

**PTI's show in flops**  
SARGODHA (INP): The 'Jail Bhara Tehreek' Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Monday failed in Sargodha too, as only 70 party activists surrendered themselves before the police. The PTI's key leadership of the Sargodha division like former MNA Aamir Sultan Cheema and former provincial minister Muneeb Sultan Cheema remained reluctant to present themselves for arrest to the police.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting to review relief activities by Pakistan in earthquake hit areas of Türkiye and Syria.

## Election date suo moto hearing 4 SC judges dissociate themselves from bench

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): In a surprising development, five judges of the Supreme Court instead of a nine-member bench have resumed hearing of the suo moto proceedings regarding the delay in the announcement of a date for elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The original bench included Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Sayyed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Athar Minallah. In its order on February 23, all the nine judges sent the matter to the CJP once again, asking for the reconstitution of the bench in light of the additional notes authored by Justice Mandokhail, Justice Shah, Justice Afridi and Justice Minallah. All four of the judges who wrote the additional notes had objected to the constitution of the bench on multiple grounds. Two of these judges had also questioned the SC's jurisdiction to invoke Article 184(3), which relates to its suo moto powers, in this matter.

CJP Bandial, Justice Shah, Justice Mandokhail, Justice Akhtar and Justice Mazhar are currently hearing the case. Justice Ahsan and Justice Naqvi, whose inclusion to the original bench was opposed by the coalition government and the Pakistan Bar Council, as well as Justice Minallah and Justice Afridi have distanced themselves from the bench. "These four judges have shown grace and stepped away from the bench," said the chief justice at the outset of the hearing. Division in the bench had also emerged in the very first hearing after Justice Mandokhail, who is part of the current bench, objected to the suo moto notice itself as "unjustified". The reconstituted bench began hearing the case around 1:30pm after two delays in its scheduled timings of 11:30am and 12:30pm.

As the proceedings commenced today, CJP Bandial said that four members of the bench have dissociated themselves from the bench. "The remaining bench, however, will continue hearing the case. "We will

continue the hearing for the interpretation of the Constitution because what the Constitution says depends on its interpretation," he stated.

The apex judge went on to say that the court will again hear the suo moto case at 9:30am on Tuesday (today) and try to wrap it up. CJP Bandial also pointed out that the note of one of Justice Mandokhail had emerged on social media even before the verdict was released. "We will take precautions so that such an incident does not recur in the future." As the hearing proceeded, Barrister Ali Zafar informed the court that the Punjab governor had sought names from both parties regarding the caretaker chief minister. "But because there was a disagreement between the parties involved, the ECP decided on the name of the CM." The ECP, he continued, wrote a letter to the governor but the latter declined to propose a date for the election on the grounds that he had not dissolved the assembly.

"According to the Constitution, it is compulsory to hold elections within 90 days [of the dissolution of the assemblies] and no constitutional representative can delay the polls further than this," the lawyer stressed. Here, Justice Mazhar remarked that the governor had "thrown the matter" into the ECP court. "Who appoints the governor?" he asked. Barrister Zafar responded that a governor was appointed with the consent of the president. "There is a difference between a governor dissolving an assembly and an automatic dissolution of the assembly after the completion of its term," Justice Mazhar said. At that, Barrister Zafar said the court could either order the governor or the ECP to announce the date for elections, highlighting that the meeting between the governor and the ECP team that was held on the directions of the court had ended inconclusively.

The president unilaterally announced the election date while analyzing the whole situation, the lawyer told the court. For his part, former Punjab Assembly speaker's counsel said that holding elections was the responsibility of the electoral body.

## 20 Pakistanis among victims of migrants' vessel

Muhammad Asad

ISLAMABAD: There were 20 Pakistan onboard the vessel that met a fateful crash yesterday while trying to offload illegal immigrants on Italy's shores on Sunday. Pakistani authorities have confirmed that Pakistan Embassy in Barcelona has reached out to 16 Pakistani survivors so far, while other four Pak nationals are still missing whose whereabouts could not be confirmed yet.

