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Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi

Security forces eliminate 22 terrorists in successful operations, six soldiers martyred



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi lauded Pakistan's security forces for conducting three successful operations against the extremist group Fitna al-Khawarij in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In the operations, 22 terrorists were neutralized, effectively thwarting their plans to wreak havoc. "Pakistan's brave security forces have eliminated these enemies of peace," Naqvi remarked, commending their swift and decisive action.

Tragically, six security personnel embraced martyrdom during the mission. The interior minister paid glowing tribute to the fallen heroes, stating, "The nation salutes these martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty."

Naqvi expressed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, pledging unwavering support. "We stand with the families of the martyrs and will always remain by their side," he assured.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to national security, Naqvi vowed to continue efforts until the complete eradication of terrorist threats. "With the nation's support, we will ensure the complete elimination of these extremists," he declared.

Poverty alleviation among govt's top priorities: Ahsan

NAROWALL: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal says poverty alleviation is amongst Government's top priorities. Addressing a ceremony in Baddomalhi on Saturday, he said the economy is moving towards right direction and all economic indicators are showing positive trajectory. The Minister said no country can achieve economic stability through riots and anarchy-based politics. Ahsan Iqbal stressed need for maintaining peace to continue the journey of progress. On the other hand, chairing a review meeting on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor in Islamabad, Ahsan Iqbal has reaffirmed government's commitment to ensure the timely implementation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects for economic growth and development. Agencies



KARACHI: Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue, and Mr. Jameel Ahmed, Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), visited the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) and participated in an interactive session with foreign investors and CEOs of leading multinational companies (MNCs) operating in Pakistan.

Existing investment is fantastic, economy moving in right direction: Finance Minister

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb on Saturday said that the investment was coming into the country and existing investment was fantastic. He said that the economy of the country was moving in the right direction. While briefing the media persons after a meeting with Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI), the Finance Minister said that they talked about structural reforms, taxation, energy, SOEs, privatization agenda and had to move with them in cooperation with existing investors. Aurangzeb said that the government would only provide policy framework and policy continuity, which was important. He said that these companies would help the government in terms of joint ventures, privatization of SOEs. He advised the private sector to include a component of export in their investments. The minister said that the country had import-led economy owing to that they got into the balance of payment problem.

He was of the view, 'If we have to end the boom and bust cycle and put forward the economy towards 4, 5 or 6% growth, it has to be export-led growth.' He said that every single entity of this country should contribute to exports. He said that markets were available for 'Made in Pakistan' products.

He said that they could not be complacent in the wake of the SBP Investors Confidence Report. 'Why do I say that the private sector has to lead this country,' he asked adding that SOEs had caused Rs 6 trillion of loss during last 10 years.

Aurangzeb, replying to a question, said that investors were coming here and political stability was an important component. He said that the loss of Rs 190 billion was being endured every single day due to sit-ins.

'We have to collectively contemplate about it. We should build tolerance. When we talk about the Charter of Economy does not matter, which administration comes in,' he said adding we all should be on the same page for a stable Pakistan.

He said that petroleum volume had grown up due to curb on smuggling. He said that they identified illegal stations, which had been sealed. They had also issued warnings to shops selling illegal cigarettes.

Answering a question, he said we were talking about the Agriculture tax with the Sindh government. Punjab government had done work on it and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan were working on it.

The Finance Minister said that they were bringing real estate, agriculture, wholesalers and retailers under tax net. He said that they had to deepen and broaden the tax net. He further said that leakages in sales tax and income tax were being stopped through the digitalization process.

Replying to a question on inflation, he said that a Standard Item Agenda had been introduced by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) to control prices of pulses, petroleum, transportation, in view of the decline in rates in international markets to provide relief to the people. He said that Price Control Committees had to be active to control the increase in prices.

Peaceful, stable Afghanistan in Pakistan's interest: Muqam

HARIPUR: Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON), Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan Affairs, Engr Amir Muqam on Saturday said that peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan was in the best interest of Pakistan. He was addressing the Afghans refugees at Malik Abdul Samad Panyan refugee camp where he inaugurated a clean drinking water project for them. Commissioner Afghans Refugees, Shafeek Safi, representatives of the Afghan Community and UNICEF officials were also present. In his address, Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam said that the Government of Pakistan was taking all possible measures for the assistance and welfare of Afghans refugees, and the provision of clean drinking water to Afghan refugees was proof of it.

He said that Pakistan was the only country in the world where over three million Afghan refugees including about 1.4 million POF Card holders were still living mostly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. He said that the people and Government of Pakistan have

extended all-out support to millions of Afghan refugees during their longest 45 years stay in Pakistan.

