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PM terms welfare of minorities as government's top priority

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has called for promoting peace and brotherhood, and ending discrimination and divides.

Addressing a special Christmas ceremony at Prime Minister House, Islamabad this afternoon, he said we should treat our minority communities with love and respect so they recognize themselves as dignified citizens of the country.

Regretting that the Holy birthplace of Hazrat Isa (A.S) is mired in war and bloodshed, Shehbaz Sharif emphasized joint action to put an end to war in Gaza.

He said in line with Hazrat Isa's mission of peace and tolerance, Christians across the world should play their role for ceasefire in Gaza.

The Prime Minister said Christian community in Pakistan has always lived with peace and brotherhood, and have been rendering valuable sacrifices since the country's

independence. He said let us work together for the progress of our country which is a homeland for all communities. He assured the minorities that their welfare and prosperity is one of the topmost priorities of the government. The Prime Minister commended the choir of young girls who performed a beautiful Christmas carol at the ceremony.

He also cut a Christmas cake on the occasion. He said the Christian community has always upheld the honour of Pakistan's national flag both through their dedicated services and noble sacrifices.

Attaulah Tarar spoke with great reverence for martyr Haroon William of Pak Army who sacrificed his life for the cause of the country and was laid to rest with full honours, draped in the national flag.

The Minister especially eulogized Brigadier Helen Mary Roberts, the first female Christian Brigadier of Pakistan Army and said she is an epitome of the meritorious services of Christian community to the country.



Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses during the ceremony on the occasion of Christmas Day 2024, in Islamabad.

COAS lauds contributions of minorities to country's progress

APP

RAWALPINDI: Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir joined the Christian community in celebrating Christmas at St. Joseph's Catholic Cathedral Church, Rawalpindi, underscoring the spirit of inclusivity and harmony.

The congregation extended a warm welcome to the Army Chief, expressing gratitude for his presence and solidarity during this cherished occasion.

On this festive day, General Syed Asim Munir conveyed his heartfelt Christmas greetings to the Christian community across the nation. He emphasized that Christmas serves as a profound reminder of the universal values of compassion, generosity, and goodwill-principles that bind our diverse society together.

He further acknowledged the remarkable contributions of minorities and the Christian community to Pakistan's cultural, social, economic and national progress, which remain a source of pride and strength for the nation.

During the occasion, the Army Chief also paid a solemn tribute to the founder of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He highlighted that the

Quaid's visionary leadership, unwavering determination, and steadfast adherence to the principles of Faith, Unity and Discipline not only paved the way for the creation of Pakistan but also provided a timeless blueprint for nation-building.

General Syed Asim Munir remarked that Quaid-e-Azam's enduring commitment to the ideals of freedom, equality, and religion tolerance continues to inspire and guide the nation in addressing contemporary challenges, from safeguarding territorial integrity to fostering internal stability.

The Army Chief said as we commemorate this festive season, let us reaffirm our collective resolve to transform Pakistan into the peaceful, prosperous nation envisioned by the Quaid.

He also urged all citizens to work tirelessly toward achieving this shared aspiration.

Govt, JUI-F 'settle all differences' on contentious madrasa registration bill

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: As the controversy surrounding the Societies Registration (Amendment) Bill 2024 came to an end earlier this month, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) Senator Kamran Murtaza on Wednesday said that all differences between the government and his party have been resolved with the authorities likely to notify the madrasa registration bill "in next two days".

"A gazette notification of the madrasa registration act passed in light of the 26th Constitutional Amendment likely to be issued in next two days," the JUI-F senator said while speaking to Geo News.

His comments come after the government, following the meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, reportedly "accepted all demands of the Ittehad Tanzeemat-e-Madaris Deenia (ITMD)" regarding the contentious madrasa registra-

tion bill. The disputed madrasa bill, which has already been passed by both houses of parliament, became a bone of contention between the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F (JUI-F) and the government.

Its enactment was part of an agreement between the government and the religious-political party for supporting the 26th Amendment, Fazl had said previously.

Following its approval from parliament, the bill now requires the president's assent to become law but President Asif Ali Zardari had returned the bill, citing legal objections.

According to the Constitution, the bill must be tabled before a joint sitting after the president refuses to sign. Article 75 (2) of the Constitution of Pakistan states: "When the President has returned a Bill to the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament), it shall be reconsidered by the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) in joint sitting and, if it is again passed, with or without amendment, by the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament).

CJCS, service chiefs, armed forces pay homage to Quaid-e-Azam, greet Christian community

INP

RAWALPINDI: On the auspicious occasion of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's birth anniversary, the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS), the service chiefs, and the armed forces of Pakistan pay profound homage to the Father of the Nation. The armed forces honour the enduring vision and unparalleled leadership of Quaid-e-Azam, whose tireless efforts united our people and established the foundation for a sovereign and independent Pakistan, said a statement issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

"On this day of national significance, we renew our unwavering commitment to his guiding principles of Unity, Faith, and Discipline, which continue to inspire the nation," it further said. Furthermore, the armed forces extend heartfelt greetings to the Christian community on the joyous occasion of Christmas. In solidarity with our Christian brothers and sisters, we celebrate the universal values of love, compassion, and peace that this occasion represents.

13 terrorists killed in South Waziristan intelligence-based operation: ISPR

APP

RAWALPINDI: Thirteen terrorists were killed during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's South Waziristan district, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Wednesday.

After the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) broke a fragile ceasefire agreement with the government in 2022, the country witnessed a sharp uptick in the number of attacks targeting security forces and other law enforcement agencies, particularly in Balochistan and KP.

According to the interior ministry, in the past 10 months, 948 out of 1,566 terrorism incidents reported occurred in KP, resulting in 583 deaths (out of a total of 924

martyrdom). The recent operation came after 16 soldiers were martyred on Saturday when terrorists attacked a checkpoint in Makeen in South Waziristan, while eight terrorists were also killed as the armed forces responded.

According to a statement by the military's media affairs wing, security forces conducted an operation in "general area Sararogha, South Waziristan District on reported presence of khwarji" on December 24-25. The ISPR said security forces effectively engaged "khwarji location, as a result of which, 13 khwarji were sent to hell". "Killed khwarji remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces as well as killing of innocent civilians," the military said.

Two killed, four injured in Turbat blast

NEWS DESK

QUETTA: At least two people were killed and four others were injured in a blast in Dasht area in Turbat, Balochistan, the police said on Wednesday.

They said that the improvised explosive device (IED) blast also damaged a vehicle. The bodies and the wounded were shifted to a hospital, the police added.

Providing details of the incident, the law enforcers said that the remote-controlled explosion occurred when the victims were travelling inside a vehicle.

Those killed in the blast have been identified as Zaman and Umer Zahoor, whereas the injured include Naem, Javed, Ameen and Waheed.



Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Asim Munir cutting cake along with Christian community during annual commemoration ceremony on the occasion of Christmas Day held at St. Josephs Catholic Cathedral Church in Rawalpindi.



QUETTA: Security personal stand alert on the roof top of the church during Christians Community attend prayers & Christmas Mass at Bethel Memorial Methodist Church. Christians throughout the world are celebrating Christmas to mark the birthday of Jesus Christ.

Military installation attackers will be tried in military courts: Tarar

Information minister accuses PTI of politicising military courts, creating unnecessary controversy around their trials

By Zahid Ahmed Khan

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Attaulah Tarar has stated that attacks on military installations will be tried in military courts and urged the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to refrain from politicising or disputing the matter.

During a press conference in Islamabad on Wednesday, he criticised PTI for using military courts as a political tool, aiming to create controversy around them. He clarified that military courts only handle cases involving attacks on defence establishments, citing incidents such as the attacks on the Corps Commander's House, Mardan, and Bala Hisar.

"When an attack is carried out on a defence institution or its property is set ablaze, it becomes the responsibility of the relevant authorities to apprehend the culprits. Just as railway police handle crimes on railway premises, military courts address offenses targeting military assets. So, when attacks on military assets occur, the Military Act is enforced", he explained.

While highlighting the PTI's shifting stance, he recalled that during Imran Khan's tenure, military court trials were praised. "Statements praising the military courts from PTI's leadership are still available on social media. Yet now, the same individuals are lobbying internationally against these courts," Tarar remarked.

The information minister assured that military trials adhere to fair trial principles. "The accused are granted the right to a lawyer, meetings with family, and the right of appeal. Trials are conducted in the physical presence of the accused. In addition, decisions can be appealed either within the military judicial framework or through the High Court," he stated.

Tarar dismissed claims of injustice in military trials, asserting that no laws—domestic or international—were violated. He called on PTI to stop politicising the issue, utilise the available right of appeal mechanisms, and acknowledge the events of May 9 as a grave mistake. "Unfortunately, some PTI members still justify the actions of that day," he concluded.

Last week, military courts sentenced 25 civilians to prison terms ranging from two to 10 years for their involvement in attacks on military installations during the nationwide riots in May 2023.

The convicts were found guilty of attacking key sites such as Jinnah House, General Headquarters (GHQ), and Pakistan Air Force Base Mianwali.

According to the military's media wing (ISPR), the sentences were handed down following a thorough review of evidence and legal procedures, with 14 individuals receiving 10-year terms.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has strongly criticized the verdicts, arguing that military courts have no jurisdiction over civilians.

PTI leaders, including Omar Ayub and Asad Qaiser, condemned the sentences, calling them a violation of justice and a breach of fundamental human rights.

They also emphasized that military courts are not part of the state's judicial system, which is separate from the military's administrative functions.

President, PM vow to build Pakistan as per Quaid's vision

APP

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif have reaffirmed commitment to building a Pakistan that reflects Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision of a democratic, inclusive and prosperous nation.

In their separate messages on 148th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, they paid tribute to the Founding Father of the nation.

President Asif Ali Zardari has renewed the commitment to religious harmony, mutual respect, and protection of minority rights in the country.

In his message on the occasion of Christmas being celebrated today, he called for ensuring that intolerance and discrimination are discouraged and everyone feels respected and safe in the country.

The president extended his heartfelt greetings to the Christian community in Pakistan and around the world and said Christmas commemorates the birth of Hazrat Isa (A.S), whose teachings of love, compassion, and peace continue to inspire us to work toward a more inclusive and harmonious society.

The President said Constitution of Pakistan guarantees the fundamental rights of all citizens, irrespective of their faith and our founding father Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah also envisioned a Pakistan where people of all religions could thrive as equal citizens.

He said upholding the rights of all citizens is essential for fostering national unity and progress.

The President said on this Day, we acknowledge the role of Christian community in the country's development. They have excelled in education, healthcare, community service, social welfare, and public service and their contributions are a testament to our national diversity.

He said let us carry the spirit of Christmas throughout the year, working together to build a society rooted in peace, justice, and compassion.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has reaffirmed the commitment to safeguard the rights of all religious communities and foster an environment of mutual respect and understanding.

In his message on Christmas today, he extended his heartfelt felicitations to the Christian brethren in Pakistan and around the world.

The Prime Minister vowed to continue to ensure that people of all faiths can practice their beliefs freely and contribute to the collective progress of our nation.

He called for reflecting on the profound message of peace, brotherhood, and love for all humanity as taught by Prophet Jesus who preached values of compassion, kindness, mercy, and wisdom. The Prime Minister paid tribute to the invaluable contributions made by Christian community for the progress and stability of Pakistan, particularly in the fields of education, healthcare, and nation-building.

He wished joy and blessings to every home, and prayed that the coming year be filled with hope, peace, and success for our beloved country and its people.

Sui Gas Supply Interrupted, Affecting Various Areas of Quetta

APP

QUETTA: The supply of gas from Sui Southern's 18-inch diameter main gas pipeline has been interrupted, affecting areas in Upper Balochistan, including Kuchlak, Ziarat, Bostan, Yaro, Karbala, Harmzai, and Pishin, as well as various parts of Quetta city, including Airport Road, Nawan Killi, Jinnah Town, Khezai, A1 City, and Hazarganji area.

According to the official of Sui Southern Gas Pipelines Limited (SSGPL), the Southern management is carefully monitoring the situation and will make efforts to complete the repair work as quickly as possible. It added that the consumers will be informed of the progress shortly.

Due to an incident that occurred recently, the exact causes of which are yet to be confirmed, Sui Southern's technical teams have been immediately dispatched to the Akhtarabad Western Bypass. The organization apologizes for the inconvenience caused to its customers.

Christmas embodies universal values of love, brotherhood & tolerance: Ch Salik

INP

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain has extended warm greetings to the Christian community in Pakistan and across the globe on the occasion of Christmas.

In his Christmas message, the minister highlighted the significance of the festival, noting that it embodies universal values of love, brotherhood, tolerance, and selflessness—principles vital for the progress of any society.

He emphasized that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had envisioned a nation founded on equality, freedom, and the protection of all communities, irrespective of religion, profession, or ethnicity.

"The Constitution of Pakistan, he said, guarantees fundamental rights to all citizens, ensuring inclusivity and fairness.

Acknowledging the contributions of the Christian community, Chaudhry Salik commended their pivotal role in Pakistan's development, national defense, judiciary, and various other fields.

Addressing global challenges, the minister expressed concern over the rise of religious intolerance in recent decades, underlining the need to promote interfaith harmony and religious tolerance.