In a tweet, Pakistan Foreign Office shared the details and said that Pakistani authorities are continuously in contact with the government of Italy to get the latest updates on Pakistani citizens to subsequently provide them with all possible medical and legal help at the earliest.

Earlier, a migrant vessel broke apart while trying to land with about 150 people aboard near the coastal town of Crotona in Southwest Italy on Sunday. The media reported that 58 migrants including a baby have died and over 80 people recovered including those who got managed to reach the shore after sinking in rough sea waters. According to Italian authorities, those onboard were mainly from Afghanistan, Iran, Somalia, Pakistan, and a few other nations in Africa. Recently, Pakistani authorities confirmed the presence of 20 Pakistani citizens on the ship that faced a dreadful fortune last night.

## Shutter down strike observed

LAHORE (INP): The countrywide shutter down strike was observed against 'unbridled' inflation and surging POL prices on the call of the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) Monday.

Eateries and shops are closed in several areas of Karachi, including Kharadar, Burns Road, Old City, Ethihad Town, Baldia Town and surrounding areas. However, the traffic is operating as usual. Many schools also remained closed owing to the uncertain situation in the port city. Moreover, protest was staged on the road leading from Baldia's Qaim Khani Colony to Orangi Town. Protesters have blocked the roads by burning tyres and placing barriers.

A day earlier, Haripur traders announced that they would keep their business centres open on Monday. The TLP had announced a countrywide strike against the rising inflation on Monday. In Lahore, reports said the protesters forced the traders to keep shutters down. On the call of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan, a partial strike was observed in Toba Tek Singh and full strike in Gujra town against rising inflation.

In Toba Tek Singh, the party took to the streets to protest against the rising inflation. The strike, however, was rejected by the majority of traders as they continued their business. Addressing the workers of Tehreek-e-Labbaik, the speakers said that the present government had not given any kind of relief to the people.

judiciary of having dual standards, saying, "Panama case proceedings were held on a daily basis while proceedings of Imran's cases are moving at a snail's pace".

She claimed that the PTI chief was running away from courts, making excuses over his plaster every time he was summoned. "First, he [Khan] will appear in courts in all the cases against him and then elections will be held", she added. The PML-N chief organiser also expressed reservations over some of the judges of the Supreme Court of Pakistan larger bench formed to take up the suo moto notice on delay in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa elections, adding that the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) has also expressed reservations about these judges.

Maryam also brought up the leaked audio clip of former judge Arshad Malik, who sentenced former prime minister Nawaz Sharif in the assets beyond means case. The PML-N leader advised Imran Khan to select the election symbol of a 'rat' instead of a 'bat' for dodging courts. Speaking at the convention, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah claimed that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif will take the country out of the economic woes after the latter's return from London.

## Maryam wants redressal of 'injustice' against Nawaz — says elections will be held only after equalizing both sides of scales

SAHIWAL (NNI): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior vice president and chief organiser Maryam Nawaz Monday said that the elections will be held after former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's sentence is annulled and bringing Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan to justice.

Addressing a workers' convention in Sahiwal, the PML-N chief organizer fired off a fresh tirade at judiciary and PTI Chairman Imran Khan, saying that elections would be held after accountability. The PML-N leader lambasted the PTI chairman for violating the agreement with International Monetary Fund (IMF), saying that Imran Khan was responsible for bringing the country on the verge of bankruptcy.

She remarked that former prime minister Imran Khan's alleged facilitators knew he was incompetent, incapable and damaging for the country, yet they imposed him and destroyed Pakistan in Nawaz Sharif's hatred. "The country would have defaulted if we had violated the IMF agreement like Imran Khan."

"We will have to hold the watch thief 'Fitna Khan' accountable before the elections. Remnants of Faiz Hameed is still saving Imran Khan who is still fleeing from courts," she maintained. She also demanded redressal of 'injustice' against her father and PML-

N head Nawaz Sharif, saying that elections will be held after the conviction of Nawaz Sharif is overturned.