Engr Amir Muqam made it clear that Afghan refugees have to return to their country. However, he said that voluntary and dignified repatriation of the Afghan refugees is being encouraged. He said that great responsibilities rest on the Afghan government to create a peaceful and secure environment for the dignified return of the Afghan refugees to their home country. He expressed the hope that the Afghan government would seriously work for the resettlement of millions of Afghan refugees by taking this issue on a priority basis and creating a secure and peaceful environment for them so that could live there with dignity and did not return to Pakistan illegally. Engr Amir Muqam said that the government has extended the stay of the Afghan Refugees for one year. He said that no government in the world can allow the stay of illegal immigrants and that legal visas and travelling documents were required for foreigners to stay in Pakistan. APP

Rana Tanveer takes notice of farmers' complaints regarding the low prices of sugarcane by sugar mills

Says sugar mill owners must pay the fair price of sugarcane to farmers

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Saturday took notice of farmers' complaints regarding the low prices of sugarcane by sugar mills.

Chairing the Sugar Advisory Board meeting, the minister directed the provincial Cane Commissioners to present a report on sugarcane prices in the next meeting. Rana Tanveer Hussain emphasized that the exploitation of farmers will not be tolerated and stressed that sugar mill owners must pay the fair price of sugarcane to farmers.

The board also reviewed the current situation of sugar stocks in the country and expressed complete satisfaction with the current sugar reserves in the country. The timely commencement of the sugar crushing season is a significant achievement, Rana Tanveer Hussain remarked. It will ensure smooth supply of the sugar which will bring stability in the market.

Naval Chief confers degrees to over 1,300 graduates at 27th convocation of Bahria University

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Pro-Chancellor Bahria University, conferred degrees to the graduating students of Bahria University Islamabad as chief guest at its 27th Convocation Ceremony held here on Saturday. During the convocation over 1300 graduates were awarded degrees across various disciplines. A total of 103 graduates received gold and silver medals in recognition of their exceptional achievements, a Pakistan Navy news release said.

While addressing the ceremony, Chief of the Naval Staff congratulated the graduates and their families on their well-deserved success. He urged the graduates to uphold values of discipline, ethics and service by contributing positively to society. He reaffirmed Bahria University's commitment to achieve the pinnacle in academic excellence with proactive response to the competitive higher education landscape.

Earlier in welcome address, Rector Bahria University Vice Admiral (R) Asif Khalil highlighted the academic achievements of the students and the importance of their future professional contributions. PR



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Justice Shah lauds Pakistan's unique role at cop29, advocates for global climate justice reforms

ISLAMABAD: Senior Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah on Saturday commended Pakistan's trailblazing contribution at the recently concluded COP29 in Baku.

Speaking as guest of honour during the "Post-COP Reflections from Baku to Pakistan" seminar hosted by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), he congratulated Romina Khurshid Alam, PM's aide for climate change for leading a historic delegation of judges to the global climate summit, said a press release.

Justice Shah while highlighting that Pakistan was the only country represented by a judiciary-led panel noted that the Global Judges Network also recognized this unprecedented participation, acknowledging the importance of judicial perspectives in addressing climate challenges.

He emphasized the intersection of climate justice and human rights, framing it as a crucial lens for addressing environ-

mental crises. "Pollution-related cases have historically been handled through penal actions in courts, but we are witnessing a paradigm shift. Climate justice is no longer just about visible polluters but encompasses broader systemic issues, including extreme weather events like floods, droughts, and glacial melts," he stated.

He further noted that COP29 underscored the urgency of climate finance as an essential pillar of climate justice. "Climate finance is not just a policy goal; it is a human right tied directly to the right to life. Loss and damage demand quick access to funds, while adaptation remains a slower process," he said, adding that the global discourse on climate finance remains confined to superficial discussions.

Justice Shah spoke about the establishment of the Climate Change Authority, albeit delayed and stressed the importance of mobilizing innovative financing mechanisms such as Zakat, Waqf

(endowments), Sadaqa (voluntary charity) and Sukook Bonds under Islamic laws to address climate funding gaps. He called for a deeper understanding of climate science as essential to framing effective climate finance policies. He also proposed the development of Climate Alternate Dispute Resolution Centers and specialized Climate Courts in Pakistan to tackle emerging conflicts stemming from climate change impacts. "Pakistan must take the lead in advocating for a global climate court, akin to the International Court of Justice, to hold the Global North accountable for its disproportionate contribution to climate damage," he urged.

Justice Shah concluded with a powerful message, emphasizing that Earth should not be seen as a commodity for exploitation but as a community to which humanity belongs. "We must redefine our approach to environmental stewardship and move towards reparative justice that addresses the historical injustices of climate degradation," he said.

Romina Khurshid Alam, the Prime Minister's Coordinator for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination said, "Pakistan achieved great success at COP29. "All sectors of Pakistan are represented, including the judiciary, which is now playing a critical role in addressing environmental issues." She emphasized the importance of Pakistan's judiciary taking a proactive stance on climate and environmental justice, a move she called groundbreaking. Alam said, "Pakistan beyond its own interests, raised voice for other vulnerable nations. We returned with a clear understanding of where future efforts must be directed. We want environmental justice and it's essential for developing and affected countries to collaborate." She also commended the leadership of Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, along with Justice Jawad Hassan and Justice Ayesha Malik, for their active participation at COP29.

