded Rs286,350 per tola.

According to local Sarafa Market Association sources, the bullion market registered the price of 24-karat gold at Rs 245,500 per 10g. It is pertinent to mention that the price of gold in Pakistan fluctuates several times per the international market, so the cost is never fixed. Local gold markets and Sarafa markets of various cities provide the above rates.

This ongoing rise in gold prices marks a week of steady increases. On Monday, November 18, one tola of gold had risen by 2,500 rupees, reaching 269,900 rupees. Till Saturday, the price has climbed further, marking a total increase of 12,800 rupees in just six days.

IESCO catches 228 power pilferers in Nov

ISLAMABAD (APP): The surveillance teams of Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) caught 228 power pilferers using direct electricity supply besides 15 with tampered meters during November.

Sharing the details, IESCO Chief Executive Officer Muhammad Naeem Jan told that over 71,000 meters were inspected during the said period in all six regions of the company. Some 243 electricity thieves were fined over Rs 20.8 million, he added. He said 138 FIRs have also been registered while 28 power thieves were also arrested by the police. He said all formations under IESCO are conducting continuous and impartial operations against electricity thieves across all operational circles.

Economic stability depends on peace, harmony: Minister

SARGODHA (APP): Provincial Minister for Zakat and Ushr and District General Secretary Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Rana Munawar Ghous has said Pakistan cannot afford political unrest at this time and peace is essential to attract investment into the country. He shared these views while addressing the PML-N workers at Chak No. 120-SB on Sunday.

The event was attended by various notables including PML-N Sillanwali Tehsil Youth Coordinator Rana Kaleem, Social Media In-charge Rana Tehseen and

others. The minister alleged that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was doing politics of hatred in the country. He said the Punjab government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, was launching public-friendly initiatives to make the province prosperous and developed.

Munawar Ghous said he had made clear to officers to make sure transparency in providing Zakat to deserving people. All-out efforts would be made to make PP-78 a developed constituency, he added.

Various food points penalised over law violations

MULTAN (APP): The food safety teams took action against non-standard food production and delivery units and imposed heavy fine over hygiene rules violations.

According to details, a water plant on Jalalpur Road was closed till improvement due to water sample failure.

Similarly, Rs. 80,000 fine was imposed on Sweets and Bakers at Bilal Chowk, Sohan Halwa Unit at Chowk Fawara and Bakery at Chowk Khuni Burj for dirt in the production area, lack of food grade certificates for hacking.



LAHORE: Artisans at Mochi Dwarka in the provincial capital are making warm jackets to protect citizens from the cold in the mild winter weather.

Handmade carpet industry urgently needs govt support: PCMEA

LAHORE (INP): A delegation of Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) called on Chief Collector Customs Peshawar, Khawaja Khurram Naeem, and Collector Matin Alam to discuss issues related to the Torkham border.

Pattern-in-Chief Abdul Latif Malik, Vice Chairman Riaz Ahmed, and Senior Central Leader Usman Ashraf apprised the FBR officials of the problems faced in the import of partially manufactured carpet goods through the Torkham border and the resulting unusual delays in the dispatch of export orders to various countries, negatively impacting exports and foreign exchange earnings.

Chief Collector Khawaja Khurram Naeem assured the delegation that all possible steps would be taken to resolve the issues. The delegation also presented shields to the FBR officials on behalf of the association. The visiting delegation briefed Chairman PCMEA Mian

Atiqur Rehman and members of the Executive Body about the meeting.

Chairman Mian Atiqur Rehman and Vice Chairman Riaz Ahmed expressed concerns that while the government aims to increase exports to \$100 billion, it is not taking sufficient interest in removing unnecessary obstacles hindering the growth of exports.

They emphasized that the handmade carpet industry urgently needs government support and patronage, but it is being completely ignored. They urged the government to restore the zero-rated regime for the industry and provide subsidies on freight to enable Pakistani carpets to compete with traditional rival countries in global markets.

The chairman and vice chairman also highlighted the challenges faced by the industry due to issues at the Torkham border. They explained that the import of partially manufactured raw materials from Afghanistan is experiencing month-long delays.

Iftikhar Malik says: Trade linked to preventing attacks on Pak from Afghan soil

LAHORE (APP): SAARC Chambers of Commerce and Industry's former president, Iftikhar Ali Malik, said on Sunday that Kabul's decisive action for prevention of Afghan territory use by terrorists for attacks on Pakistan could unlock immense opportunities for bilateral trade and economic growth in both neighbouring Muslim countries.

In a statement issued here, he said the region holds tremendous potential for trade, energy projects and connectivity initiatives like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Trans-Afghanistan Pipeline. He said such mega ventures require stability and cooperation, making it imperative for both states to prioritise trust and dialogue bringing an end to perpetual menace of terrorism. He said Afghanistan, as a sovereign state, must take immediate and effective measures to ensure its territory was not exploited by hostile elements aiming to destabilise Pakistan.

Malaysians show interest in importing Pakistani food

LAHORE (APP): Malaysians have expressed strong interest in importing high-quality Pakistani food and snacks to meet the rising demand.

A delegation of Pakistani food exporters, led by Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Saifur Rehman, is currently on a two-week tour of Malaysia to explore untapped export markets.

