

# Independent

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## Four security personnel martyred during PTI protest Rangers begin arrests, regain control of D-Chowk after pushing back PTI protesters

Army deployed in Islamabad as PTI anti-govt campaign turns violent;  
Over 100 police officers injured, many critically, in ongoing unrest.

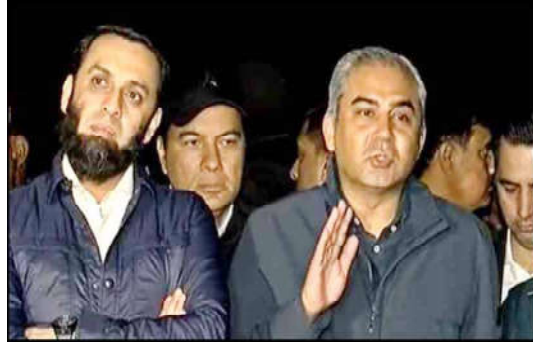
**Monitoring Desk**  
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Rangers have regained control of Islamabad's D-Chowk after beginning arrests and pushing back PTI protesters from the venue of the party's much-touted power show. A private TV channel report that PTI protesters began retreating from the site in the face of heavy teargas shelling and action by the authorities. Protesters earlier gathered at the site for the party's protest to demand PTI founder Imran Khan's release, among other things, amid reports of intense tear gas shelling by security forces to curtail the large crowds. The PTI convoys have been plying roads countrywide since Sunday, here were blackouts in many areas of Islamabad, including D-Chowk, Jinnah Avenue, G6, G8 and G9. Scores of people have also been injured, includ-

ing journalists who were attacked by demonstrators, as dozens of PTI supporters beat a videographer covering the protest for The Associated Press and took his camera. He sustained head injuries and was treated in a hospital. Earlier the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) convoy, led by Bushra Bibi, the wife of Imran Khan, is approaching Islamabad's Zero Point, which has been taken under the control of Pakistan Army soldiers.

APP adds: At least four personnel of Rangers embraced martyrdom while five others and police personnel sustained seriously injuries when miscreants rammed a vehicle into them at Srinagar Highway in the wee hours of Tuesday. According to security sources, four personnel of Rangers and two of police have been martyred so far in attacks on law enforcement agencies by PTI miscreants.

## Govt rejects any negotiations with PTI, accuses opposition of escalating tensions

Information minister warns against testing the state's patience, says Bushra Bibi seeking "blood and bodies"



ISLAMABAD (INP): The government has firmly rejected any possibility of negotiations with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protesters, escalating tensions following days of demonstrations in Islamabad. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Information Minister Atta

Tarar held a joint press conference on Tuesday, stating that the protesters, who had gathered at D-Chowk, had been pushed back and the area was cleared. The ministers stressed that no discussions would take place with the demonstrators. The interior minister maintained that no negotiations would be held with the protesters, asserting that "now that they have come and seen the situation, there is no possibility of talks."

The government has made a clear decision that there will be no negotiations with those on the sit-in. He detailed the actions taken by the government forces, stating that not only had the protesters been removed from D-Chowk, but they had been pushed back "two roundabouts away." Naqvi accused the PTI protesters of trying to provoke violence, claiming that their objective was to cause casualties, a situation the government worked hard to avoid.

PM hosts banquet in President Lukashenko's honour

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday hosted a banquet in the honour of President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko at the Prime Minister's House.

## Imran urges supporters to stand firm until demands are met

RAWALPINDI (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has lauded his party's supporters in Islamabad and D-Chowk, urging them to remain steadfast in their protests until their demands are met. In a statement shared via his official X account, Khan expressed his gratitude to the Pakistani nation and PTI activists for standing up for their rights and engaging in peaceful protests against what he described as a "mafia" that has taken control of the country.

Freedom in the face of the mafia imposed on this country," Khan wrote. The PTI founder stated that his message to his team was clear: "Fight until the last ball, and we will not back down until our demands are fulfilled." He reiterated the party's resolve to push forward with their protests, regardless of the opposition. Khan accused the authorities of violence against protesters, claiming that police and Rangers forces, under the direction of interim Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, fired upon PTI workers and used tear gas, resulting in injuries. He demanded accountability for the actions taken against the demonstrators.

## GoB grieved over martyrdom of Rangers' cops in attack of miscreants in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Balochistan has expressed grief and sorrow over martyrdom of the personnel of Rangers in attack made by the miscreants in Islamabad. In a statement issued here on Tuesday, the spokesman of provincial government, Shahid Rind expressed condolence with the bereaved families of martyr cops of Rangers. He said that persons of Rangers embraced martyrdom while performing their duties. He said that the incidents of torturing personnel of Rangers taking law in their hands by the armed groups are condemnable.

He said that the attack on federal capital by the armed groups in the name of a so-called party is matter of great concern. He said that there is nothing above than supremacy of law, and as such stern action is needed against the elements involved in the violence. The spokesman also said that the citizens of Islamabad are being made hostage under the garb of protest. He questioned that what protest is this to subject the state personnel to torture taking law in hand. He stressed to take action against the elements involved in the violence, according to the law and constitution.