"The elections will definitely be held only after compensating for the injustices meted out to PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif," she remarked. The PML-N leader also lambasted the five-member 'Panama bench', disqualified her father, alleging: "The five notorious judges disliked Nawaz and sought revenge from him."

"Nawaz Sharif took Pakistan on the path of development, but then he was disqualified in the Panama case," she said, pointing out that the economic and development achievements of Nawaz Sharif's previous governments. She further alleged that the 'Panama bench' had been created by former ISI chief Lt Gen (retd) Faiz Hameed. She also acknowledged that the PML-N may have suffered politically for the time being, but claimed the party stopped Pakistan from becoming Sri Lanka.

Maryam Nawaz added that elections will be held for sure, but first there will be justice. Nawaz get justice in fake cases and Imran Khan brought to book for all his alleged thefts. "The elections will be held after PTI Chairman Imran Khan will be measured on the same standards of justice set for Nawaz Sharif," she added. Maryam also accused the

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## Child martyred in blast F.P. Report

WANA: One child was martyred while two children were critically injured when a roadside bomb exploded in Daza Gondai area of Wana South Waziristan, on Monday. According to the rescue, there was a report of a bomb explosion on the road at Daza Ghondai, Wana area due to unknown reasons, in which three children were victims of the accident.

## PM directs action against profiteers, hoarders in Ramadan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Monday directed strict action against those indulging in profiteering, hoarding and overcharging during the month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak.

He was chairing a meeting here to review the availability of essential edible items during Ramadan and look into steps to ensure the stability of prices. A free hand was given to the district administration and law enforcement agencies at the federal and provincial levels to deal with profiteers and hoarders.

The prime minister ordered a clean-up operation at the warehouses, shops and markets before Ramadan. He said those who would charge the people already facing economic difficulties due to floods, more than the rates fixed by the administration should be dealt with iron hands.

The prime minister gave the Federal Government and the chief ministers the task to ensure the availability of goods and control of prices. Elements, who would be creating difficulties for those fasting in Ramadan, should be taught a lesson with the force of the law, he ordered.

He categorically stated that if any problem arose in the demand and supply of goods and prices, action would be taken against the officer concerned in the area. There was no shortage of edible items, including wheat, anywhere in the country, he noted. He inquired about the rise in the price of chicken when its feed was readily available. He reiterated that no leniency should be shown to those causing trouble for the public during Ramadan and said unscrupulous elements should be taken to task.

The profiteers who were burdening people with price hikes should be

dealt with strictly according to law, he added. He said the quality of items should be ensured at the Utility Stores in the country. In the holy month of Ramadan, mobile Utility Stores should be established for the benefit of people. He directed that "Sasta Ramadan Bazaars" should be set up in the Federal Capital and provinces, where modern technology should be used to keep prices under control.

**Shehbaz directs sending of 50,000 winter tents to Türkiye by March 23:** Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Monday directed that the manufacturing and supply of the remaining 50,000 winter tents to Türkiye should be completed by March 23 and the delivery should be made by air.

He was chairing a meeting here to review the ongoing assistance activities of Pakistan for the earthquake affectees of Türkiye and Syria. He said while maintaining quality, the new tents should be manufactured at a low cost and third-party validation should be ensured to assess their standard. He directed the Customs authorities to make special arrangements for an immediate supply of humanitarian assistance to Türkiye. He said Pakistan was providing assistance to the earthquake affectees in Syria on a humanitarian basis.

He ordered that fund-raising for the earthquake affectees of Türkiye and Syria in the educational institutions should be stepped up. The meeting was informed in detail about the assistance sent to the victims of the natural disaster in the two countries. It was told that Pakistan had so far sent a total of more than 8,000 winter tents and over 37,000 blankets for the earthquake victims.