According to a report received from Kuala Lumpur, here on Sunday,

the growing interest is driven by the increasing popularity of Pakistani snacks and food products, which are known for their rich blend of flavors, spices, and traditional recipes. Pakistani basmati rice, spices, confectionery, processed food, and various types of internationally recognized namko have particularly

gained traction in the Malaysian market.

Saifur Rehman said that with Malaysia's diverse multicultural population, there is a significant demand for Halal-certified products. Pakistan, with its strong Halal compliance standards, is well-positioned to meet this demand, creating more opportunities for Pakistani exporters to penetrate the Malaysian market.

Trade collaborations between the two Muslim countries have further facilitated smoother import processes, he added. Exhibitions, food fairs, and promotional campaigns have played a key role in showcasing the quality and variety of Pakistani food products, strengthening bilateral ties and boosting trade between the two nations.



KARACHI: A mechanic busy in repairing sewing machine at his workplace in the Provincial Capital.

SBP asked to give collateral-free loans to woman entrepreneurs

FAISALABAD (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) should provide long-term loans without collateral at 3pc to women entrepreneurs in order to ensure their active participation in the national economy.

This was demanded by Imran Mehmood Sheikh, Central Chairman All Pakistan Bedsheet and Upholstery Manufacturers Association (APBUMA).

Addressing an awareness session, organised by the SBP in connection with World Women Entrepreneurship Day, he said that the ultimate objectives of such events are to encourage women to become active participants of the national building process instead of becoming a burden on society. He particularly underlined the role of Small & Medium Entrepreneurs (SMEs) and said that APBUMA is one of the largest representative bodies of the SMEs with 600 members out of which

350 belong to Faisalabad alone.

He said that high markup has become a threat to the existence of small and medium entrepreneurs as most of the businessmen have limited financial resources.

"High markup coupled with inflation has eroded their financial viability", he said, adding that the SBP has successfully motivated the women entrepreneurs by offering them loans at subsidized rates but these are insufficient and SBP should revisit its existing policies particularly about the women entrepreneurs belonging to the SME sector.

He said that the government should dispel apprehensions of the exporters and formulate policies according to the ground realities.

He also stressed the need to enhance efficiency of commercial banks so that they could actively support the exporters.

FCCI panel suggests tough action on tax evasion

LAHORE (APP): Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) Standing Committee on Food Regional Chairman Shahid Imran has said that tax evasion undermines Pakistan's financial stability and unfairly burdens honest taxpayers.

Speaking to a delegation of traders, led by former FPCCI vice president Chaudhry Zahid Iqbal from Vehari, here on Sunday, he called for stringent government measures to recover outstanding dues from evaders, ensuring equity and accountability in the tax system.

Shahid Imran stressed that targeting tax evaders would not only boost

revenue but also demonstrate the government's commitment to justice and good governance. He proposed naming and penalizing high-profile offenders to deter others and urged the government to remain firm against resistance or lobbying from influential groups. Deputy delegation leader Mian Muhammad Azhar Shaukat noted that such measures would reduce the strain on compliant taxpayers, decrease reliance on excessive borrowing, and contribute to long-term fiscal stability. He emphasized that a fair tax system is crucial for economic growth and urged decisive government action to combat tax evasion.

Balanced use of fertilizers stressed to enhance wheat yield

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Agriculture Department has advised wheat growers to use balanced and proportional fertilizers to enhance crop yield. A spokesman for the department said on Sunday that application of phosphorus and potash fertilizers at the time of sowing, preferably through drilling had proven to be highly beneficial.

Farmers should apply fertilizers according to soil fertility to maximize productivity, he added. He further said that wheat farmers must conduct soil analysis to determine the optimal fertilizer proportions. It was

advisable to apply the full amount of phosphorus and potash fertilizers along with the first installment of nitrogen fertilizer at the time of sowing, he said and added that Nitrogen fertilizer should then be applied in two or three equal installments in sandy areas. He said that if phosphorus or potash fertilizers had not been applied at sowing then they should be added with the first irrigation. The spokesman said for late sowing full amount of fertilizer should be applied during sowing and in rain-fed areas, the entire quantity should be used at sowing time.

Israel attacks central Beirut; 120 more killed in Gaza

Monitoring Desk
BEIRUT: A powerful airstrike killed 15 people in central Beirut and 13 others were killed in attacks north-east of the Lebanese capital, while around 120 Palestinians were killed as Israel continued to press its offensive in Gaza and Lebanon. Eight of the victims, four of them children, were killed in a strike on the Lebanese village of Chimstar and five people died in an attack on the village of Bodai, the ministry said. Both villages are in the Baalbek district. In Beirut, an eight-storey building was struck with four missiles, including bunker penetrating types designed to hit underground targets, said a Lebanese security source. At the site of the Israeli strike in central Beirut, Amin Chirri, a member of parliament, said there had been no Hezbollah leader in the building that was struck. The Israeli military made no immedi-

ate comment. Saturday's blasts shook the Lebanese capital at around 4am and left a deep crater. Beirut smelled strongly of explosives for hours afterwards. Rescuers searched through rubble, in an area of the city known for its antique shops. It was the fourth Israeli airstrike this week targeting a central area of Beirut, in contrast to the bulk of Israel's attacks on the capital region. "There was dust and wrecked houses, people running and screaming, they were running, my wife is in hospital, my daughter is in hospital," said Nemir Zakariya, who held up a picture of his daughter after the strike. "This is the little one, and my son also got hurt — this is my daughter, she is in the American University (of Beirut Medical Centre), this is what happened." Separately, at least