"Justice Mansoor Ali Shah's leadership in championing climate activism within the judiciary is invaluable," she remarked, acknowledging his dedicated efforts to integrate climate justice into legal frameworks.

The coordinator stressed that Pakistan's unified presence at COP29 marks a significant step toward advancing climate justice and strengthening the country's position on the global stage.

Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), described COP29 as a blend of successes and challenges, where true success lies in achieving balanced compromises. Expressing gratitude to Azerbaijan for hosting COP29, he urged for collaborative, innovative strategies leading up to COP30 in Brazil, reaffirming that climate justice is inherently tied to equitable climate finance. APP



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'Britain is back' as trade horizons widen

ANDREW HAMMOND

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer has been the subject of recent UK media criticism suggesting that he has spent too much time on foreign policy in his first 150 days in office. However, he hit back this week declaring that "Britain is back on the world stage" and asserting, rightly, that this could help drive a new era of domestic prosperity for the nation.

Giving the annual Lord Mayor's Banquet speech in London, a major address on foreign policy, Starmer pledged that renewed, post-Brexit UK international engagement will help drive much-needed domestic economic growth. In coming months, the UK intends to continue a series of business trade missions, including to the Middle East.

One of the biggest, potential longer-term opportunities comes with the UK's accession on Dec. 15 to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, the big trade bloc stretching from the Asia-Pacific to the Americas.

While the UK will be a clear geographical "outlier" among the agreement members, the move makes a reality of aspirations, post-Brexit, to strengthen ties with longstanding allies outside Europe — in effect, trying to create a stronger business "bridge" from Europe to the Asia-Pacific and the Americas.

The CPTPP opportunity is seen most accurately as a long-term opportunity for Britain. The last UK government's impact assessment declared that the economic gains will be fairly small in the medium term — only around .08 percent of gross domestic product over the next decade.

However, optimists such as UK Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch, who helped promote the deal as a former UK trade and business secretary, argue that the partnership is akin to a "startup". She says that those 10-year estimates do not account for the fact that some members — for example, Vietnam — are rapidly growing in importance in global trade. She also flags that a key perk of the new deal is greater access to all CPTPP markets, including a pledge to eliminate or reduce the overwhelming majority of import charges or tariffs.

It will be some years before it is possible to know if Badenoch is proven right, or not. However, what is much surer already is that CPTPP opportunities for the UK will be heavily country and sector specific, at least to begin with in the 2020s.

One of the most significant country opportunities, in the immediate term, may well be Malaysia, the only CPTPP nation apart from Brunei with which the UK does not have an existing trade agreement. While Malaysia is not in the UK's largest, existing export destination, it is a growing market, and businesses will see some product-specific tariff and non-tariff barriers reduced as a direct result of CPTPP accession.

In terms of sectors, one of the significant opportunities might be in food and agriculture. For instance, with Malaysia and Brunei, UK manufacturers will eventually see removal of tariffs, including more-or-less complete removal on entry into force of Malaysian tariffs on a significant number of manufactured products, such as confectionery items.

UK exports to the other CPTPP members could also become significantly more competitive.

In part, this is because the deal cuts tariffs on a range of products, providing more competitive access for UK importers to many ingredients and raw materials used in UK manufacturing that either are not produced domestically or not in sufficient quantities. This includes access to a tariff-free cheese export quota and grain opportunities in Canada; additional access for dairy and cereals in Japan; dairy access in Chile; and the removal of tariffs on chocolate and confectionery, plus better beef and poultry access to Mexico. CPTPP also provides more flexibility for manufacturers to access tariff-free trade. Rules of origin are the terms and conditions that dictate if a trader is able to access a preferential tariff in a trade agreement. CPTPP includes a single set of rules that offer alternatives for businesses to those in the UK's existing trade agreements, and this may help to unlock additional opportunities for UK exporters. On the metals and mineral resources front, it is hoped that all tariffs will eventually be eliminated on UK exports to Malaysia. There could also be opportunities in wider markets, too, including Australia, and Chile, which is part of the so-called "lithium triangle," with just under two-thirds of global reserves collectively with Argentina and Bolivia. Another sector where there might be significant, new UK business opportunities is data flows. Joining CPTPP will help remove remaining barriers faced by UK-based companies, such as data localization requirements, ensuring data can flow between UK and CPTPP members. CPTPP accession may also help the UK become a significantly stronger international leader in digital trade, with modern rules on data and freer access to bloc-wide services sectors. Moreover, CPTPP accession could also help UK producers of items such as machinery and medicines — among the UK's most valuable, existing exports to the bloc — by allowing them to expand supply chains across member nations. Taken together, Starmer is right to argue that deeper UK international engagement, including in the Middle East, Asia-Pacific and Americas, can help boost UK prosperity in the generation ahead. While the CPTPP specifically will probably not yield game-changing economic opportunities in the 2020s, it may prove to be a significant source of UK growth in the second quarter of the 21st century and potentially beyond.

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Hamid Masood

The state of Pakistan has taken upon itself to provide water as an essential service. The governance structure through a hierarchical approach defines related responsibilities — from quality standards to service provision — for different tiers of government.