"Pakistan is currently navigating a challenging phase in its history, and it is imperative for us to unite as one nation to ensure its development and prosperity," he said.

The minister called on citizens to embrace the spirit of Christmas by fostering religious tolerance and brotherhood, turning Pakistan into a beacon of peace. "This country belongs to all of us. Let us work together to overcome its challenges and build a brighter future," he concluded.



QUETTA: All parties head Rashid Khan Nasir addressing a press conference.

Over 100 children dead in Parachinar amid road blockades

NEWS DESK

KURRAM: More than 100 children have tragically died in Parachinar due to the unavailability of medical facilities caused by road blockades that have persisted for two and a half months.

The ongoing crisis has sparked protests as citizens demand urgent action to reopen access routes. They are protesting against the road blockade for the sixth day.

According to Geo News, the blockade, which has been going on for more than two months, has deprived residents of essential food and medical supplies.

Agha Muzamil, Chairman of Upper Kurram Tehsil, said:

"Residents are unable to access basic needs like healthcare and food due to road closures. Over 100 children have succumbed to the lack of medical care."

In response, Kurram's Deputy Commissioner announced that a Grand Jirga arrived

in the district to initiate peace talks aimed at resolving the long-standing tribal conflict. The government hopes these negotiations will lead to stability and the reopening of roads.

Solidarity demonstrations have also taken place outside Karachi's Numaish Chowrang and Lahore Press Club, organised by Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen to highlight the plight of Parachinar residents.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister's Adviser on Information Barrister Saif said that a special police force has been approved to secure Parachinar Road.

He emphasised that the government's goal is to achieve a sustainable and permanent resolution to the century-old tribal dispute that has caused significant unrest in the region.

The ongoing tribal conflict in Parachinar has claimed over 100 lives and paralysed the district by blocking all major and minor routes for the past two and a half months. The situation remains tense, with residents and authorities grappling with the fallout from the prolonged blockade.

Uzbekistan ambassador praises Jinnah's vision, highlights ties with Pakistan

APP

ISLAMABAD: Uzbekistan Ambassador to Pakistan Alisher Tukhtayev, on Quaid-e-Azam Day, underscored Muhammad Ali Jinnah's enduring legacy which remains a source of inspiration for all who strive for justice, unity and progress.

The ambassador of Uzbekistan to commemorate Quaid-e-Azam Day, marking the birth anniversary of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan. In his message, he emphasized Jinnah's pivotal role in shaping an independent Pakistan, describing him as a symbol of determination and unity. He called on people to draw inspiration from Jinnah's principles of justice, unity, and mutual respect, urging them to work collectively for national progress.

Reflecting on Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations, the ambassador noted the deep historical and cultural ties between the two countries. He highlighted the ongoing efforts to strengthen cooperation and foster friendships. "Together, we aim to open new horizons for development and prosperity for our peoples," he stated.

He also reiterated the shared commitment of both nations to peace and regional progress.

Syedaal extends birthday greetings to Nawaz Sharif

APP

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan on Wednesday extended heartfelt birthday greetings to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, lauding him as a seasoned politician with a vision for the nation's progress.

In his message, Syedaal Khan acknowledged Nawaz Sharif's pivotal role in strengthening democracy, stating, "Nawaz Sharif has rendered invaluable services for the promotion of democracy and has faced numerous challenges to uphold democratic values."

Highlighting Sharif's special connection with Balochistan, he said, "The people of Balochistan hold immense respect and affection for Nawaz Sharif, who has always prioritized the province's development."

Two More Police Jawans Martyred in Shikarpur

By Abdul Sami Bhutto

SHIKARPUR: Two Police Constables of Karachi Police Special RRF Commandos were killed in the jurisdiction of Garhi Tegho police station on Wednesday.

According to initial reports reached here that two Police Constables of Kashmir -

Kandhkot District posted at Karampur went for having tea to their nearby area of Garhi Tegho when some group of dacoits riding on two motorcycles suddenly opened fires upon the Special RRF Commandos Jawans there. As a result of firing, two police Jawans identified as Altaf Brohi and Abdul Qadir Kaladi were martyred there.

The dead bodies of deceased police Jawans were brought to RBUT Civil Hospital Shikarpur for Medico legal formalities.



Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah along with Kamran Tessori, Governor Sindh and others are offering prayer at grave of Founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on occasion of his birthday anniversary, in Karachi.

Yousuf Raza Gilani pays tribute to Quaid-e-Azam

INP

ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Tuesday extended heartfelt congratulations to the nation on the auspicious occasion of the 148th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

"Today, we pay tribute to the great leader whose vision, determination, and leadership were instrumental in the creation of our beloved country, Pakistan" he

said in a message.

He said that Quaid-e-Azam's commitment to justice, equality, and the rights of minorities laid the foundation for the Pakistan.

"His profound belief in the principles of unity, faith, and discipline continue to serve as guiding lights for our nation.

As we celebrate this significant day, let us renew our commitment to upholding the values for which Quaid-e-Azam fought.



QUETTA: Christians' woman exchange greetings after Christmas Mass at Bethel Memorial Methodist Church. Christians throughout the world are celebrating Christmas to mark the birthday of Jesus Christ.



Junior national badminton starts in Lahore

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: National Junior Badminton Championship rolled into action as several matches were played in different age categories here at the Nishtar Sports Complex.

More than 250 boys and girls from all over the country are participating in this competition.

Results (first-round):
Boys singles Under-15: Ayaan Khizer (Punjab) bt Danish Ali (Punjab) 21-16, 21-11; Ibrahim Raza (Punjab) bt Mohammad Bin Nouman (Punjab) 21-13, 21-16; Usman Laeeq (Punjab) bt Zargham Ali (Islamabad) 21-8, 21-15; Ghazan Hadi (Balochistan) bt Muhammad Rehna Khan (Punjab) 21-17, 25-23; Fahad Hussian (Punjab) bt Faras Shahzad (Punjab) 16-21, 21-18, 24-22; Shaheer Ahmad (Punjab) bt Azan Kiyani (Punjab) 21-15, 21-7.

Boys singles U-17: Saad Ahmed (Punjab) bt Syed Sabih Ahmed Shah (AJK) 21-17, 21-17; Mohammad Ali (Punjab) bt Uzair Nadeem (Punjab) 15-21, 21-12, 21-10; Mohammad Ali (KP) bt Ahmed Zaman (Punjab) 21-18, 15-21, 21-15; Ahmed Ali Muddaser (Punjab) bt Sohaib Sohail (Punjab) 21-12, 21-14; Abdul Rafeh Hayat (Islamabad) bt Rehman Ali (Punjab) 21-13, 21-8; Sohail Khalil (KP) bt Ibrahim Ahmed (Punjab) 18-21, 21-10, 21-9; Wasiq Shamsad (Punjab) bt Abdul Muhaiman (KP) 21-5, 24-22; Okasha Javed (Punjab) bt Mohammad Ahmad Bajwa (Punjab) 21-12, 21-11; Mohammad Sheraz (KP) bt Rehman Nouman (Punjab) 21-8, 21-12.