Security Forces foil Khwarij attempts to enter Pakistan, kill 3 terrorists

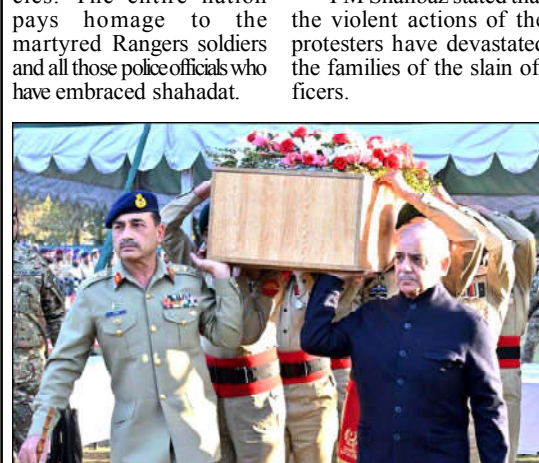
RAWALPINDI (APP): The Security Forces killed three Khwarij terrorists by thwarting their attempt to infiltrate through Pak-Afghan border on Monday night in general area of Hassan Khel, North Waziristan District. "Movement of a group of khwarij, who were trying to infiltrate through Pakistan-Afghanistan border, was picked up by the security forces in general area Hassan Khel, North Waziristan District. Own troops effectively engaged and thwarted their attempt to infiltrate. Resultantly, three Khwarij were sent to hell, according to a news release by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). Pakistan has consistently been asking the Interim Afghan Government to ensure effective border management on their side of the border. The interim Afghan Government is expected to fulfil its obligations and deny the use of Afghan soil by Khwarij for perpetuating acts of terrorism against Pakistan, it further said.

Security Forces of Pakistan are determined and remain committed to secure its borders and eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country.

'Miscreants want bloodshed, not revolution': PM Shehbaz  
Says Pakistan cannot afford any form of chaos or bloodshed; PM, COAS attend funeral prayers of Shaheed security personnel

ISLAMABAD (APP): Funeral prayers of three Rangers officials, who embraced Shahadat yesterday during the ongoing protest, were offered at Chaklala Garrison, on Tuesday. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Minister for Information Attullah Tarar, Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), senior serving military and civil officials attended the funeral, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. "Pakistan cannot afford any chaos and bloodshed for achieving vested political purposes. These acts of violence are unacceptable and highly condemnable which are bordering the limits of restraint by the Law Enforcement Agencies. The entire nation pays homage to the martyred Rangers soldiers and all those police officials who have embraced shahadat.

The PM further remarked that law enforcement agencies, tasked with maintaining peace and order, have been deliberately targeted by the disruptive group. He condemned the attack on security forces, particularly on the Rangers and police officers, noting that these personnel are essential in maintaining law and order in the city. PM Shahbaz stated that the violent actions of the protesters have devastated the families of the slain officers.



RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and COAS General Asim Munir attend the funeral procession of the martyred Rangers officials.

## Sadiq Umrani concerned about bringing exceptional amendments in IRSA Act by federal government

Independent Report

QUETTA: The senior Provincial Minister for Irrigation and member of Central Committee of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani has expressed concern over the efforts being made by the federal government for bringing extraordinary amendments in the IRSA Act.

He said that IRSA Act would not only be weakened with the efforts being made by federal government to bring exceptional amendments in the Act, but it would also be annulled. He said that the amendments in the IRSA Act would cause differences among the provinces besides mounting misunderstandings further. Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani said that the WAA was approved with mutual consent of the provinces in 1991, which is intact even today. He also mentioned that all the provinces are being provided water from the Indus Main Irrigation System 1815. He said that the share of Balochistan is very meager, and doesn't meet our requirements. He said that we fully endorse the stance of Sindh on the matter of IRSA, and we would not withdraw from it. He also mentioned that the Provincial Assembly has already adopted a resolution against amendments in the IRSA Act.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of Belarus H.E. Aleksandr Lukashenko exchanging joint communique.

## Pakistan, Belarus agree on early realization of bilateral accords in multiple sectors

Underscore significance of advancing political dialogue, expanding trade, economic cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Belarus on Tuesday agreed on the early realization of bilateral accords to enhance cooperation in trade, agriculture, food, defence and technology. The government forces, stating that not only had the protesters been removed from D-Chowk, but they had been pushed back "two roundabouts away." Naqvi accused the PTI protesters of trying to provoke violence, claiming that their objective was to cause casualties, a situation the government worked hard to avoid.

Trade, audit institutions, financial intelligence sharing, vocational education and science & technology. One of the key outcomes of the meeting was the signing of the "Roadmap for Comprehensive Bilateral Cooperation between Pakistan and Belarus for 2025-2027," which outlines a strategic framework for enhancing economic ties through high-level meetings, inter-governmental commissions, and targeted collaborative initiatives. Talking to the media, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif referred to the closeness between Pakistan and Belarus and said that in their "productive" bilateral meeting and the delegation-level talks, they discussed the cooperation in multiple sectors including commerce, tourism, defence, food and others. He lauded President Lukashenko's commitment to turning the bilateral understandings into practical agreements and actions.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti speaking to the participants of 14th National Workshop on Balochistan.