In Punjab, the federal government has established quality standards, while local governments and the Water and Sanitation Agencies (WASAs) of five cities serve as the primary providers of piped water supply to residents. Where piped supply is unfeasible, the law governs alternative methods of water provision. However, the escalating challenges of climate change and a steadily declining water table across the province highlight the urgent need for more robust and effective regulation of water services.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines access to water by the availability of at least 20 litres of water per person per day from a source within one kilometre of walking distance whereby access has also been made subject to the notion of sustainability.

In simple terms, sustainability implies judicious use of available water without depleting the sources and damaging the environment. However, Punjab with the highest population in the federation, leads the unsustainable use of water as all public water supply schemes across the province pump and supply water on a daily basis without quantitative allocation of pumping and supply.

The only consideration curtailing the number of hours of water supply per household per day is the energy cost. Financially struggling local governments and other agencies are

increasingly finding it difficult to bear the burgeoning energy costs, thus delaying the over consumption of aquifers.

The governance constraints of ensuring access to water are not just characterised by energy bills of existing schemes but by the supply gaps requiring new schemes to address water needs of citizens and redesigning of distribution systems. Supply of water has historically been dealt with differently for the urban and rural areas of the province that further compounds the access situation.

Moreover, the legal and administrative oscillation of urban and rural areas in local governance systems of Punjab over the past two decades is simply tragic as it has resulted in strengthening shortcomings of service delivery. In short, the changing policy perspective has not addressed the need for treating water as a finite resource that warrants equitable distribution amongst residents of the province.

Citizens as consumers of water supply remain at the centre of water governance in the province and all policy instruments entitle them to an affordable supply of wholesome water — also fit for drinking. Coverage, connections, and average hours of water supply to household per day are the main administrative indicators for water suppliers that define access to water. Each of these indicators narrates a governance challenge that ought to be addressed on priority basis.

First, the coverage indicator assumes that the presence of a main water pipe within an area under a water supply scheme equates to 100 per cent coverage, regardless of the actual number of households connected to the public water supply in that area. For administrative planners, the mere potential to provide

water through an existing main pipe is deemed sufficient to mark the area as covered. Consequently, access to water, as a theoretical possibility within the planning framework, is treated as a fulfilled service provision indicator.

Second, the number of households connected to public water supply is a valid indicator of access to water whereby one may fairly estimate the percentage of the majority of the population with access barring a small percentage benefitting from private supply of water.

The case of Vehari, as an intermediate city of the province, may be taken as an example here where according to official records, publicly available through the website of Municipal Committee (MC), unserved area of water supply constitutes only 18 per cent of the total area but merely 17 per cent households are connected to the public water supply — that is: nearly 6000 of the total approximately 36,000 households.

The average hours of water supply to a household per day is less than one hour and has been so over the past one year. Lack of water metering, both on supplier and consumer sides, further makes it difficult to gauge the exact volume of water in the access of citizens. However, the available data on supply helps fairly estimate that the WHO defined parameter of access to water is not being met.

Barring the consumers of WASAs as having a relatively advantageous position, it is not just the 2.2 million residents of Vehari, other residents of intermediate cities struggle with a similar fate and are forced to turn to private supply of water. The private supply of water is regulated by law, and citizens accessing water through unregulated private means may face fines under the Local Government Act 2022. The

Ninth Schedule of the Act outlines offences subject to penalties, including obstructing main water pipes or drawing, diverting, or using water without the necessary permissions stipulated in the Act, classifying such actions as municipal offences.

Citizens who are drawing water without formal permission are deemed in contravention of the law. They are liable to a fine of Rs5,000/ by their respective local governments. Ironically, the same law sets a fine of Rs10,000/ for keeping ferocious dogs or other animals in residential areas or taking such animals

public places or areas specified by the local government without leash or chain and without being muzzled. Access to water remains a struggle for both service planners and citizens of the province whereby the two struggle with their respective sets of challenges. The former faces policy and institutional fragmentation along with financial constraints and local challenges of operation and maintenance notwithstanding the irksome rural-urban dichotomy of service provision. However, the latter is a victim of lack of access and an offender of irresponsible consumption.

In addressing issues of access, groundwater is often treated as an inexhaustible resource, disregarding its inherent scarcity and the consumption patterns it necessitates. This approach, coupled with the current water governance system in Punjab, not only perpetuates but also deepens vulnerabilities and exclusions. Perhaps it is time for the government to view residents as active citizens and water as a finite, shared resource requiring thoughtful stewardship.

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Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect The Asian Telegraph's point-of-view

Today in History

Pakistan

Rajgopalacharia suggested a formula for a separate Muslim state in the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress, which was rejected at the time, but later on, in 1944, formed the basis of the Jinnah-Gandhi talks.

The Pakistan demand became popular during the Second World War every section of the Muslim community.