Girls singles U-17: Sameen Faisal (Punjab) bt Hamayal Aftab (AJK) 21-16, 21-17; Tasmia Uresh (Punjab) bt Ayesha Malik (Islamabad) 21-12, 21-12; Dua Afaq (Punjab) bt Maryam Zaheer (Punjab) 21-17, 21-5; Almas Rabeel (Punjab) bt Hamna Junaid (AJK) 21-14, 21-12; Hasifa Azhar (Punjab) bt Noor Ul Ain (Punjab) 21-8, 21-6.

Boys singles U-19: Zain Bajwa (Punjab) bt Ali Zain (Sindh) 21-11, 21-13; Fahad Idress (Punjab) bt Mohsin Ali (KP) 21-18, 21-18; Ibrahim Ifikhar (Islamabad) bt Ahmed Faraed (Punjab) 22-20, 21-17; Ihtisham Ul Hassan (Punjab) bt Huzaifa Shahid (KP) 21-8, 21-9; Faizan Maqsood (Punjab) bt Tamheed Khan (KP) 21-7, 21-8; Ahmed Niazi (Punjab) bt Yousha Shahid (Punjab) 21-5, 21-12; Bilal Shabeer (Punjab) bt Adnan Hafeez (Punjab) 13-21, 21-4, 21-16; Fahad Ahmed (KP) bt Atta Mustafa (Punjab) 21-14, 21-12; Sohaib Khan (Punjab) bt M Arham Sajid (Punjab) 21-7, 21-14; Arham Basharat (Punjab) bt Ayan Azhar (Punjab) 21-14, 21-16; Tafreed Ahmed (Islamabad) bt Tayyab Subhani (Punjab) 11-21, 21-19, 24-22.



RAWALPINDI: A view of match between Allied Bank Stallions vs UMT Markhors during ongoing The Bahria Town Champions T20 Cup at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

Rohit backs Kohli to find fix for off-stump woes

SPORTS DESK

MELBOURNE: Indian captain Rohit Sharma has backed Virat Kohli to overcome his problems with deliveries outside the off-stump in Australia, saying that players of his calibre always find a way to succeed.

Kohli arrested a long run of poor form with an unbeaten century in the first Test in Perth but has frequently chased balls moving away from his stumps in the current five-match series, resulting in his dismissal.

"Modern-day greats will figure out their own ways [to deal with the issue]," Rohit told reporters ahead of the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne.

Rohit's own batting frailties in the longest format have been laid bare in recent matches. The captain has managed scores of three, six and 10 since rejoining the team for the second Test following the birth of his son.

His move to the middle order has done little to inspire confidence but Rohit was tight-lipped about a potential switch back to the opening slot where he can be devastating.

"Let's not worry about that. I think 'who bats where?' is something that we need to figure out within ourselves. It's not a thing I should be discussing in every press conference."

"Whatever it takes for our team to look good or gives us the best chance to succeed, we'll try and do that."

After winning the first Test by 295 runs, India crashed to a 10-wicket defeat in Adelaide before battling to a draw in the rain-hit third match in Brisbane.

"At 1-1, I think it's a fair reflection," Rohit added. "Both teams have played solid cricket and these two

Tests are going to be so important for both teams.

"We want to break it down to Melbourne and focus on what we can achieve here, get things right and play well."

India added uncapped Mumbai all-rounder Tanush Kotian to the squad for the final two tests after ruling out the inclusion of seamer Mohammed Shami due to a knee injury.

Rohit was coy Tuesday on how his team will line up for the Boxing Day, with the option of a second spinner on the table.

Temperatures are forecast to reach 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) on Thursday, and the Melbourne Cricket Ground curator said during the week he expected the pitch to offer plenty for the fast bowlers.

But Rohit left the door open to a second spinner.

"Whatever we have to do to make the best possible XI in these conditions, we will do that — whether that is playing an extra spinner or not," he said.

With off-spinning all-rounder Ravichandran Ashwin announcing his immediate retirement from international cricket after the third Test in Brisbane, Ravindra Jadeja is expected to keep his place.

Washington Sundar is the other spin option. India has carried this series by pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who has tormented Australia almost single-handedly, with the other quicks not offering as much menace.

Speedster Akash Deep replaced the underperforming Harshit Rana in Brisbane and is set to play again along with Mohammed Siraj and Nitish Kumar Reddy should the second spin option not be taken.

Army, Balochistan and SNGPL register wins at national squash

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: The COMBAXX-Roshan Khan National Team Championship continued here at the Pakistan Navy Roshan Khan Jahangir Khan Squash Complex on Tuesday with men's team of Army, Balochistan and SNGPL winning their fixtures on the third day.

In the men's category, Army dominated Railways 3-0, thanks to straight sets wins by Mohammed Ashab Irfan, Huzaifa Ibrahim and Sadam Ul Haq.

Ashab thumped Talha Saeed 11-6, 11-6, 12-10 while Huzaifa beat Hassan Paracha 11-8, 11-7, 11-7. Sadam kept the record perfect as he defeat Mohammad Ali 11-1, 11-7, 11-5 in 20 minutes.

In another match, Balochistan upset Navy 3-0 with Abdul Waqar Khan, Asmat Ullah and Nasrullah securing victories.

Waqar lost the first game but equalised immediately in a toiling second frame. Waqar appeared to be the fresher one in the following games as he registered two consecutive wins to give his team the advantage.

Asmatullah also had a similar outing as he lost the first game 9-11 but roared back to win three consecutive games rather easily 11-2, 11-2, 11-5 to ensure the triumph for Balochistan. Nasrullah made easy work of SL Muzammil 11-6, 11-3, 11-4 in 20 minutes to keep the record perfect.

Top seeds SNGPL secured a 3-0 victory over PAF — who didn't show up in the championship for the reason best known to them — with Asim Khan, Aamad Faraed and Israr Aamad winning their respective matches via walkover.

In the evening session, Punjab edged Sindh 2-1 as Asher Butt and Azlan Khawar won their respective matches while Anas Khan was the only victor for Sindh.

Asher had a tricky fixture against Naveed Rehman but he eventually prevailed 11-5, 11-6, 9-11, 11-8 in 28 minutes. Anas retaliated in the next match after a grueling 42 minutes seesaw clash against Khaqan Malik, winning 6-11, 11-7, 7-11, 12-10, 11-8. In the decisive match, Azlan lost the first game but calmed his nerves and claimed three straight games to give Punjab the victory 5-11, 11-9, 11-5, 11-9.