## Backwardness not basic reason behind insurgency in Balochistan: asserts CM

Mir Sarfaraz Bugti says any Punjabi, Sindhi, Siraiqi or any other didn't keep Balochistan backward, rather there's hand of own people in it; says steps being taken to bridge gulf between State and youth in province on priority basis

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Bugti has categorically stated that backwardness is not the basic reason behind insurgency in the province, and added that any Punjabi, Sindhi, Siraiqi or any other has kept the province backward, rather there's hand of the own people in it. He said that backwardness in the province is not because of the people coming from outside, rather it is because of own people. The Chief Minister also stressed the need to make the real concept of Balochistan compatible with facts. He also stressed that there's a need to correct the historical facts.

He said that it is just wrong to attribute the operation in limited area as operation in the whole province. He stressed the need to correct the historic facts. Referring the province, Chief Minister said that Balochistan is being pushed towards instability in three ways. While resentment is being spread by killing innocent people through violence, he mentioned adding that hatred is being spread against the State through baseless propaganda on social media. Moreover, social instability is being created through the negative social tricks, he added. He said that measures are being taken to bridge the gulf between State and youth in the province. The Chief Minister also mentioned that implementation has been started on first Youth Policy after its formulation. In addition to this, it has been decided to grant scholarships to the students of Balochistan for Ph.D from 200 prominent universities of the world. Similarly, the Provincial government would bear 16 years' educational expenditures of the topper students from each district.



MOSCOW: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq being welcomed at Moscow on his arrival by Vice Chairman of Russian State Duma Mr. Alexander Babakov.



QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Health Bakht Muhammad Kakar presides over the meeting to ensure medicine supply in hospitals. Secretary Health Mubejj-ur-Rehman Panezai is also present.

Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

**Kurram ceasefire**

Despite efforts by the KP government to bring about a ceasefire in Kurram tribal district, the bloodletting has continued. An official delegation said on Sunday that a seven-day truce between rival tribes had been brokered. The latest round of violence was sparked by the atrocious attack on a convoy on Thursday in which over 40 people were murdered. In an apparent retaliatory move, over 20 people were killed in armed attacks on Friday.

Locals told media that there were few signs of a ceasefire on Monday, while officials said the death toll had risen further. The unfortunate fact is that Kurram has been rocked by tribal-cum-sectarian violence for the past several months, yet the state has preferred a firefighting approach, only stepping in after high loss of life. A land dispute is said to be the trigger for the violence that erupted in July, while deadly clashes also took place last year. In fact, tensions go back to 2007, when lethal clashes and their aftermath reportedly resulted in thousands of deaths.

The continuing violence indicates the complexity of the situation in Kurram. For there to be durable peace, the underlying factors fueling tension need to be addressed judiciously. For one, terrorist and sectarian groups cannot be given any space to operate. These malignant actors use local tribal and land disputes to stoke the flames. Thorough action is needed to neutralise the militants in Kurram and the surrounding districts, while strict vigilance should be maintained to ensure that terrorists based in Afghanistan cannot cross the border.

Moreover, the state must ensure people can safely travel between cities and towns, and that violent groups do not maintain any 'no-go areas' in the region. It is the state's duty to secure thoroughfares, and it must deliver on this obligation. Also, an official land commission has reportedly reached a conclusion regarding the dispute at the heart of the matter, but has not made its findings public due to 'sectarian sensitivities'. These findings should be made public, and all sides must reach an amicable solution to end the dispute.

PPP chief Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has blamed the KP administration for the poor security situation in Kurram. Unfortunately, over the decades, all organs of the state — the federal and provincial governments, as well as the security establishment — have repeatedly failed to maintain order, protect citizens and judiciously resolve disputes in Kurram.

This must change if the state wants to prevent further bloodshed in this volatile area. Local tribes had signed an accord in Murree in 2008, which was revalidated in 2011, to help bring peace to the region. This framework should be pursued to permanently end violence in Kurram.

**Future socialisms**

Dr Niaz Murtaza

"Socialism is dead; Long Live Socialism," wrote fellow Berkeley scholar Roger Burbach in 1997, bravely predicting socialism's rise in new forms even as older ones were falling. As capitalism's damaging toll on humans expands hugely, the search for alternatives to the beast assumes urgency. Many think this means ending wage labour, profits and private capital, which they wrongly see as capitalism's core.

But sociologist Karl Polanyi argued that these had existed even before capitalism for long. Capitalism rose only in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when capital's interests became society's dominant logic to replace other human concerns, with a false promise that its sway ensures common welfare.

Capitalism expands its profits by penetrating all human spheres and coaxing humans to satisfy all their needs via markets that they are satisfying via family, community, state or nature for free, arguing that market solutions better cater to all human needs. But the ills of this idea, spread cunningly by owners of big capital, are visible now in high inequality, environmental loss, resource wars and irrelevance of millions of workers as AI spreads fast, as capital's dehumanising interests hold sway even over human realms that transcend commercial logics. Thus, ending capital's corrupting sway over all other human concerns is imperative.