five people were killed and two wounded in an Israeli strike on Roum village in southern Lebanon on Saturday. Israeli strikes killed at least 62 people and injured 111 in Lebanon on Thursday, bringing the toll in 13 months to 3,645 dead and 15,355 injured, Lebanon's health ministry said. The figures do not distinguish between combatants and civilians. The Lebanese government has accused Israel of indiscriminate bombing that kills civilians. Israel denies the allegation and says it takes numerous steps to avoid the deaths of civilians and it accuses Hezbollah of using human shields. On the other hand, Israeli military strikes across the Gaza Strip have killed at least 120 Palestinians over the last 48 hours and hit a hospital on the northern edge of the enclave, wounding medical staff and damaging equipment, Palestinian medics said on Saturday. The Israeli military made no immedi-



Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli strike on a mosque at Nuseirat refugee camp, in central Gaza Strip.

Nato chief discusses 'global security' with Trump

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: Nato chief Mark Rutte held talks with US president-elect Donald Trump in Florida on the "global security issues facing the alliance", a spokeswoman said on Saturday. "They discussed the range of global security issues facing the Alliance," spokesperson, Farah Dakhallah, said in a brief statement. The meeting took place on Friday in Palm Beach, spokeswoman said. In his first term Trump aggressively pushed Europe to step up defence spending and questioned the fairness of the Nato transatlantic alliance. The former Dutch prime minis-

Afghan women turn to entrepreneurship under Taliban

Monitoring Desk
KABUL: When Zainab Ferozi saw Afghan women struggling to feed their families after Taliban authorities took power, she took matters into her own hands and poured her savings into starting a business. Two-and-a-half years after putting 20,000 Afghani (\$300) earned from teaching sewing classes into a carpet weaving enterprise, she now employs around a dozen women who lost their jobs or who had to abandon their education due to Taliban government rules. Through her business in the western province of Herat, the 39-year-old also "covers all the household expenses" of her family of six, she told AFP from her office where samples of brightly coloured and exquisitely woven rugs and bags are displayed. Her husband, a labourer, cannot find work in one of the poorest countries in the world. Ferozi is one of many women who have launched small businesses in the past three years to meet their own needs and support other Afghan women, whose employment sharply declined after the Taliban took power in 2021. Before the Taliban takeover, women made up 26 percent of public sector workers, a figure that "has effectively decreased to zero", according to UN Women.

Russia supplied air defense missiles to North Korea in return for its troops, South Korea says

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: Russia has supplied air defense missile systems to North Korea in exchange for sending its troops to support Russia's war efforts against Ukraine, a top South Korean official said Friday. The U.S., South Korea and Ukraine say North Korea sent more than 10,000 troops to Russia in October, some of whom have recently begun engaging in combat on the front lines. North Korea's troop deployment threatens to

escalate the war, and what Russia could give to the North in return has been a source of rampant international speculation. The most alarming development for South Korea and the U.S. would be Russia transferring sophisticated weapons technology that can enhance North Korea's nuclear-capable missiles targeting its rivals. Many experts say, though, that it is unlikely Russia would do this in the initial stage of the North's troop deployment.



US president-elect Donald Trump shakes hands with Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte in Palm Beach, Florida.

Philippines VP says she has told an assassin to kill Marcos 'if I get killed'

Monitoring Desk
MANILA: Philippine security agencies stepped up safety protocols on Saturday after Vice President Sara Duterte said she would have President Ferdinand Marcos Jr assassinated if she herself were killed. In a dramatic sign of a widening rift between the two most powerful political families in the Southeast Asian nation, Duterte told an early morning press conference that she had spoken to an assassin and instructed him to kill Marcos, his wife, and the speaker of the Philippine House, if she were to be killed. "I have talked to a person. I said, if I get killed, go kill BBM (Marcos), (first lady) Liza Araneta, and (Speaker) Martin

Romualdez. No joke. No joke," Duterte said in the profanity-laden briefing. "I said, do not stop until you kill them, and then he said yes." She was responding to an online commenter urging her to stay safe, saying she was in enemy territory as she was at the lower chamber of Congress overnight with her chief of staff. Duterte did not cite any alleged threat against herself. The Presidential Security Command said it had heightened and strengthened security protocols. "We are also closely coordinating with law enforcement agencies to detect, deter and defend against any and all threats to the president and the first family," it said in a statement.

India mosque survey sparks clashes, leaving two dead

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: Indian Muslim protesters clashed with police on Sunday with at least two people killed in riots sparked by a survey investigating if a 17th-century mosque was built on a Hindu temple. "Two persons were confirmed dead," Pawan Kumar, a police officer in Sambhal in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, told AFP, adding that 16 police officers were "seriously injured" during the clashes. The Press Trust of India news agency quoted officials saying three people had died. Right-wing Hindu groups tend to lay claim to several mosques they allege were built over Hindu temples during the Muslim Mughal empire centuries ago.



SANAA: People attend a rally in the Yemeni capital in solidarity with Palestine and Lebanon, as Israeli forces continued to press their offensive on both sides, fuelling fears among Palestinians that the Israeli goal is to permanently depopulate a part of Gaza Strip.