Organized under the banner of the All-India Muslim League. Branches of the party were opened even in the remote corners of the subcontinent. Literature in the form of pamphlets, books, magazines and newspapers was produced to explain the Pak-

istan demand and distributed widely. The support gained by the All-India Muslim League and its demand for Pakistan was tested after the failure of the Simla Conference, convened by the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, in 1945. Elections were called to determine the respective strength of the political parties. The All-India Muslim League election campaign was based on the Pakistan demand. The Muslim community responded to this call in an unprecedented way. Numerous Muslim parties were formed making up the parliamentary board at the behest of the Congress to oppose the Muslim League. But the All-India Muslim League swept all the thirty seats in the Central Legislature and

in the provincial elections also, its victory was outstanding. After the elections, on April 8-9, 1946, the All-India Muslim League called a convention of the newly-elected League members in the Central and Provincial Legislatures at Delhi. This convention, which constituted virtually a representative assembly of the Muslims of South Asia, on a motion by the Chief Minister of Bengal, Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, reiterated the Pakistan demand in clearer terms.

In early 1946, the British Government sent a Cabinet Mission to the subcontinent to resolve the constitutional deadlock. The Mission conducted negotiations with various

political parties, but failed to evolve an agreed formula. Finally, the Cabinet Mission announced its own Plan, which among other provisions, envisaged three federal groupings, two of them comprising the Muslim majority provinces, linked at the Centre in a loose federation with three subjects. The Muslim League accepted the plan, as a strategic move, expecting to achieve its objective in not-too-distant a future. The All-India Congress also agreed to the Plan, but, soon realising its implications, the Congress leaders began to interpret it in a way not visualized by the authors of the Plan.

To be continued....

Tech

WhatsApp's new feature to remind users to check messages left unseen

Prepare to say goodbye to losing track of unread messages in your WhatsApp chats as those days will be over soon because the app is introducing a handy reminder notification feature designed to help users stay on top of their conversations. According to WABetaInfo, the new feature will be available in an upcoming update but beta testers can currently access it in the latest WhatsApp beta for Android 2.24.25.29 update, which is available on the Google Play Store. The chat notification feature in Meta's instant-messaging app, which was previously limited to status updates, enhances the app's capabilities by sending reminders specifically for unread messages from contacts that users interact with most frequently.

The selection of these contacts will be determined by the app via an internal algorithm that prioritises contacts with whom users interacted most frequently, ensuring that important messages don't slip through the cracks.

However, it's important to remember that this algorithm only functions within the current

Meta's instant-messaging app's chat notification feature was previously limited to status updates

app installation. If a user reinstalls the app, WhatsApp must recalculate these interactions, as this data is not saved in backups or on the server. In terms of the new message reminder functionality, users might receive a notification when they have left a message unread from a frequently interacted contact. For example, if a user habitually engages in conversations with a specific person but leaves one of their messages unseen, WhatsApp could remind them about this unread message. As WhatsApp aims to avoid overwhelming users with excessive notifications, this measured approach ensures that notifications are relevant and non-intrusive.

Showbiz

Sabrina Carpenter, Chappell Roan delight fans with new Christmas duet

Chappell Roan and Sabrina Carpenter set the holiday mood with new performance



Sabrina Carpenter's Christmas special, A Nonsense Christmas, invited Chappell Roan as a celebrity guest and the two popstar's vocals came together to perform a melodic duet. The 25-year-old Espresso songstress released her Christmas special on Netflix on Friday, December 6th and it featured many guest appearances of comedy and musical artists.

The Disney alum invited the Roan on stage to perform a cover of the iconic holiday hit from 1984, Last Christmas. The two popstars lit the stage on fire with their rendition of the classic in similar costumes as the Good Luck, Babe! Hitmaker wore an emerald

cropped top with a long skirt featuring a slit, and white fur coat. Meanwhile the Bad Chem singer matched with her collaborator and wore an emerald top and matching skirt paired with a similar white coat. The set for performance was designed to resemble the wreckage of a house party, with strewn cups, champagne bottles, rolling around and green streamers creating the atmosphere of a holiday gathering.

Fans flocked over to social media and heaped on praises for the popstars. One such admirer hoped that the "perfect" cover should be released on streaming sites.

Echoing the sentiment, another wrote,

"if Chappell Roan and Sabrina Carpen-

Pack Your Diet With These Kidney-Healthy Foods to Safeguard Your Health

When you think about your health, your kidney function probably isn't the first thing that comes to mind. But this pair of organs is more important than you may realize. The kidneys remove wastes from the body while ensuring that the water, salts and minerals are balanced in your blood. They also make hormones that create red blood cells, control your blood pressure and maintain your bone health. Roughly one in seven American adults has chronic kidney disease, which can cause waste and fluid buildup in your body. Your risk for CKD is partly tied to the foods you eat. Eating the wrong foods can increase your risk, while filling your diet with nutrient-rich foods can safeguard your kidney health. Make sure these 13 foods are in your daily diet to safeguard your kidney health. While you're at it, see which foods can protect your heart, nourish

your mind and make you happy. Fish delivers protein, and when you choose a fatty fish like tuna, salmon or trout, you're also getting omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3 fats may help reduce fat levels (triglycerides) in the blood and may also lower blood pressure, according to the National Kidney Foundation. If you have CKD, you may need to keep an eye on the phosphorus and potassium levels of the fish you choose. The National Kidney Foundation has a chart you can use to determine levels in specific types of fish. Although, it's best to consult with your doctor. This nutrient-dense vegetable is low in both potassium and sodium while packing in fiber, vitamins C and K and more. Plus, cabbage is versatile. You can use it in salads and slaws, but you can also use it as a wrap for tacos, sandwiches and more.