Socialism is usually seen as a system with state-owned production assets. But Polanyi's insights about capitalism's core inspire a new vision of socialism as a system with common welfare as its dominant logic/aim (rather than an uncertain derived one as in capi-

talism) that allows all ownership forms that don't nix common welfare. This vision can spawn many forms of socialism, as the plural in the title suggests. The Nordic model is a form built on private capital, with common welfare ensured via provision of public social services, big state investment in education, health, and other human capital services and strong labour-force protection via unions and safety nets.

But poor states lack the globally competitive economies to generate enough taxes to fund a generous welfare state. They need a conjoint twin: a developmental-cum-welfare state where the first twin spawns an inclusive economy that gives income options to all able beings and the welfare twin that gives safety nets to the few labour-deficit beings. But new forms must avoid the ills of failed forms: over-centralised political and economic power that disempowers and disincentivises masses, kills energies and causes political autocracy and economic unproductivity.

Oddly, huge oligopolies are producing some such results even in capitalism that aged oligarchs did in former USSR. Donald Trump wants to keep afloat US oligarchies that can't compete with efficient Chinese units, just as Soviet oligarchs tried against efficient US ones 50 years ago.

Politically, new forms must embrace multiparty democracy over a one-party system and disperse power horizontally and vertically. Empowered local bodies must empower community organisations to help gain market power, protection, assets, skills and social services. The economic system must be similarly devolved

**Banking shortcomings**

Jawwad Farid | Rimmel Mohyidin

Systems in Pakistan often operate below potential. We could be close, but remain mired in red tape, beholden to power structures and burdened by hidden and friction costs. Despite an educated middle class and a growing youth bulge, we barely make a dent in the world. Our banking sector is no exception.

Banks are crucial to capital formation, documentation and digitisation of the economy. Implementers of monetary policy, banks are the first port of call when it comes to improving national savings rate, international trade or private sector credit. Without healthy banking, standards of living or the GDP will not improve.

So why isn't our banking there yet? One could be forgiven for believing that our banks are creating all the value they can, based on the recent national debate on banking profitability. However, Banking on our Banks, a joint analysis by CERP and Alchemy Technologies, asks if we are looking at the right benchmarks for evaluating banking competitiveness.

If we shift our gaze to banks in similar markets, there is a widening performance gap. Consider India's HDFC bank. Twenty years ago, HDFC and HBL were comparable in size. In 2024, HDFC ranks 11<sup>th</sup> globally by market capitalisation. The closest Pakistani bank is at number 394. HBL stands at 477. While the volume of reserves, market size and regulatory contexts must be acknowledged, it speaks to the impact of the decisions made by both banks.

Our best banks reveal similar shortcomings in efficiency, profitability, and growth, when measured against their peers in the region who compete by focusing on growing advances with innovative products and technology-driven improvements to credit allocation and disbursement. Pakistani banks focus on investments and returns on government debt. The outcome of both choices is clear.

When we widen our lens to include context that our banks operate in, course correction becomes urgent. By conservative estimates, frictional costs in Pakistan's tax collection system cause leaks of Rs2 trillion every year, including the opportunity cost of currency in circulation (Rs9tr) and non-interest-bearing current accounts (Rs6tr).

Part of the challenge in our over-regulated banking sector is the emphasis on safety, minimising risk at the cost of innovation. Innovation results from a desire to change but often breaks things. When safety is the prime motivator, breakage becomes a four-letter word.

For decades, the regulator has driven banking innovation — ATMs, national connectivity, faster check clearance, branchless banking and now digital and mobile banking. Yet many believe this top-down approach with a focus on safety is restricting risk appetite and growth.

Processes and predictable returns deter innovation with both the regulator and within banking boards.

We need market-driven incentives, responsive regulators, forward-looking boards and a sandbox approach to experimentation. Otherwise, banks will continue to prioritise comfort lending over bold decisions necessary for economic transformation. Small and medium enterprises are the backbone of economic growth but remain a banking stepchild. Export focused borrowers pose a different challenge. Their tech focus makes them asset-light and talent-heavy making them unsuitable for asset-backed loans. The same is true for the growing low-cost private school market. Partly inform-ally, partly under the radar, it doesn't fit within conventional credit frame-works.

Is it just burdensome compliance and underwriting requirements that deter banks? Or is there more to the equation that prioritises larger exposures? The mystery element 'X' is scale. We scaled the liability side but left advances behind. Data-driven models, market-relevant pricing and customer-driven products are one solution.

Digitalisation, reducing inefficiencies and building anew come with a price tag. There are regulatory burdens to overcome, skittish investors to pacify, unprecedented economic challenges to confront.

The question is not if these challenges are surmountable — they are, but if we are willing to take them on. The path forward demands courage for regulators to rethink models, for banks to take calculated risks, for policymakers to align incentives with innovation. — Courtesy Dawn

**Commerce News**

**Pak, China sign 13 MoUs on fostering joint ventures in animal fodder, fruits, vegetables processing sectors**

BEIJING (APP): Pakistani and Chinese companies on Tuesday signed 13 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) valued at US\$ 250 million on fostering joint ventures and investment partnerships in the animal fodder and fruits and vegetables processing sectors.

Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi witnessed the signing ceremony held at the conclusion of a day-long B2B Matchmaking Meeting on Animal Fodder and Fruits and Vegetable here.