Iran to hold nuclear talks with three European powers in Geneva on Friday, Kyodo reports

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Iran plans to hold talks about its disputed nuclear programme with three European powers on Nov. 29 in Geneva, Japan's Kyodo news agency reported on Sunday, days after the UN atomic watchdog passed a resolution against Tehran. Iran reacted to the resolution, which was proposed by Britain, France, Germany and the United States, with what government officials called various measures such as activating numerous new and

advanced centrifuges, machines that enrich uranium. Kyodo said Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's government was seeking a solution to the nuclear impasse ahead of the inauguration in January of US President-elect Donald Trump. A senior Iranian official confirmed that the meeting would go ahead next Friday, adding that "Tehran has always believed that the nuclear issue should be resolved through diplomacy."

Iran protests 'violent' arrest of students in Russia

Monitoring Desk
TEHRAN: Iran has lodged a protest with Moscow regarding what it described as the "violent" arrest of Iranian students at a university in the Russian city of Kazan, state media reported on Saturday. Two Iranian students who visited a visa extension centre at Kazan Federal University on Friday were arrested after being subjected to "inhumane and unprofessional beating" by the police, according to the IRNA state news agency, which cited a statement from Iran's consulate in the city. In response Iran submitted "a protest note" to the Russian Foreign Ministry condemning the "violent treatment of the Iranian students by the police", IRNA said. Iran, a close ally of Russia, has requested "explanations" for the incident. The two students were released late on Friday following interventions by the consulate. The press service of the Kazan police said via Telegram on Friday that a conflict among students had turned physical, and that officers had "detained the instigators" of the fight. The statement did not give the nationality of those arrested. The regional Investigative Committee in Kazan also reported on Friday that two foreign nationals were arrested for allegedly "using violence against a representative of the authority".

Thousands protest in Valencia over lack of schools after deadly floods

Monitoring Desk
VALENCIA: Families and teachers protested in Valencia to demand action over schools damaged by the deadly floods that killed over 220 people in eastern Spain and affected thousands of children's education. Holding posters demanding the resignation of Valencian leader Carlos Mazon, protesters marched through the Spanish city almost a month after the country's worst natural disaster in decades on Oct 29. Controversy over the regional government's handling of the floods still rages, and a teachers' union

accused it of leaving the clean-up to teachers and pupils. Five people remain missing in the Valencia region after torrential rains and flooding drowned people in cars and underground car parks, and collapsed homes. Thirty schools were still closed, the regional teachers' union STEPV said, leaving 13,000 children with nowhere to learn. About 5,000 people attended the demonstration, the Spanish government said. "We feel abandoned because, teachers, parents and volunteers have had to clean up the schools."

EU cannot pick and choose as ICC warrants are binding, says Borrell

Monitoring Desk
NICOSIA: European Union governments cannot pick and choose whether to execute arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court against two Israeli leaders and a Hamas commander, the EU's foreign policy chief said on Saturday. The ICC issued the warrants on Thursday against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his former defence minister Yoav Gallant and Hamas leader Ibrahim Al Masri, for alleged crimes against humanity. All EU member states are signatories to the ICC's founding treaty, called the Rome Statute. Several EU states have said they will meet their commitments under the statute if needed, but Hungarian Prime Minister

Viktor Orban has invited Netanyahu to visit his country, assuring him he would face no risks if he did so. "The states that signed the Rome convention are obliged to implement the decision of the court. It's not optional," Josep Borrell, the EU's top diplomat, said during a visit to Cyprus for a workshop of Israeli and Palestinian peace activists. Those same obligations were also binding on countries aspiring to join the EU, he said. "It would be very funny that the newcomers have an obligation that current members don't fulfill," he said. The United States rejected the ICC's decision and Israel said the ICC move was antisemitic.

Romanians vote in presidential election focused on high living costs, Ukraine war

Monitoring Desk
BUCHAREST: Romanians started voting on Sunday in the first round of a presidential election that may give hard-right politician George Simion a chance of winning, with voters focused on high living costs and the country's support for Ukraine. Opinion surveys show leftist Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu, 56, leader of Romania's largest party, the Social Democrats, will make it into the runoff vote on Dec 8, with Simion, 38, of the Alliance for Uniting Romanians the likely runner-up. About 3.7 million Romanians, or 20.7% of registered voters in the European Union and NATO state, had cast their ballots across the country by 1045 GMT, data showed. Voting ends at 1900 GMT with exit polls to follow immediately. Voting by Romanians abroad, who can influence the result and where the hard right leader is popular, began on Friday. Analysts expect

Ciolacu to win the second round against Simion, appealing to moderates and touting his experience running Romania during a war next door. But the prospect of a Ciolacu-Simion runoff vote could mobilise centre-right voters in favour of Elena Lasconi, leader of opposition Save Romania Union, ranked third in opinion surveys, analysts said. Simion has cast the election as a choice between an entrenched political class beholden to foreign interests in Brussels and himself, an outsider who will defend Romania's economy and sovereignty. He opposes military aid to Ukraine and supports a peace plan as envisioned by US President-elect Donald Trump, whom he admires, and would support a government that emulates that of Italy's Giorgia Meloni. "We want peace, the war must end so we stop being afraid," 76-year-old Valentin Ion said after voting in Bucharest.