In the women's category, Sindh edged out Punjab 2-1, while Army thrashed Balochistan 3-0.



MELBOURNE: Indian batter Virat Kohli plays a shot in the nets at the Melbourne Cricket Ground

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Kurram
'roadmap'

THOUGH the KP government has hammered out a seemingly comprehensive 'roadmap' to bring peace to Kurram district, the barbaric murder and decapitation of two men on Monday on their way to Parachinar underscores the fact that implementing these measures will require the state's full commitment.

Influenced by decades-old tribal and sectarian rivalries, with the state mostly playing the role of bystander, and complicated by geopolitical factors, the Kurram conundrum will require more than mere statements to resolve. From the looks of it, the KP cabinet's roadmap seems quite detailed. For example, it envisions a special force to protect the region's thoroughfares, a dewatering drive, as well as measures to punish hatemongers spreading incendiary content online. If implemented in full, these steps could bring peace and healing to Kurram. But it is a very big 'if'.

The latest round of bloodletting was sparked after a convoy was attacked last month; over 130 lives have been lost in the violence. Moreover, the main road to Peshawar has been blocked for over two months, resulting in severe shortages in Kurram. The most heart-wrenching outcome of this de facto blockade has been the fact that the district faces a shortage of medicine; according to social worker Faisal Edhi, around 50 babies have died due to lack of treatment. This is an unconscionable state of affairs in any civilised society.

State functionaries insist there is no shortage, and both public and private actors have started ferrying in lifesaving drugs, along with airlifting critical patients to Peshawar. But these are stopgap measures, and only the permanent reopening of Kurram's thoroughfares — with safety of travellers guaranteed by the state — can end the suffering of the district's people.

Dewatering of the area's armed groups is also key to bringing peace, as the roadmap has observed. Both the Shia and Sunni communities of Kurram have access to heavy arms, thanks to the presence of militant groups belonging to both sides. Therefore, the state must confiscate heavy weapons across the board to ensure peace. However, some tribes feel that if their arms are taken away, they will become sitting ducks for terrorist groups based just across the border in Afghanistan, as well as local militants.

The state must provide ironclad guarantees that the local population will be protected from all forms of terrorism, and that no militant group will be able to operate in the area. Up till now, successive federal and provincial governments, as well as the security establishment, have been unable to judiciously resolve Kurram's complex and interwoven conflicts, and guarantee peace to its people.

By Barrister Usman Ali, Ph.D.

Selective Morality: Exposing the Hypocrisy of Global Powers

The United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union have recently expressed concerns about the trial and sentencing of 25 civilians in military courts in Pakistan. These individuals were convicted for attacking military installations during the riots on May 9, 2023. It is worth noting that these riots witnessed large-scale incidents of political agitation, violence, and arson at several locations. The hypocrisy of these nations is not limited to their global actions but extends to their treatment of their own populations. These countries have perpetuated severe discrimination and human rights violations internally, undermining their moral authority to criticize others.

In the United States, systemic racism has been a long-standing issue, with widespread racial discrimination evident in law enforcement, the judiciary, and society at large. The killings of unarmed Black individuals by police have triggered protests and highlighted deep-seated racial inequalities. Similarly, the United Kingdom has a troubling history of racism, particularly against its migrant and minority communities, who often face social, economic, and institutional discrimination.

These nations also employ harsh measures to suppress dissent and riots, including the use of expedited courts and disproportionate punishments. For instance, during the 2011 London riots, British courts processed cases at an extraordinary speed and handed out severe sentences, which were widely criticized as excessive. Yet, these same countries now express outrage over Pakistan's military court decisions while conveniently ignoring their own practices that bypass normal judicial proceedings during periods of unrest. The Guantanamo Bay detention center is a glaring example of America's disregard for human rights. Individuals were held there for years without trial, subjected to torture and inhumane treatment, and denied access to fair trials. Instead of being confined in regular prisons, detainees were placed in a facility designed to operate outside the bounds of international law, shielding perpetrators of torture from accountability.

Such blatant double standards undermine the credibility of their claims to uphold human rights. These nations criticize Pakistan over riots and military court convictions but disregard their own histories of violations. Before lecturing others, they must confront their internal and external injustices and take responsibility for their actions. Only then can their advocacy for human rights carry genuine weight. The hypocrisy of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union is evident in their selective concern over human rights violations. Recently, they expressed outrage over the sentencing of 25 individuals by Pakistan's military courts, alleging human rights abuses. These individuals were involved in attacks on military installations—acts that no sovereign nation would tolerate. Yet, these Western powers have a long history of committing or supporting serious human rights violations both domestically and globally.

For example, under the pretext of searching for weapons of mass destruction, the United States, the United Kingdom, and their allies invaded Iraq, resulting in the deaths of millions and leaving the country in ruins. They waged a two-decade-long war in Afghanistan, destroying infrastructure and claiming countless innocent lives. Their interventions in Syria and Libya, under the guise of promoting democracy, led to devastating civil wars that destabilized entire regions. Most disturbingly, they remain indifferent to the ongoing atrocities in Palestine, where over 40,000 innocent children, women, and elderly individuals have been killed.

Despite clear genocide and war crimes against Palestinians, these nations continue to unconditionally support Israel, ignoring the immense suffering of the oppressed. Such double standards expose the selective nature of their human rights narrative. Before criticizing others, these nations must hold themselves accountable and address the blood of millions of innocent lives on their hands. Until they confront their own actions, their claims of advocating for human rights will remain hollow and hypocritical.

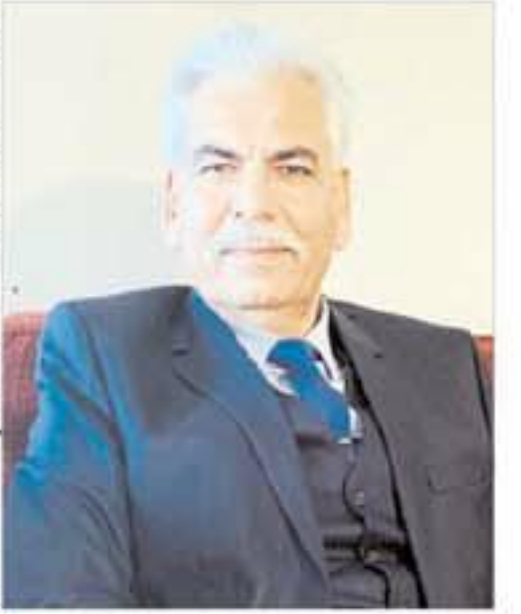
The matter of sentencing civilians through military courts in Pakistan raises legitimate concerns about democracy and the rule of law. Ideally, such cases should be handled by civilian courts to ensure transparency and adherence to democratic principles. However, the reality in Pakistan is far more complex. The judiciary is either influenced by political pressures or operates under constant threats, making it difficult for civilian courts to handle high-profile, organized attacks. The attacks on military installations were not spontaneous but part of a systematically planned assault on the national defense infrastructure. Under existing laws, such cases fall within the jurisdiction of military courts, which are specifically designed to address crimes against military installations and personnel.