Pakistan Embassy Beijing, in collaboration with the Board of Investment (BOI), successfully hosted the third in a series of sector-specific B2B matchmaking meetings.

This event, focused on fostering joint ventures and investment partnerships in the animal fodder and fruits and vegetables processing sectors. The event featured insightful presentations, individual B2B meetings, networking opportunities, and the signing of 13 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) valued at approximately USD 250 million.

Over 150 productive B2B meetings, including 30 virtual engagements, took place, providing a

robust platform for Pakistani and Chinese companies to explore partnerships and expand trade in these priority sectors.

In his remarks, Ambassador Khalil Hashmi highlighted the strong trade ties between Pakistan and China and emphasized the strategic importance of agriculture and food processing sectors.

He noted that the event underscored Pakistan's ongoing efforts to bolster its trade relationship with China, focusing on creating opportunities for direct connections and long-term partnerships.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of Belarus H.E. Aleksandr Lukashenko witnessing the MoUs and Agreements exchange ceremony held in Prime Minister's House.

**Finance minister highlights govt's policy framework**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, here on Tuesday highlighted the government's comprehensive policy framework aimed at enhancing tax revenues through improved documentation and financial transparency.

During a meeting with a delegation of the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) led by Dr. Andreas, Chairman IASB, the minister emphasized the importance

of standardizing financial regimes to align with global practices, which he said were crucial for fostering investor confidence, both domestic and international.

The delegation included Jianqiao Lu, Member IASB, Faruk Rehman, President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP), Rana Usman Khan, Chairman of the Asia-Oceania Accounting Standards Group, Ashfaq Tola, Chairman of the Reforms and Resource Mobilization Commission of Pakistan (RRMC) and senior officers from the Finance Division also attended the meeting.

According to press release issued by finance division, the minister reiterated the government's commitment to ensuring policy continuity to create a conducive environment for sustainable economic growth. On the occasion, Dr. Andreas acknowledged Pakistan's leadership in adopting international accounting standards and commended the country for being an early follower of global practices.

**Fertilizer available at low prices across Punjab: CM Maryam**

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that for the first time, there is an abundance of fertilizer in Punjab in the Rabi season, and prices have also come down.

Chairing a special meeting on agriculture here on Tuesday, she said 30 percent more stock of DAP fertilizer is available in Punjab, and 17 percent reduction in its price during the wheat season has been observed for the first time.

The CM said that 125 percent more stock of urea fertilizer than required is available, and 25 percent reduction in its price has been observed in the province. She said that the

wheat cultivation target of 16.5 million acres across Punjab has been set and 82 percent of the target has been completed. She added wheat cultivation target will be completed across the province by December 10. She highlighted wheat cultivation on 326,000 acres of government land across Punjab has been set.

The CM said 40,000 agriculture graduate interns are available to assist farmers in the field across the province, adding that applications have been invited for free grant of 1,000 green tractors and 1,000 land levelers for wheat farmers under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's scheme.



BAHAWALPUR: People buying overcoats from roadside stalls as the temperature rapidly falls in the city.

**Most Asian markets drop, dollar gains as Trump fires tariff warning**

HONG KONG (APP): Asian markets fell and the dollar rallied Tuesday after Donald Trump warned he would impose huge new tariffs on China, Mexico and Canada on his first day in office, dealing a blow to hopes of a more moderate approach to trade policy.

The former and next president said on his Truth Social account that he would hammer the United States' largest trading partners in response to the illegal drug trade and immigration.

with fears now of another trade war with China and warnings that the move—along with promised tax cuts—will reignite US inflation.

"On January 20<sup>th</sup>, as one of my many first Executive Orders, I will sign all necessary documents to charge Mexico and Canada a 25 percent tariff on ALL products coming into the United States, and its ridiculous Open Borders," he wrote.

In another post, he added that he would hit China with a 10 percent tariff "above any additional Tariffs" on all of its products entering the US, citing Beijing's failure to tackle fentanyl smuggling.

**NEPRA concludes hearing into FCA for October**

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Tuesday concluded public hearing into public petition filed by Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) on behalf of XWDISCOs in power tariff increase under monthly fuel cost adjustment (FCA) for October.

The hearing was presided over by Chairman NEPRA Waseem Mukhtar while other members Mathar Niaz Rana of Balochistan, member Sindh Rafique Ahmad Shaikh, Member Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Engineer Maqsood Anwar Khan and member.

**Qaiser Sheikh says: Economic stability contingent upon political stability**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, emphasized on Tuesday that achieving economic stability is contingent upon political stability. Talking to a private news channel, the minister highlighted the government's repeated efforts to resolve political issues through dialogue. He noted that multiple attempts were made in the

**94% wheat sowing target achieved in Layyah**

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): The Agriculture Department Layyah has announced achieving 94 percent of the wheat cultivation target set by the Punjab government for the district in the ongoing season.

A spokesperson for the department revealed that wheat has been sown over 641,000 acres across the district's three tehsils.

He noted that 92% of the target has been achieved in Tehsil Layyah, while Tehsil Karor Lal Eason has reached 93%.