Russia says US using Taiwan to stir crisis in Asia

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: The United States is using Taiwan to provoke a serious crisis in Asia, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko told TASS news agency in remarks published on Sunday, reiterating Moscow's backing of China's stance on Taiwan. "We see that Washington, in violation of the 'one China' principle that it recognises, is strengthening military-political contacts with Taipei under the slogan of maintaining the 'status quo', and increasing arms supplies," Rudenko told the state news agency. "The goal of such obvious US interference in the region's affairs is to provoke the PRC (People's Republic of China) and generate a crisis in Asia to suit its own selfish interests."

The report did not cite any specific contacts that Rudenko was referring to. China views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory, a claim that Taiwan's government rejects. The US is Taiwan's most important international backer and arms supplier, despite the lack of formal diplomatic recognition. The US State Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Rudenko's remarks outside office hours. In September, President Joe Biden approved \$567 million in military support for Taiwan. Russia responded that it was standing alongside China on Asian issues, including criticism of the US drive to extend its influence and "deliberate attempts" to inflame the situation around Taiwan.

Developing nations blast \$300 billion COP29 climate deal as insufficient

Monitoring Desk
BAKU: Countries at the COP29 summit in Baku adopted a \$300 billion a year global finance target on Sunday to help poorer nations cope with impacts of climate change, a deal its intended recipients criticised as woefully insufficient. The agreement, clinched in overtime at the two-week conference in Azerbaijan's capital, was meant to provide momentum for international efforts to curb global warming in a year destined to be the hottest on record. Some delegates gave the deal a standing ovation in the COP29 plenary hall. Others lambasted wealthy nations for not doing more and criticised the Azerbaijan host for hurriedly gaveling through the contentious plan. "I regret to say that this document is nothing more than an optical illusion," Indian delegation representative Chandni Raina told the closing session of the summit, minutes after the deal was gavelled in. "This, in our opinion, will not address the enormity of the challenge we all face.

Therefore, we oppose the adoption of this document." United Nations climate chief Simon Stiell acknowledged the difficult negotiations that led to the agreement but hailed the outcome as an insurance policy for humanity against global warming. "It has been a difficult journey, but we've delivered a deal," Stiell said. "This deal will keep the clean energy boom growing and protect billions of lives. "But like any insurance policy, it only works if the premiums are paid in full, and on time." The agreement would provide \$300 billion annually by 2035, boosting rich countries' previous commitment to provide \$100 billion per year in climate finance by 2020. That earlier goal was met two years late, in 2022, and expires in 2025. The deal also lays the groundwork for next year's climate summit, to be held in the Amazon rainforest of Brazil, where countries are meant to map out the next decade of climate action.

Mass rape trial sparks demonstrations across France

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: Thousands demonstrated in major French cities on Saturday against violence targeting women, as campaigners push for the country to learn from a mass rape trial that has shocked the public. Prosecutors will in the coming week ask the court in the southern city Avignon to sentence 51 men, one who drugged his wife over the course of a decade and several of others who accepted his invitations to abuse her at their home. Out on the street, "the more of us there are, the more visible we are, this is everyone's business, not just women," said Peggy Plou, a local elected official from the Indre-et-

Loire region in western France who had made the trip to Paris. Thousands of people marched in the capital alone, mostly women but including some children and men. And there were hundreds-strong demonstrations in other major cities including Marseille in the south, Lille in the north-east and Rennes in the northwest. Many demonstrators carried signs with variations on the slogan "shame must switch sides", popularised by the plaintiff in the Avignon trial, Gisele Pelicot. She has been celebrated for accepting public hearings in her case rather than a trial behind closed doors, despite their painful content.



Leader of the radical right Alliance for Uniting Romanians (AUR) George Simion stands with his wife Ilinca at a polling station, during the first round of the presidential election in Bucharest, Romania.

President reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to women's rights, end to violence

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has reaffirmed on the 'International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women', that they were united in solidarity with women and girls across the world who endured violence in many forms.

"This day serves as a reminder to intensify our efforts to end violence against women and girls," he said in a message on the observance of International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25. On this day, he reaffirmed commitment to protect the rights of women, provide them with a safe and enabling environment, and reduce gender-based violence.

"We need to empower women by providing them education, focusing on their skill-building and ensuring their financial independence. It is also essential to raise awareness about women's rights and eliminate violence against them," he stressed.

The president said that violence against women was a pervasive human rights issue that affected nearly one in three women globally. The urgency for immediate and collective action could be gauged from the fact that thousands of women lost their lives annually in acts of violence, he observed. "This year's theme 'Every 10 Minutes, a Woman is Killed. #NoExcuse. UNITE to End Violence against Women' calls upon us to increase investments in prevention strategies, survivor support, and systemic reforms to address this grave violation of human rights", President House Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the president as saying.

The president said Pakistan stood committed to this cause, aligning its national efforts with this global call to action.