Like cabbage, bell peppers pack in lots of good nutrients with low levels of potassium. With them, you get vitamins B6, B9, C and K, plus fiber. They deliver antioxidants too. You can slice them and eat them with dips or roast them and add them to dinner. Cranberries help to prevent urinary tract infections. These usually stay in your bladder, they can travel up to your kidney, making kidney problems worse. Fortunately, regularly consuming cranberries can help you avoid this welcome situation. Plus, cranberries have antioxidants that can help fight inflammation, and they can boost your heart and digestive health. It turns out, these tart berries aren't just for the Thanksgiving table. We've talked about some of the best foods for kidneys, but you can take it a step further. The question is: What foods help repair kidneys? Blueberries deliver



Health

Salik emphasizes importance of madrassahs registration



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Saturday highlighted the longstanding necessity of registering madrassahs (religious seminaries) in the country.

He, in a statement, said the government has consistently engaged with madrassah administrations, eminent religious scholars, and political leaders to ensure broad consultation on the issue.

The minister mentioned that the government fulfilled its commitment by approving a bill in Parliament in line with the demands of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazl) Chief, Maulana Fazlur Rehman. However, due to certain legal complexities, it will take additional time to finalize the legal framework for madrassah registration, he added.

He clarified that these delays should not be misconstrued as an attempt to reverse the entire process. "Madrassahs are educational institutions and fall exclusively under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education," he emphasized.

Chaudhry Salik further explained that madrassah administrations had previously faced lengthy legal procedures during the registration process. To address these challenges, the Directorate General of Religious Education, operating under the Ministry of Education, established a streamlined one-window system after years of dedicated effort. Currently, he said 18,000 madrassahs are registered through this directorate.

The minister cautioned that reopening the registration debate would undermine the progress achieved so far and render prior efforts futile. "Madrassahs are educational institutions, not industrial enterprises. Accepting demands to alter their jurisdiction could set a precedent for shifting responsibilities between ministries based on subjective preferences. The country's administrative system operates on established rules and regulations, not personal whims," he asserted.

He said the Ministry of Education and the Directorate General of Religious Education have already simplified the registration process for madrassahs, making it more accessible and convenient. The one-window operation at the Directorate General ensures efficient registration without unnecessary hurdles, the minister concluded.



CAP

Palestinian death toll from the ongoing Israeli aggression has exceeded 44,612: Hamas

More than 10,000 Palestinians are still missing under the rubble of the destroyed homes including over 5,000 children

GAZA: Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement- Hamas has said that the Palestinian death toll from the ongoing Israeli aggression has exceeded 44,612, of which 75% are children, women and elderly people. (+17,581 children & 12,048 women). More than 10,000 Palestinians are still missing under the rubble of the destroyed homes including over 5,000 children. The number of injured people has exceeded 105,834 most of them children and women. A daily update for the Israeli ongoing aggression on Gaza and the West Bank has been issued by the Hamas Spokesperson citing the Health Ministry. According to Hamas, more than 7,190 massacres against Palestinian families by bombing their homes while they were still inside. Over 35,000 children in Gaza lost their parents or at least one of them. At least 1,410 families entirely wiped out from civil registry by occupation aggression since October 2023. More than 3,000 civilians in the northern Gaza Strip have since been killed since October 5, according to Palestinian health authorities. 130 mass graves have been discovered across the Gaza Strip until May 1, according the Euro-Med rights group. 7 mass graves were found in three hospitals across Gaza containing over 520 bodies of martyrs including children and women, according the Health Ministry. At least 54 Palestinian detainees died in Israeli jails under systematic torture and deliberate medical negligence since October 7. The death toll among Palestinians includes (1) 471 people killed in the massacre of bombing the Al-Ahli Baptist

Hospital on October 17, 2023, (2) nearly 90 members of the civil defense rescue teams killed while on duty, (3) at least 1,055 medical staff and (4) 212 UNRWA staff killed by the Israeli occupation army. The Government Media Office said on May 1 that the losses and destruction from the ongoing Israeli aggression on Gaza exceeds \$33 billion. The Israeli army conducted arrests and forcible disappearance to over 6,000 Palestinians from Gaza, as they are held in unknown locations. Images and videos by the Israeli occupation soldiers showed how they arrested hundreds of Palestinians after forcing them to strip off their clothes. Testimonies by released detainees confirmed that the Palestinians in Israeli jails are subjected all forms of physical and psychological torture, and deprivation of food and medical treatment. Over 1,055 medical staff killed by the Israeli occupation army including doctors, nurses and first-aid providers, and over 1,230 others injured by the Israeli army. The arrest of more than 310 personnel of the medical staff who were kidnapped from hospitals while on duty including the directors of the three hospitals; Al-Shifa Hospital (released later), the Indoneisa Hospital and the Al-Awda Hospital. 34 hospitals in Gaza completely out of service under the Israeli aggression & lack of fuel. 80 health care centers stopped providing services under the Israeli aggression. 162 health facilities sustained damage by the Israeli bombing. 246 ambulances directly hit & destroyed or severely damaged by the Israeli occupation.