**OGRA seeks support for uninterrupted transportation of petroleum products**

ISLAMABAD (APP): In coordination with the Petroleum Division, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has urged law enforcement agencies to ensure the smooth transportation of tank lorries carrying petroleum products to retail outlets.

"OGRA, in coordination with the Petroleum Division, has requested law enforcement agencies through Chief Secretaries and local administrations to ensure the unhindered transportation of tank lorries carrying petroleum products to the retail outlets," said an OGRA spokesperson in a statement.

To address any challenges faced by tank lorries during transportation, a dedicated communication channel has been established between Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) and District Administrations/Law Enforcement agencies.



LAHORE: Parliamentary Secretary for Women Sadia Taimoor addressing the awareness campaign at Lahore Chamber of Commerce.

**Kundi flays martyrdom of Rangers personnel on Srinagar highway**

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Tuesday strongly condemned the martyrdom of Rangers and police personnel on the Srinagar Highway Islamabad, emphasizing that their sacrifices will never be in vain.

In a statement, Governor Kundi expressed his deep sorrow and solidarity with the families and colleagues of the martyrs, sharing in their grief.

"The sacrifices made by these brave personnel will never be forgotten," he said, stressing the importance of their service to the nation.

Kundi further pointed out that the masterminds behind the May 9 incidents continue to pose a threat to the state, saying, "The

masterminds behind May 9 attacks are still assaulting the state today."

He labeled the recent attack on Rangers personnel, where a vehicle was driven into them, as part of a larger agenda of a hostile group. "Running over Rangers personnel with a vehicle is a mission of anti-state elements," he added.

The Governor also accused certain political groups of fostering terrorism, particularly highlighting the role of a party that has been accused of supporting militants in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while engaging in terrorism activities in Islamabad.

"The party that has been fostering terrorists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is engaged in terrorism in Islamabad as well," Kundi remarked.

**'Suthra' Punjab Outsourcing of sanitation system in progress for four UCs**

RAWALPINDI (APP): The outsourcing of the cleanliness and sanitation system under the 'Suthra' Punjab programme is in progress in four Union Councils (UCs) and zero waste would be ensured in cities and villages through the 'Suthra' Punjab programme. According to a district administration spokesman, the 'Suthra' Punjab programme was launched on the directives of Chief Minister Punjab and it is a gift for the people. Rawalpindi Waste Management Company is taking solid steps regarding 'Suthra' Punjab programme, he added.

The environmental friendly sustainable measures are being taken under 'Suthra' Punjab programme, he informed.

All the required resources are being provided by the Punjab Government, after which

there should be no problem in ensuring 100 percent cleanliness. He said that outsourcing cleanliness and sanitation systems in rural areas would ensure manual, and mechanical sweeping, waste collection, drain cleaning and waste disposal. Local government departments would monitor the outsourcing system digitally, he said. The monitoring would include biometric attendance, vehicle tracking management system, vehicle weighing at dumping site, digital monitoring of the fleet and container clearance through geo-tagging and prompt resolution of the complaints, he informed.

At the district level, a control room under the supervision of Assistant Commissioners is being built in the Deputy Commissioners' Office and in each Tehsil.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan in a group photo with delegation of the business community led by Humayun Iqbal Mir at Governor House. Senior PPP Lahore leader Aslam Gill is also present on the occasion.

**Punjab Governor says: Business community playing a major role in the economic improvement of the country**

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: A delegation of the business community led by Humayun Iqbal Mir met with Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at Governor House Lahore. Senior PPP Lahore leader Aslam Gill was also present on the occasion. During the meeting, the delegation demanded that the Governor Punjab lift restriction on closing

markets at 8 pm. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that the business community is playing a major role in the economic improvement of the country. He said that stakeholders should be taken on board while making any policy. Governor Punjab said that strengthening the business community is vital to

improve the economy as well as to create employment opportunities. He said that a large number of the business community pays taxes, adding that tax payers should be respected. Punjab Governor further said that the PTI's protest is not a solution to the problems, they should come to the negotiating

table. Punjab Governor said that the visit of a high-level delegation from Belarus to Pakistan is good news for the country's economy. He said that protest call of PTI is not in the national interest. Punjab Governor further said that all political parties should be on the same page regarding the country's economy.

**Preparations underway for polio campaign in Battagram**

BATTAGRAM (APP): Deputy Commissioner Battagram Asif Ali Khan Tuesday chaired a meeting to finalize preparations for the upcoming polio campaign in the district.

The meeting was attended by District Police Officer Ayaz Khan, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Additional Assistant Commissioners, health department officials, WHO representatives, and other relevant stakeholders.

**CS reiterates govt commitment to ensure rule of law**

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Secretary (CS) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary has underscored the critical importance of restoring peace and stability in Kurram district reiterating the government's strong commitment to ensuring the rule of law.

He was addressing a Grand Peace Jirga that was convened at Commissioner House Kohat to deliberate on prevailing situation in Kurram district and

devise a roadmap for enduring peace. The Jirga was attended by leading religious figures of Sunni and Shia sects. The Chief Secretary emphasized that a consultative process with local elders was integral to craft a sustainable peace framework. He assured participants that the government would implement their suggestions and recommendations effectively.