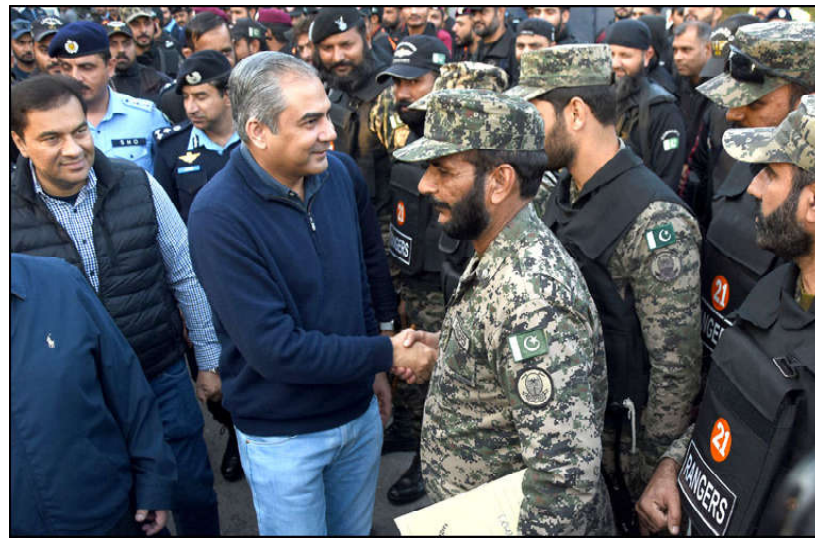
Former Prime Minister Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto championed the rights of women, he said, adding in her address at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, she called for economic independence, social equality, and education of women.

"She firmly believed in creating a society free from exploitation and maltreatment of women where they could rise to the highest level in politics, business, diplomacy, and other spheres of life," he further added.

The president expressed his satisfaction that in Pakistan, they were making meaningful efforts to end violence against women.

Addressing a press conference here at Model Town, he said that only courts were empowered to release the PTI founder, and "we will never let Pakistan be damaged for the ego of a single person". He said the PTI founder could not be released through an executive order, and he should prove his innocence in the court. He said the PTI founder was in jail not to fulfill legal requirements but on the charges of theft, fraud and sedition.

During the PTI regime,



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi shake hands with Paramilitary soldiers before a press conference at the D-Chowk in the Federal Capital ahead of PTI protest in the Federal Capital.

PTI wants to sabotage national development again: Ahsan Iqbal

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal said on Sunday that the PTI wanted to sabotage the journey of national development once again.

Addressing a press conference here at Model Town, he said that only courts were empowered to release the PTI founder, and "we will never let Pakistan be damaged for the ego of a single person". He said the PTI founder could not be released through an executive order, and he should prove his innocence in the court. He said the PTI founder was in jail not to fulfill legal requirements but on the charges of theft, fraud and sedition.

During the PTI regime,

he said, the PML-N leadership got justice from the courts and did not appeal to the government for their release from jails.

Ahsan Iqbal said that there was irrefutable evidence against the PTI founder in the cases of Tocha Khana and Al-Qadir Trust, and his legal team was using delaying tactics in his cases. Bushra Bibi is not appearing in the court despite taking bail, as she fears that she would not be able to avoid punishment by participating in the court process, he added.

The federal minister said that Pakistan was moving on the way to development, and the stock market was showing bullish trends. He said maintaining law and order was a

responsibility of the government. Necessary measures were inevitable to thwart ambitions of the "anarchist" group, he said and offered apology for the inconvenience caused to citizens due to road closures.

The PTI acted like a terrorist organisation on May 9, and no good could be expected from it now, the minister said adding that those who invited external powers to intervene in Pakistan could not be well-wishers of the country. Ahsan said those calling for protests and sit-ins again and again had been rejected by people, as their real faces had been exposed now. He said the PTI wanted to spread chaos in the country through sit-ins.

Peace to be ensured in Islamabad at all costs: Defence Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Defence Minister Khawaja Asif warned the PTI on Sunday that any violent protests would be met with a firm response.

He emphasised that the state will not permit any illegal mob to attack Islamabad, noting the party's history of organizing demonstrations that have often escalated into violence.

"The government will take a tough stance on individuals who disrupt law and order in Islamabad", the minister warned in a recent private news channel interview. Islamabad has been placed on high alert, with the government warning of zero tolerance for violent mobs, he added.

Khawaja Asif has emphasised that peace will be ensured in the capital city at all costs. He accused the PTI of habitually using innocent people to attack state institutions, adding

that the state will not be blackmailed by the PTI's protests, which have a history of turning violent.

He said that the government will take firm action against any illegal activities and will not allow the party to use innocent people to attack state institutions.

The Defence Minister expressed disappointment that the PTI tends to protest whenever a country announces to visit Pakistan, adding that Ali Amin Khan Gandapur, should focus on improving the law and order situation in the province.

"Both government and military leadership are jointly move the country forward. We will not permit any violent mob to attack Islamabad under any circumstances," Defence Minister Khawaja Asif stated.

He emphasised the government's firm stance on maintaining law and order.



SUI: Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti offering Fataha after condoling with relatives of Shaheed Sadrudin. Provincial Ministers and tribal elites are also present.

Bilawal for collective efforts to end all form of violence against women

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has underscored the importance of collective efforts to end all forms of violence against women.

In a message on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, he emphasized the need to empower women and safeguard their safety, dignity, and rights.

Reaffirming the PPP's dedication to gender equality and women's empowerment, he called for a society free from fear, discrimination, and violence. He expressed grave concern over the widespread prevalence of gender-based violence, urging immediate action to address its causes through comprehensive legislative, social, and cultural reforms.