Over 25,000 injured people in Gaza are in urgent need for completing their medical treatment abroad as no proper treatment for their cases is available in Gaza under the current aggression. 38 children across the Gaza Strip, especially in the northern areas, died as a result of malnutrition and dehydration amid growing famine. 3,500 children across the Gaza Strip, especially in the northern areas, are at risk of death because of malnutrition and shortage in food. Bed occupancy rate in the Gaza operational hospitals' intensive care units is up to 340%. Severe shortage in all items of medicines and medical disposables. Nearly 5,000 patients are in need of health care services every day, and 1,100 patients in need of urgent dialysis. Over 60,000 pregnant women lack the proper health care across the Gaza Strip. The health care to nearly 12,500 cancer patients in Gaza is disrupted under the Israeli aggression and deliberate targeting of hospitals. Some 350,000 patients of chronic diseases require regular health follow-up and medicines that are now unavailable due to disruption of work of Gaza hospitals under the Israeli aggression. More than 1.7 million cases of infectious diseases documented including skin diseases, diarrhea and Hepatitis C cases. In brief, most of Gaza hospitals were attacked and damaged by the Israeli occupation forces, rendering most of them out service, while only few remain partially functional amid deep shortage in fuel for the electricity, medicines and medical equipment. SABAH

Naval Chief confers degrees to over 1,300 graduates at 27th convocation of Bahria University



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Pro-Chancellor Bahria University, conferred degrees to the graduating students of Bahria University Islamabad as chief guest at its 27th Convocation Ceremony held here on Saturday. During the convocation over 1300 graduates were awarded degrees across various disciplines. A total of 103 graduates received gold and silver medals in recognition

of their exceptional achievements, a Pakistan Navy news release said. While addressing the ceremony, Chief of the Naval Staff congratulated the graduates and their families on their well-deserved success. He urged the graduates to uphold values of discipline, ethics and service by contributing positively to society. He reaffirmed Bahria University's commitment to achieve the pinnacle in academic excellence with proactive response to the competitive higher education landscape.

Earlier in welcome address, Rector Bahria University Vice Admiral (R) Asif Khalil highlighted the academic achievements of the students and the importance of their future professional contributions. APP

Information minister spends busy day in his constituency NA-127

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attallah Tarar visited his constituency NA-127 on Saturday and spent time with residents and participated in their moments of joy and sorrow.

The minister visited the home of General Councilor Dr. Riaz, congratulating the family on their daughter's wedding. He also met senior Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) worker Qudratullah at his residence, appreciating his long-standing dedication and selfless love for the party.

During his visit, the federal minister interacted with local residents, listened to their issues, and assured them of prompt resolution. He also reviewed ongoing development projects in the constituency. In the light of the upcoming Christmas celebrations, Attallah Tarar assessed preparations in the area. He issued immediate orders for construction of Dilkash Road and instructed for repair of other roads and the resolution of issues related to non-functional streetlights. Later, the minister visited Vice Chairman of Union Council 235 Ramzan Gujjar's home to offer condolences over the death of his aunt. The minister also visited the home of Labour Councillor Ansar Jamil, congratulating him on his daughter's marriage and extending best wishes to the newlywed couple. APP

Funeral prayers for 6 martyred personnel of Armed Forces offered



RAWALPINDI: Funeral prayers for six personnel of armed forces who embraced martyrdom in an operation against khawarij terrorists offered on Saturday at Thall.

Corps commander Peshawar, senior serving military, civil officials and large number of people

from the area attended the funeral, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release.

Those who embraced martyrdom are included Naib Subedar Muhammad Khalid, (age 39 resident of Kohat), Haveldar Jadid Ali (Age 35 Resident of Orakzai), Lance Naik Walayat Hussain (Age 28,

R/O Kurram), Lance Naik Sifatullah (Age 30 R/O Khyber), Lance Naik Shaheedur Rehman (Age 27 R/O Kurram) and Sepoy Nizamuddin (Age 27 R/O South Waziristan). The supreme sacrifices of the martyrs for the defence of motherland will not go in vain. PR

NDMA's first relief consignment set to depart for Kuala Lumpur



ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority's (NDMA) first relief consignment, carrying 40 tons of relief items for flood-affected people in Malaysia, is set to depart from Islamabad International Airport to Kuala Lumpur via a chartered flight on Sunday morning.

NDMA provided help for Malaysia's flood victims on the Prime Minister's orders. The consignment includes 40 tons of food packs, winter tents, blankets, and medicines, addressing the current needs of Malaysia's flood victims. A second consignment of the same size is planned for next week, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to supporting flood-hit Malaysia.