**PA resolution condemns attack on security personnel**

LAHORE (APP): A resolution condemning the incident of crushing rangers personnel by PTI supporters under a vehicle has been submitted to the Punjab Assembly by PML-N MPA Hina Pervaiz Butt.

The resolution states that this house strongly condemns the act of crushing three rangers and a police officer under a vehicle on Srinagar Highway by miscreants.

**7th Maritime Security Workshop commences**

LAHORE (APP): Seventh edition of the Maritime Security Workshop (MARSEW-7) aimed at enhancing knowledge and understanding of maritime security, geopolitical dynamics in the broader Indian Ocean region and the Blue Economy besides exploring Pakistan's untapped maritime potential commenced on Tuesday at Pakistan Navy War College.

The workshop was inaugurated by the Commandant of Pakistan Navy War College, Rear Admiral Azhar Mahmood, said a news release issued by the Directorate General of Public Relations (Pakistan Navy).

MARSEW is a national-level forum organized under the auspices of the Pakistan Navy, with the theme "Secure Seas, Prosperous Pakistan."

The workshop seeks to highlight the challenges and opportunities in Pakistan's maritime sector and its critical role in supporting the national economy. This forum provides a shared platform for participants from the public and private sectors, including senators, parliamentarians, senior bureaucrats, maritime industry professionals, business leaders, academia, think tanks, and media representatives, to deliberate on pressing national maritime issues.

A total of 38 participants from the public, private, and military sectors are taking part in MARSEW-7.

In his welcome address, Rear Admiral Azhar Mahmood outlined the purpose of the workshop, emphasizing the need for Pakistan's intelligentsia to shift its strategic focus towards the sea.



RAWALPINDI: Passengers rush to the railway station due to the closure of transport amid PTI protest.

**Resolution demanding ban on PTI submitted in Punjab Assembly**

LAHORE (APP): A resolution demanding a ban on the PTI has been submitted in the Punjab Assembly.

The resolution was submitted by PML-N member Hina Pervaiz Butt, in which it was said that this house strongly condemns the PTI's attack on the federation in droves.

The text of the resolution said that the chief executive of a province and the former first lady are attacking the federation in droves.

The resolution states that miscreants and rioters injured police personnel and set vehicles on fire, a specific group has caused damage to the lives and property of the people under a well-planned conspiracy.

**International News**

**Israel pounds Beirut suburbs as Lebanon says 31 dead nationwide**

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIRUT: Israeli strikes pummelled south Beirut, Lebanese official media said, and health authorities reported 31 people killed across the war-hit country, most of them in the south. Israel's military said in a statement Monday afternoon it had hit "approximately 25 terror targets" belonging to Hezbollah across Lebanon, including in Nabatiyeh, Baalbek, the Bekaa Valley and southern Beirut and the city's outskirts.

AFPTV images showed palls of smoke over the capital's southern suburbs after strikes that began in the morning after successive Israeli military warnings to evacuate. Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported a fourth wave of Israeli raids in south Beirut on Monday evening,

saying "enemy warplanes launched strikes on (the) Haret Hreik and Shiyah" districts. The attacks came after a weekend of heavy raids in the area, despite ongoing international ceasefire efforts. Early Saturday, a deadly strike on central Beirut's densely populated Basta neighbourhood killed at least 29 people, the health ministry said.

Israel's army said Monday it had struck a Hezbollah command centre there, though an official with the Iran-backed group denied reports that a senior member had been targeted.

The NNA reported Israeli strikes on Tyre and Nabatiyeh after Israel issued evacuation warnings for parts of the main southern cities.

Lebanon's health ministry said Israeli strikes killed at least 31 people on Monday.

A statement listed "the casualty toll of Israeli enemy strikes on a number of Lebanese cities and towns" in the east, south and near Beirut, with most people killed in the south and four killed in the east.

The NNA also reported "a drone strike that targeted a residential complex" in a Druze-majority town on the outskirts of Beirut, without prior evacuation calls.

Lebanon's Druze community follows an offshoot of Shiite Islam, and its heartland around Mount Lebanon has largely been spared in the current hostilities. The education ministry suspended classes on Monday in schools, technical institutes and private higher education institutions in Beirut and a number of surrounding areas, citing "the current dangerous conditions".



A man moves a scooter amid the rubble, in the aftermath of Israeli strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs, amid the ongoing hostilities between Hezbollah and Israeli forces, in Lebanon.

**Iran's Khamenei says ICC warrant for Netanyahu 'not enough'**

**Monitoring Desk**  
TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Monday that a war crimes case against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the Gaza war was insufficient and that he deserved a "death sentence".

In his first remarks since the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for Netanyahu last week, Khamenei told a Tehran meeting that it was "not enough".

His country, Israel's arch nemesis, backs armed movements in the region

**Moscow assures Taliban of removal from negative list**

**Monitoring Desk**  
KABUL: Top Russian security official Sergei Shoigu visited Afghan government officials on Monday, assuring them Moscow will soon remove the Taliban from its list of banned organisations, Kabul said.

The Russian delegation's visit coincides with ongoing diplomatic efforts by China and Iran. Special envoys from these nations are currently in Kabul, marking a rare political gathering of representatives from three US rivals since Donald Trump's recent election victory.