It is important to note that military courts have been used in the past to convict individuals. During Imran Khan's tenure, several people were sentenced through military courts, and many are still in prison today. However, there was no significant reaction from the international community at that time. This selective concern raises questions about the motives of these nations, who are now expressing outrage. The issue appears to be less about human rights and more about pursuing an international agenda against Pakistan, particularly targeting its strategic assets like its nuclear program. Western powers have long sought to undermine Pakistan's sovereignty and defensive capabilities under various pretexts, and this situation seems no different. While the use of military courts for civilian trials should not become a norm, the international criticism of Pakistan reflects a double standard. Nations that claim to champion human rights must first address their systemic issues and historical injustices before criticizing others. Constructive support for strengthening Pakistan's judicial system and democracy would be far more effective than pursuing geopolitical agendas.

Instead of introspecting, these countries consistently interfere in the affairs of other nations and assert their dominance over global matters. However, they must remember that Pakistan is a sovereign nation.

Although Pakistan faces terrorism, extremism, political division, and numerous external and internal challenges—largely due to the actions of these very powers—it is fully capable of resolving its internal issues. The Pakistani nation is well aware of how to address its challenges.

While our problems exist, the Pakistani people should condemn such interventions instead of welcoming them, as today one country is criticized, tomorrow it will be another, and these powers will continue to divide us, exploit our resources, and use us for their own interests. Pakistan will undoubtedly ensure justice during the trials of civilians in military courts.



By Dr Naazir Mahmood

A tale of literary events

Hardly a month passed since the World Cultural Festival enthralled the denizens of Karachi when the Arts Council offered another fairly successful 'Aalmi Urdu Conference' coupled with 'Jashn-e-Karachi' from December 5 to 7, 2024.

President of Arts Council Karachi Ahmed Shah assembled an excellent team that includes names such as Prof Ejaz Farooqi, Noorul Huda Shah, Dr Huma Mir, Ambreen Haseeb, Akhlaq Ahmed, Ghazi Salahuddin, Dr Ayub Shaikh, Dr Jafar Ahmed, Prof Amjad Siraj Memon and many others.

The 17th Aalmi Urdu Conference invited over 150 speakers from Pakistan and abroad who discussed and dissected various aspects of Pakistani culture, literature, and society in dozens of sessions during the four-day events and festivities. At the inaugural session at the YMCA lawn, Ghazi Salahuddin delivered the keynote address while Ahmed Shah and Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah stole the show with their impromptu speeches.

The Arts Council Karachi also celebrated its 70th birth anniversary at the inaugural session with a big cake. Ahmed Shah in his welcome address outlined the achievements of the Arts Council and highlighted the role it has been playing in promoting art, culture and literature not only in Karachi but also across the province and the country. There is hardly any doubt that Ahmed Shah and his team have made the Arts Council Karachi the most dynamic of the Arts Councils in Pakistan. Of course, a lot of the credit also goes to the PPP government in Sindh that has facilitated the ACP-K in nearly all its major conferences, events, and festivals.

Murad Ali Shah is perhaps the most articulate of chief ministers Pakistan has. Since he is one of the most qualified chief ministers, he appears to enjoy the company of scholars and writers and in his speech, stressed the need for cultural and linguistic harmony for a peaceful and tolerant society. He was proud of the fact that in the past ten years, he had not missed a single Aalam Urdu Conference held at the ACP-K. Unlike the chief minister of Punjab who

consistently bashes Imran Khan and glorifies Mian Sb in nearly all her speeches, Murad was more interested in highlighting his actions and plans rather than focusing on others' failures. Compared to Ali Amin Gandapur whose sole objective appears to be initiating onslaughts in Islamabad, Murad Ali Shah outlined the cultural preferences of his government and how he is trying to promote a more inclusive society for all citizens irrespective of their provenance. He expressed his pleasure and pride at the growing dynamism of Karachi as a cultural and literary hub of Pakistan.

And now something about new books and some sessions that attracted my attention at the conference. 'Nikalta Hua Din' (Daybreak) is a new poetry collection by Farrukh Yar that Book Corner Jhelum has published maintaining their high quality of book production. Farrukh Yar has emerged as a noticeable poet and researcher in recent years with his pungent lines and impressive verses. 'Mitti Ka Mazmoon' was perhaps his first poetry collection that appeared in 2011. Since then he has honed his poetic imagery and used metaphors that are new and inspiring. 'Nikalta Hua Din' is a good addition to his oeuvre. Sharif Awan presented his insightful analysis of the book.

The session on Saraiki culture and literature discussed contemporary trends in Saraiki writings both in poetry and prose. Novelist Hafeez Khan who has penned several novels in Saraiki was hopeful that the language that does not have much governmental support is thriving by the efforts of Saraiki poets and writers.

Journalist Shahid Jatoi who now works for the Sindh Information Commission claimed that Saraiki is the single largest linguistic group in Karachi; going so far as to assert that Karachi is essentially a Saraiki city.

Social activist Abida Batool discussed the challenges that Saraiki as a language has been facing in Pakistan.

Pakhtun culture and literature also came under discussion in a separate session that Sarwar Shamal moderated. Makham Khattak who has a couple of poetry collections to his credit discussed Karachi as pre-

sented in Pashto poetry. Makham Khattak's new poetry collection 'Kakare Gharey' contains English and Urdu translations of a particular genre of Pashto poetry that owes its creation and transfer from generation to generation to women poets. Just like 'tapas', the genre of 'Gharey' also deals with various dimensions of Pakhtun culture and the social and economic challenges that have beset the people in that region.

Itikhar Arif presided over the session 'Asloob-e-Ghazal' (The style of Ghazal) that featured discussion with Ashfaq Hussain, Ziaul Hasan Javed Saba, Ahmed Mubarak, and others. Ashfaq Hussain's book 'Lo Hum Ne Daman Jhaar Diya' was also launched at the conference. Ashfaq Hussain is a progressive activist and writer who was active in student politics in Karachi in the 1970s before moving to Canada. He has numerous books to his credit and his new collection contains his 'kulliyat' (all poetry in one volume). His poetry is of outstanding merit and is an invaluable addition to the contemporary landscape of Urdu literature.