Federal Minister for Housing and Works, Riaz Hussain Pirzada, First Secretary of the Malaysian Embassy, Zulazri Rosdi, and officials from MoFA and NDMA attended the relief item's departure ceremony at Islamabad International Airport.

The Federal Minister expressed his heartfelt condolences for the lives lost in the floods in

Malaysia and assured full support from the government and people of Pakistan.

The current monsoon season in Malaysia has brought heavy rainfall and flash floods to 09 eastern states, affecting 137,410 people across 38 districts. As a result, 40,922 families have sought refuge in 633 evacuation centers. Nine lives have been lost. The persistent rainfall is expected to continue until February 2025.

On November 30, 2024, Prime Minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, called Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim, to express condolences for the recent flood-related losses. PM Pakistan offered assistance and announced the immediate dispatch of humanitarian assistance.

PM Ibrahim expressed his gratitude. Having faced its own share of natural disasters, Pakistan deeply understands the challenges and hardships such calamities bring. This shared understanding and empathy drive Pakistan's efforts to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Malaysia in its recovery journey.

PM congratulates newly elected Sindh HC Bar Association President

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday congratulated Barrister Sarfraz Metlo on being elected as President of the Sindh High Court Bar Association.

The prime minister also congratulated Ahsan Bhoon, head of the Independent Lawyers Group (Asma Jahangir Group), on the victory.

He expressed the hope that the newly elected President and the Independent Lawyers Group will continue their efforts for the welfare of lawyers, the prime minister said in a statement issued by the PM Office.

"I trust that the Asma Jahangir Group will continue to prioritize the politics of principles and adherence to values, as always," the prime minister remarked. He hoped that the newly elected president will work tirelessly to strengthen the legal profession and continue efforts to promote justice and democracy in the country.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif to Leave for China Tomorrow on 8-Day Official Visit

LAHORE: On the invitation of International Development Department of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif will leave for China tomorrow on an 08-day (8-15 December) official visit. A 10-member high-level delegation including Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb will accompany Madam Chief Minister on this visit. Special arrangements have been made for Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's visit to Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Guangzhou.

Madam Chief Minister will meet Mr Liu Jianzhou, Minister of International Department of CPC. Deputy Minister Ms. Sun Haiyan will host a luncheon in her honor. She will also meet the central leadership of CPC, including Minister of Environment.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif will visit Shijiazhuang Hospital, and will be briefed on the public health system in China. She will also visit Beijing Municipal Commission of Transport, the Science Park, environmental improvement technology, IT and institutions related to the use of modern scientific methods.

Madam Chief Minister will participate in the exhibition of imported goods, will visit the CPC Central Congress and the museum. She will also visit a primary school, and will be briefed on the education system in China. Punjab China Dinner and Punjab Investment Conference are also included in the visit schedule.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif will visit the Jiangdong Renewable Energy Facility, and will review the renewable energy system of China. She will also visit the Hawaii Technologies Factory. Discussions are also scheduled on increasing mutual cooperation between China's ruling party and Pakistan Muslim League (N), besides a discussion on increasing mutual cooperation and economic ties between China and the Government of Punjab.



ISLAMABAD: The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on Saturday organized a photo exhibition in order to celebrate 70 years of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Pakistan, highlighting the transformative impact of its projects across the country.

The exhibition brought together prestigious guests, including government officials, development partners and key stakeholders, to celebrate this significant achievement. Since Japan initiated ODA in 1954 by receiving trainees from Pakistan, JICA has been committed to fostering sustainable development in Pakistan through diverse initiatives such as education, health and disaster management, and infrastructure such as road and electricity network. The photo exhibition highlights the successful JICA projects, featuring compelling visuals that capture the dedication and joy of communities that have benefited from this long-standing partnership. At the inauguration of the exhibi-

tion, JICA's Chief Representative in Pakistan, Naoki Miyata said,

"Building reciprocal relationships through continuous dialogues with partner countries to create solutions is a strong tradition of Japan's cooperation. By leveraging the tradition, JICA is ready to advance co-cre-

ation among stakeholders for a better future of Pakistan". Also Chargé d' Affaires of Embassy of Japan, Shuichi Takano said, "We would like to create our social values together, through dialogue and cooperation. Japan will continue to collaborate with Pakistan in realizing its vast potential."

The event showcases photographs from various successful projects. Each image tells a story of partnership, highlighting the shared commitment to improve the quality of life for millions of Pakistanis. Distinguished guests at the exhibition included Secretary of Ministry of Economic Affairs, Dr. Kazim Niaz, who emphasized the importance of continued collaboration and innovation in tackling Pakistan's development challenges. Their presence not only underscores the significance of JICA's efforts but also reaffirms the enduring friendship between Japan and Pakistan.

The exhibition will remain open to the public until 8th of December 2024 from 10 am to 4 pm at white gallery in Lok Virsa, Islamabad, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the rich history of JICA's contributions to Pakistan and to inspire future generations to engage in development efforts.