"Violence against women is a gross violation of human rights and a major impediment to achieving a just and equitable society. We must commit ourselves to eliminating it from all aspects of life, be it at home, in the workplace, or public spaces," he said.

Highlighting the

PPP's pioneering role in advancing women's rights in Pakistan, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said, "The PPP has a proud history of empowering women by electing them as Prime Minister, Speaker, and Ministers, besides appointing judges and other key posts for the first time in the history of Pakistan."

He credited Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto with laying the foundation for gender equality through the 1973 Constitution, which ensures protection against gender-based discrimination and promotes women's participation in all walks of life. "Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto opened new avenues for women by focusing on their education, empowerment, and protection," he added. He paid tribute to Shaheed Mohtama Benazir Bhutto as a global icon of women's empowerment. Bilawal Bhutto highlighted her transformative initiatives, including the establishment of women's police stations, the First Women Bank, and the Lady Health Workers Program, which created opportunities for women across Pakistan.

Train services b/w Lahore, Rawalpindi, Peshawar suspended amid PTI protest

LAHORE (INP): In response to the PTI protests, Pakistan Railways has suspended all train services between Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Peshawar.

Train services have been halted on the routes between Peshawar and Rawalpindi, Lahore and Rawalpindi, as well as Multan and Faisalabad to Rawalpindi.

Railway officials confirmed that all 25 train tickets for Sunday, November 24, have been canceled. Passengers who had booked tickets for the day will be refunded immediately.

To ensure security, a heavy police presence has been deployed at railway stations, and entry to stations has been completely shut down. Passengers will receive ticket refunds at temporary counters set up at the stations.

DPM/FM Dar terms PTI's calls for protest as conspiracy against country's prestige

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Mohamud Ishaq Dar on Sunday questioned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) repeated calls for strikes, terming them as a well-thought-out conspiracy against the country's prestige.

In a press statement, the DPM/FM expressed his regret over PTI's protest announced for November 24 in Islamabad.

He said that the party announced its protests at a time when important global personalities were on a visit to Pakistan, adding whether it was on 14th October on the occasion of the Chinese premier's visit or on 15-16 October when the heads of government of SCO arrived to participate in high-level event hosted by Pakistan.

DPM/FM Dar said, similarly, the Belarusian President was due on Monday on his official visit to Pakistan and prior to it, Belarusian ministers and business delegations were also arriving on Sunday.

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Fatal shooting in Balochistan claims 3 lives

QUETTA (APP): Three people, including two brothers of a groom who were going to Quetta for a wedding party, were ambushed and killed on Sunday by armed men in Balochistan. According to a private news channel, this sad incident has taken place near the Patri area of Gandawah, Tehsil of Jhal Magsi district. According to sources from Jhal Magsi Levies, armed men riding a motorcycle opened fire and killed the groom's two brothers, Fida Hussain, Zakir Hussain son of Mehrab Ali Lashari, and son-in-law Babul Khan.

Interior Minister conducts aerial visit of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday conducted an aerial visit of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Attock to review security arrangements in the three cities.

During his visit, Interior Minister took an aerial view of the security arrangements in various areas of the three cities. He also observed the overall situation on the Motorway, Swabi, and Pathar Gharh, expressing satisfaction with the security arrangements.

Mohsin Naqvi stated that necessary measures have been taken to ensure public peace and order in compliance with the

Islamabad High Court's order. He added that police, FC, and Rangers personnel are diligently performing their duties.

The Interior Minister emphasized that the government has taken all possible measures to protect the lives and property of citizens, and that strict action will be taken against miscreants in accordance with the law.

Interior Minister made it clear that no one will be allowed to disrupt the peace and order situation in the capital, and the administration, police, and law enforcement agencies are prepared to deal with any possible situation.

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Imran Khan is only making missed calls, says Tessori

LONDON (INP): Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori has stated that former prime minister Imran Khan was making "missed calls" and would not be able to reach anyone for the next five years.

In a conversation with a private TV channel in London, Tessori said that PTI members would eventually "go in circles and return to where they started," describing the current political situation as a "game of emotions and the last over."

He added that the situation will soon come to an end, and that frustration was evident in their statements.

Tessori also commented on the controversial statement by Bushra Bibi, noting that even her own party did not endorse it. He said if Imran Khan made such a statement to Bushra Bibi, he would have violated his oath.

He further explained that if any such matters did occur, Imran Khan had taken an oath as prime minister not to disclose state secrets.

Tessori emphasized that any attempts to link these issues would go against the country's sovereignty and integrity. Regarding Pakistan's economic stability, the Governor stated that the country was making efforts towards recovery, with support from friendly nations.

He warned that whatever actions PTI took, would not be welcomed by either the friendly countries or the Pakistani public.



LAHORE: Buses loaded with goods stationed at the lorry stand due to the closure of the Motorway, Ring Road, due to the PTI's Islamabad rally in the provincial capital.

Musadiq Malik says: People rejected PTI's politics of confrontation

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Petroleum Musadiq Malik on Sunday said people had rejected PTI's politics of agitation and confrontation, which is aimed at destabilizing the country and no any convoy was taken out from Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa CM and Bushra Bibi heading towards Islamabad but they would never succeed in their nefarious designs, he said while addressing a press conference here at PSO head office. Federal Petroleum minister said PTI was ruling in KP since last 11 years and during their rule in the province several major terrorist incidents were occurred. He cited APS tragedy, Police Lines incident and several other terrorist incidents claiming lives of innocent civilians as well as security forces Jawans.