'Yaad-e-Raftagaan' (In memory of the departed) was a timely session as it featured a discussion on personalities such as Talat Hussain, Athar Waqar Azeem, Ajmal Siraj, and Rahat Saeed, among others. Akhtar Waqar Azeem recalled his years with his brother Athar. Akhtar himself is a well-known media professional and former MD of PTV who has penned his memoirs about his PTV days titled 'Hum Bhi Waheen Maujood Thay' (We also happened to be there). The book is a treasure trove of information about the good old days of the PTV that thrived under the supervision of Aslam Azhar.

Veteran journalist Hussain Naqi reminisced about Rahat Saeed who passed away in October.

Rahat Saeed was a progressive activist and intellectual who played an instrumental role in the launch of the Irtiqā literary journal from Karachi and also initiated the project of the Irtiqā Institute of Social Sciences. In the early 2000s, he visited nearly all major cities of Pakistan to revive the Progressive Writers Association (PWA) which had become inactive.

DAILY MIRROR

Rana Sanaullah says govt will accommodate PTI's time frame for progress in talks

> Says it will take time to go back and forth on each demand, but no pressure from govt to move things quickly

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Senior PML-N leader Rana Sanaullah announced Tuesday that the government was willing to accommodate PTI's demand for a time frame in ongoing talks, following PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan's conveyance of former premier Imran Khan's demand for a defined timeline.

Since Imran's incarceration last year in several cases, PTI's relations with the government and the establishment have deteriorated sharply, marked by protests that frequently escalated into violence amid state repression.

Tensions further intensified after PTI's 'Final Call' rally last month, with renewed calls to ban the party and task forces formed against alleged "malicious campaigns."

PTI claimed a dozen deaths of its supporters during this period, a claim the government denies.

Following the turmoil, Imran established a five-member committee to hold talks with "anyone," signalling a shift in PTI lawmakers' stance in parliament.

In response, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, on the recommendation of NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq, also formed a committee with ruling coalition members. The first meeting between the government and PTI committees was held on

Monday, marking the start of long-awaited negotiations to ease political tensions.

Yesterday, during a conversation with the media outside Adiala Jail after meeting Imran, Barrister Gohar said that the former premier called for a time frame for the negotiations during which some progress should be made.

Senior PML-N leader Rana Sanaullah responded to the demand late last night while speaking to Geo News, saying that the government would "accommodate such a request".

"If they want to set a timeframe they can, because then, the meetings will be held according to that timeline," the PM's political aide said.

"It won't be the case that we will accept all the demands they'd bring forward and vice versa. So, going back and forth on each point and demand, along with finding common ground, will inevitably take time."



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhel in a meeting with CM Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

PPP MPA Ali Hassan Zehri takes oath as minister in CM Bugti's cabinet

APP

QUETTA: PPP MPA Ali Hassan Zehri has taken oath as provincial minister in Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti's cabinet on Wednesday at Governor House in Quetta.

Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhel administered the oath from newly appointed minister.

Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti, provincial ministers, Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri, former Chief Minister Balochistan Qaddus Bizenjo, senior government officers and party workers also participated in the swearing-in ceremony.

Talking to media after the ceremony, Ali Hassan Zehri claimed that Chief Minister Balochistan Sarfraz Bugti was not serious about the uplift of the province. He said whenever he (Ali Hassan Zehri) met Sarfraz Bugti he always gave lame excuses about the development funds.

Mohsin Naqvi lauds security forces for successful operation against Khawarji terrorists in South Waziristan

INP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi has praised the security forces for their successful operation against Khawarji terrorists in South Waziristan.

He commended the security forces for killing 13 Khawarji terrorists, saying that Pakistan's brave security forces have thwarted the nefarious designs of Khawarji terrorists through their timely operation.

Mohsin Naqvi said that the nation is proud of its brave security forces, who have achieved significant successes against Khawarji terrorists. He added that the Pakistani people stand with the security forces, and the nation looks at their successes with huge admiration and respect. He emphasized that if God willing, we will completely eliminate Khawarji terrorists with the support of the people.

Governor Balochistan Celebrates 148th Birth Anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam

APP

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokheil on Wednesday said that Pakistan would emerge as a strong economic power in the region with the implementation of golden principles of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the vision of Nawaz Sharif.

A special ceremony was held at the Governor House in Quetta to mark the 148th birth anniversary of the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. On the occasion, Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokheil said that today is the birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam, who was a great leader.

"Quaid-e-Azam is the founder of Pakistan, and Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif is the leader of Pakistan and the day holds significance in relation to the birth anniversaries of the founder of Pakistan and the leader of the PML-N", he expressed these views while addressing participants at a cake-cutting ceremony held at the Governor House to mark the birth anniversaries of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, PML-N leader Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, and

Christmas. He said the world admired the personality of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who gave us an independent homeland by creating Pakistan. He expressed hope that Pakistan would emerge as a strong economic power in the region.

The event was attended by the Governor of Balochistan, Jaffar Khan Mandokheil, Provincial Minister for education Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani, Provincial Parliamentary Secretaries Barkat Ali Rind, Haji Wali Muhammad Noorzi, Nawabzada Zareen Magsi, Mir Attaullah Langove, Malik Naseem Anwar Kasi, Sahar Gul Khilji, Naseer Khan Achakzai, Sajjad Raisani, Atal Khan, and others, as well as lawyers from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

During the event, separate cakes were cut to celebrate the birthday of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Christmas Day.

The Governor of Balochistan also extended greetings to the Christian community on Christmas Day and expressed solidarity with them.

Ahsan Iqbal urges nation to adopt Quaid's golden principles of unity, faith and discipline

INP

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday urged the nation, especially the younger generation, to adopt Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's golden principles of unity, faith, and discipline.

"This adoption will transform Pakistan into a strong, sovereign and prosperous nation—a true embodiment of Quaid-e-Azam's dream," he said in a message on the founder of Pakistan's 148th birth anniversary.

He said that the Quaid's tireless work and dedication to national unity were a beacon for all Pakistanis, adding, "His life gives us the message that if we move forward with determination, integrity and mutual consent, no obstacle can stop us from becoming a developed and prosperous state."

The minister said that today, Pakistan stood at a crucial crossroads, and it was the duty of every citizen to play their part in national development by upholding the principles of Quaid-e-Azam and setting aside personal interests.

The government, he said, guided by the principles of Quaid-e-Azam, was adopting the 5Es framework as the basis of its development strategy. "This framework, based on exports, e-Pakistan, equity, energy and environment, is meant to put Pakistan on the path of sustainable growth and prosperity, so that when we celebrate the centenary of Pakistan's independence in 2047, Pakistan will be among the leading economies of the world." Ahsan Iqbal said the current economic challenges in the country also required the nation to adopt the principles of discipline from Quaid-e-Azam and put the economy on the path of stability by promoting self-reliance.

Azerbaijan passenger plane crashes in Kazakhstan with dozens aboard

MONITORING DESK

A passenger plane traveling from Azerbaijan to Russia crashed near the city of Aktau in Kazakhstan, according to the country's Ministry of Emergency Situations.