Shoigu, the secretary of Russia's Security Council, met an Afghan cohort in Kabul headed by Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Abdul Ghani Baradar.

He "expressed Russia's interest in increasing the level of bilateral cooperation with Afghanistan," Baradar's office said in a statement released on social media site X.

"He also announced that, to expand political and economic relations between the two countries, the Islamic Emirate's name would soon be removed from Russia's blacklist."

The Islamic Emirate is the name the Taliban government uses to refer to itself.

**G7 ministers discuss ceasefire efforts in Mideast**

**Monitoring Desk**  
FIUGGI: Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said he was "optimistic" for a cessation of hostilities in Lebanon, as Middle East tensions dominated a G7 meeting near Rome.

The Group of Seven foreign ministers also discussed the International Criminal Court's arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Hamas military chief.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken attended the talks in the towns of Fiuggi and Anagni with ministers from Britain, Canada, Germany, France, Japan and host Italy.

"I am optimistic about Lebanon," Tajani told a press conference as international efforts for a

ceasefire intensify—even if it was "more complicated than Gaza".

"We are strongly committed to strongly pushing Israel and Hamas to end this war in Palestine," he said.

Tajani hinted however at difficulties in reaching "an unambiguous position on the International Criminal Court decision".

The ICC issued warrants against Netanyahu and his former defence minister Yoav Gallant as well as Hamas' Mohammed Deif on Thursday.

They have been accused of crimes against humanity and war crimes in Israel's war on Hamas in Gaza, triggered by the militant Palestinian group's October 7, 2023 attack.

**Top EU diplomat says Israel has 'no excuses' to refuse a ceasefire with Hezbollah**

**Monitoring Desk**  
FIUGGI: The European Union's top diplomat said Tuesday there were "no excuses" for Israel to refuse to accept a ceasefire with the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, saying all its security concerns had been addressed in the U.S.-French-brokered deal.

Josep Borrell, the outgoing EU foreign policy chief, called for increased pressure on Israel to blunt extremists in the government who are refusing to accept the deal. Speaking on the sidelines of a Group of Seven meeting in Italy, Borrell warned that if a ceasefire is not implemented, "Lebanon will fall apart."

Israeli officials said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's security Cabinet was set to convene Tuesday to discuss a proposed ceasefire. Among the issues that remain is an Israeli demand to reserve the right to act should Hezbollah violate its obligations under the emerging deal.

Borrell said under the

proposed agreement, the U.S. would chair a ceasefire implementation committee, with France participating at the request of Lebanon.

"On the proposal agreement brokered by the U.S. and France, Israel has all security concerns (addressed)," Borrell told reporters in Fiuggi, Italy.

"There is not an excuse for not implementing a ceasefire. Otherwise, Lebanon will fall apart."

Israeli bombardment has killed more than 3,500 people in Lebanon and wounded more than 15,000, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry. On the Israeli side, about 90 soldiers and nearly 50 civilians have been killed by rockets, drones and missiles in northern Israel and in the fighting on the ground in Lebanon. The G7 meeting of foreign ministers from the world's leading industrialized nations, the last of the Biden administration, was dominated on Monday by the Mideast wars in Gaza and Lebanon.

**Austrian far right shows strength with state election win in Styria**

**Monitoring Desk**  
VIENNA: Austria's far-right Freedom Party won a state election in Styria for the first time on Sunday in an echo of September's general election and a new show of strength while national coalition talks continue without it.

Sunday's election in Styria, home to Austria's second city, Graz, raises pressure on party leaders currently attempting to forge the country's first three-way government since 1949.

It is only the second state which the eurosceptic, Russia-friendly Freedom Party (FPÖ) has ever won, the first having been Carinthia, the fiefdom of then-FPÖ leader Joerg Haider in his heyday in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

**Republican Rand Paul opposes Trump talk of using military in deportations**

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: Republican US Senator Rand Paul voiced opposition on Sunday to the idea of using the military to carry out mass deportations of people living in the country illegally after President-elect Donald Trump signaled last week that he plans to do so.

"You don't do it with the Army because it's illegal," Paul said on CBS's "Face the Nation" program. "If they send the Army into New York and you have 10,000 troops marching carrying semi-automatic weapons, I think it's a terrible image, and I will oppose that." A 19th century US law prohibits federal troops from being used in domestic law enforcement except when authorized by Congress.

**Trump vows big tariffs on Mexico, Canada and China**

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: US President-elect Donald Trump on Monday said he intended to impose sweeping tariffs on goods from Mexico, Canada and China, prompting a swift warning from Beijing that "no one will win a trade war."

In a series of posts to his Truth Social account, Trump vowed to hit some of the United States' largest trading partners with

**Trump vows big tariffs on Mexico, Canada and China**

duties on all goods entering the country.

"On January 20th, as one of my many first Executive Orders, I will sign all necessary documents to charge Mexico and Canada a 25 per cent tariff on all products coming into the United States," he wrote.

In another post, Trump said he would also be slapping China with a 10pc tariff, "above any additional Tariffs".

**Trump vows big tariffs on Mexico, Canada and China**

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