Senator Musadiq said

in the past our security forces had initiated successful operations like Zarab-e-Azab and eliminated terrorist networks from our soil and terrorists had fled away but when PTI took over the reins of power in KP they brought all terrorist elements back to our soil.

He said terrorists were involved in killing of miners, innocent people in tribal areas of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and PTI is responsible of all these terrorist incidents.

Senator Musadiq Malik said PTI wanted to storm the capital and at that time when foreign leaders are coming to Pakistan. The aim of this agitative step is to bring bad name for Pakistan, Musadiq Malik said and warned no one would be allowed to harm Pakistan's stability.

Petroleum minister said Pakistan had overcome economic crisis and heading towards stability.

Sohailur Rehman posted as Secretary Culture, Tourism, Zohaib posted as DC Dera Bugti

QUETTA: The senior bureaucrat of Balochistan Civil Service (BCS), Sohailur Rehman, who was awaiting posting order, has been posted as the Secretary Culture, Tourism and Archives department, with immediate effect.

This was announced in an official notification issued here by the Services and General Administration Department (S&GAD) the other day.

According to the notification, another BCS officer, Zohaibul Haq, who was serving as Deputy Secretary in CM's secretariat, has been posted as Deputy Commissioner Dera Bugti.

Governor directs QESCO's CEO to ensure voltage power supply in Zhob

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has directed to the Chief Executive Officer of Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) to ensure electricity supply with full voltage to the consumers of Zhob Division.

He also directed to stop the unannounced load shedding of electricity in the Division just because the good consumers paying bills on regular basis have also become fed up of the situation.

He also directed to the high ups of WAPDA to improve their official timing and behave well with all the consumers.

The Governor was speaking to the CEO of QESCO during his meeting with him on Sunday.

The QESCO Chief on the occasion assured to Governor that another big transformer/ trolley would also be installed in order to increase the production of Zhob Grid Station.

The Governor stressed that the complains of electricity consumers should be addressed effectively just to maintain high standard of customer service.

He also directed to take special care of electricity supply during official timings in the government offices including the health and education departments.



QUETTA: Relatives of missing persons hold a rally of the release of their love ones at Adalat road.

Indian SC weighs Yasin Malik's trial amid security concerns

MIRPUR (AJK): (APP): In a significant legal development, the Supreme Court of India has reportedly emphasized the importance of a fair trial, drawing comparisons to the case of terrorist Ajmal Kasab, during the ongoing appeal by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) concerning veteran Kashmir freedom struggle leader Yasin Malik, says a report reaching here Sunday from across the line of control (LoC).

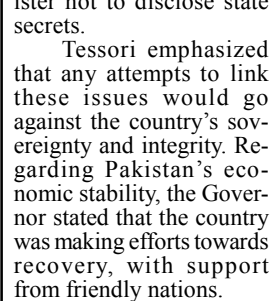
Malik, the report said, is embroiled in a fake case linked to the alleged killing of an Indian Air Force personnel.

As the CBI challenges a directive for Malik's physical appearance in a Jammu court, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta expressed serious security concerns, highlighting potential risks to both Malik and witnesses involved in the trial.

The bench, comprising Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice Augustine George Masih, is currently deliberating on the matter, the report said.

In a related statement, Raja Muzaffar, US-based acting Chairman of Yasin Malik faction of tge JKLF-Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front, on Sunday urged the Indian government to reconsider its stance on Malik, arguing that he should be viewed not as a terrorist, but rather as a figure akin to Gandhi or Nelson Mandela for the people of Kashmir, says a message reaching and released to the media here Sunday night.

The JKLF acting Chairman contends that acknowledging this perspective was essential for resolving the longstanding issues in the region, emphasizing the need for political will to foster change, he concluded.



QUETTA: Activists of Civil Society hold a protest against former prime minister Imran Khan's wife, Bushra Bibi, comments allegedly implicating Saudi Arabia in his government's ouster.



QUETTA: Chairperson Ejwaji Alliance Sana Durrani addressing a press conference at Quetta Press Club.

Sri Lanka High Commissioner donates eye corneas to AFIO

ISLAMABAD (APP): Sri Lanka's High Commissioner Admiral Ravindra C Wijegunaratne (Retd) Islamabad and the Sri Lanka Eye Donation Society, the ceremonial handover took place on November 20, at the Armed Forces Institute of Ophthalmology, Rawalpindi, it further said. Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Admiral Ravindra C Wijegunaratne (Retd), Brigadier Kaminda Silva, and representatives from the Sri Lanka Eye Donation Society presented the corneas to Lieutenant General Arshad Nasim HI(M), Surgeon General of the Armed Forces.

press release issued here Sunday. Organised by the Defence Wing of the Sri Lankan High Commission in Islamabad and the Sri Lanka Eye Donation Society, the ceremonial handover took place on November 20, at the Armed Forces Institute of Ophthalmology, Rawalpindi, it further said. Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Admiral Ravindra C Wijegunaratne (Retd), Brigadier Kaminda Silva, and representatives from the Sri Lanka Eye Donation Society presented the corneas to Lieutenant General Arshad Nasim HI(M), Surgeon General of the Armed Forces.