Flight J2-8243, an Embraer 190 aircraft, was carrying 62 passengers and five crew members when it was forced to make an emergency landing approximately 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) from Aktau.

The passenger plane was en route from Baku to Grozny in Russia's Chechnya but had been rerouted due to fog in Grozny, Russian news agencies reported.

The aircraft caught fire after the crash, and emergency responders swiftly arrived at the scene to extinguish the flames.

Kazakh authorities have confirmed that 27 people survived the crash of an Azerbaijan Airlines flight. Unverified footage of the incident showed the plane bursting into flames upon impact, with thick black smoke rising from the wreckage.

46 dead in Pakistan's airstrikes on Afghan border, Taliban reports

MONITORING DESK

KABUL: Pakistan airstrikes in Afghanistan's eastern Paktika province killed at least 46 people, including women and children, according to the Taliban's spokesperson, Zabihullah Mujahid, on Wednesday. The strikes, which took place late Tuesday night in the Barmal district, also left six others injured.

Mujahid condemned the attack, describing it as "clear aggression," and reaffirmed that the Taliban government would not leave such actions unaddressed.

The Afghan defence ministry issued a statement condemning the airstrikes, stating that the Islamic Emirate would defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

This follows a series of deadly cross-border exchanges between Pakistan and Afghanistan since the Taliban's takeover of Kabul in 2021. Tensions have escalated, particularly in the border regions, where Pakistan has been battling a surge in militant violence. According to a resident of Barmal, Maleel, the airstrikes devastated several homes, with one bombing killing 18 members of a single family. Another strike reportedly killed three people and left several others wounded, who were subsequently hospitalized.

'Free Imran Khan': PTI welcomes Trump's aide statement as PML-N calls for 'respecting sovereignty'

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has welcomed the statement of Richard Grenell, US President-elect Donald Trump's nominee as envoy for special missions — who advocated for the release of incarcerated party founder Imran Khan, with the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) urging the United States to respect the country's sovereignty.

Grenell, who is also a close confidant of Trump, garnered attention in Pakistan when he demanded the release of Imran, who was ousted in April 2022 through a parliamentary no-confidence vote.

"Release Imran Khan," Trump's ally tweeted on November 26 — the day when authorities launched a late-night crackdown against PTI protesters marching on Islamabad's D-Chowk.

Free Imran Khan: PTI welcomes Trumps aide statement as PML-N calls for respecting sovereignty

A day earlier, Grenell — while talking to a US media outlet — said that the US had a much better relationship with Pakistan during

the Trump administration when Imran Khan was the leader of Pakistan because "he was an outsider".

"He [Imran Khan] was a former cricket player, he wasn't a politician and he spoke in very common sense language, and he and Donald Trump had a very good relationship," he said.

Reiterating his demand to release Imran, he said: "There are a lot of the same allegations just like President Trump, where the ruling party put him in prison and created some sort of corruption allegations and false allegations."

Grenell has held several critical roles during Trump's first administration, including US ambassador to Germany, Special Envoy for Serbia and Kosovo Peace Negotiations, and Acting Director of National Intelligence.

Meanwhile, the PTI leaders, including Zartaj Gul and Aliya Hamza, have welcomed Grenell's statements with PTI spokesperson Sheikh Waqas Akram saying that if someone advocates for human rights "he will be welcomed".

"We are thankful for the statement but that doesn't mean we want interference [in internal affairs of country]," he clarified.

In a statement, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said that they want Imran's freedom in accordance with the Constitution and law of Pakistan. "PTI founder will be released through the courts," he added.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi in a meeting with Archbishop Germano Penemote, the Ambassador of the Holy See (Vatican City)..

Tribal Jirga Announced for Recovery of Abducted Minor Musawir Khan

NEWS DESK

Quetta: The family of 10-year-old Musawir Khan, who was abducted on November 15 from the Multani Mohala area of Quetta, has joined political leaders in announcing a tribal jirga to intensify efforts for his recovery. Despite promises from authorities and widespread protests, no significant progress has been made in the case. During a joint press conference, Sardar Rashid Nasir said, "The Prime Minister announced the formation of a Joint Investigation Team (JIT), and the provincial government sought 10 days to recover Musawir. Yet, nearly a month and a half later, we have received no updates."

Musawir's family remains in deep

anguish, with the community voicing outrage over the government's failure to act. The abduction has sparked protests, highlighting security concerns in Quetta.

Criticizing the government's inaction, Sardar Rashid Nasir stated, "The provincial authorities have failed to protect their people. This negligence cannot be ignored." In response to the prolonged inaction, leaders have called for a grand tribal jirga to unite efforts and demand accountability. The jirga will bring together tribal elders and political figures to press for Musawir's safe return.

This case has become a stark reminder of the security challenges in Balochistan, with families and communities urging immediate action to recover the missing child.

Israeli forces kill eight Palestinians in West Bank refugee camp raid

MONITORING DESK

GAZA: Israeli forces killed at least eight Palestinians in raids on Tuesday on a refugee camp near the city of Tulkarm in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, Palestinian and Israeli officials said. Khawla Abdo, a 53-year-old woman, was killed as a result of shelling by Israeli forces at dawn, while Fathi Saeed Odch Salem, an 18-year-old man, died after being shot in the abdomen and chest, the Palestinian Health Ministry said. Another Palestinian woman died in the afternoon due to sustained injuries from the attack. Later on Tuesday, the health ministry updated its death toll to eight after a new round of shelling in Tulkarm by Israeli forces. Hamas' armed wing al-Qassam Brigades said in a statement that two of its members were killed by Israeli forces in Tulkarm.

The Israeli military said earlier it killed one Palestinian in a "counter-terrorism" operation in Tulkarm, while its forces arrested 18 other wanted individuals and confiscated dozens of

weapons.

The Israeli army said early on Wednesday one of its commanders was moderately injured after his vehicle was hit by an explosive device during the operation in the area of Tulkarm.

"The Commander of the Menashe Regional Brigade was moderately injured and was evacuated to receive medical treatment. The rest of the passengers in the vehicle did not get injured," the Israeli military said in a statement.

Late on Tuesday, the military also said aircraft had struck armed militants in the Nur Shams refugee camp.

Hundreds of Palestinians and dozens of Israelis have been killed in the West Bank since the October 7, 2023.

The official Palestinian news agency Wafa said Israeli forces prevented ambulance crews from reaching Salem by opening fire on them.

Bulldozers also demolished infrastructure in Tulkarm camp, including homes, shops, part of the walls of Al-Salam mosque, which they barricaded off, and part of the camp's water network, it said.



QUETTA: Activates of Sunni Ulama Council hold protest outside QPC.