About eight to 15 tonnes of humanitarian assistance was being sent on a daily basis to Türkiye and

Syria on the flights of Pakistan International Airlines. The participants were told that a ship of the Pakistan Navy carrying 1000 tonnes of assistance goods for the two countries would depart on February 28. The assistance would include generators, dry rations and medicines for the victims in Syria, and winter tents and blankets for the affectees in Türkiye.

Besides that, a caravan of 21 trucks of the National Logistics Cell (NLC) reached the city of Malatya in Türkiye on February 25. Besides that, a caravan of 21 trucks of the National Logistics Cell (NLC) reached the city of Malatya in Türkiye on February 25.

While giving details of the countrywide humanitarian campaign, it was told that the assistance gathered by different philanthropic and humanitarian organizations at collection centers of NDMA was being sent to Türkiye and Syria through land and air routes. The prime minister was told about the details of the rations sent to the affected countries.

Pakistan's ambassadors to Türkiye and Syria also apprised the meeting about the assistance activities. The envoy in Syria told about the positive response to the humanitarian assistance sent by Pakistan and the collection of assistance and 20 million Syrian pounds by the children of Pakistan International School in Syria. The ambassador in Turkey said winter tents and blankets were urgently needed in Türkiye. He said Pakistan's embassy in Türkiye was in constant contact with the Turkish authorities to keep the assistance activities well organized. Federal ministers Ishaq Dar, Ahsan Iqbal and Marriyum Aurangzeb, Special Assistant to the PM Tariq Fatimi and high-ranking officers attended the meeting.

## Lt. Gen Amjad remanded in police custody for 3 days

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): An Islamabad district and sessions court has granted the police a three-day remand of defense analyst and retired Lieutenant General Amjad Shoaib, following his arrest after a magistrate registered a case against him on charges of inciting the public against state institutions.

The first information report (FIR) was lodged at the Ramna police station by Magistrate Owais Khan a day ago. It invokes section 153A (promoting enmity between different groups, etc) and 505 (statements conducing to public mischief) of the Pakistan Penal Code. In the complaint, Magistrate Khan said that the retired general in an interview on a private TV channel show passed statements that "incited the government officials and opposition from performing their government and legal duties". Following his arrest, the retired lieutenant general was presented in the court of Judicial Magistrate Abbas Shah where Ramna police station's investigation officer (IO) and Prosecutor Adnan were also present.

The legal team representing the retired general comprising Advocate Mudassar Khalid Abbasi, Islamabad Bar Association President Advocate Qaiser Imam and Advocate Riyasat Ali Azad were also in attendance. Against the prosecution's request for a seven-day physical remand, the court granted the police a three-day physical remand of Lt-Gen (R) Shoaib and issued directives for him to be produced before the court on March 2.

At the outset of the hearing, the IO requested a seven-day physical remand of Lt-Gen (R) Shoaib. The prosecutor then read out the text of the complaint filed against the retired general. "Lt-Gen (R) Shoaib was present as a guest on a private television [channel]. Hatred was spread against the government through his statement. Through his statement, it was attempted to cause hatred between the government, opposition and government officials," he read the complaint. The prosecutor further said, "The relations between the opposition and the government are not well; they were incited through the statement. "The opposition is being incited to employ a stricter strategy against the gov-

ernment. Through Lt-Gen (R) Shoaib's statement, hatred is being spread between three factions," he added. "As per the sections imposed on Lt-Gen (R) Shoaib, a sentence of five years can be given," prosecutor Adnan said.

He said a photogrammetric and a voice matching were required to be conducted of the retired general, adding that the photogrammetric test will be done in Lahore. At this point during the hearing, Lt-Gen (R) Shoaib's counsel Abbasi opposed the grant of the physical remand and requested for his client to be discharged from the case. Advocate Abbasi said, "The court has to see whether Lt-Gen (R) Shoaib even committed a crime or not. If the magistrate thinks the suspect has not committed any offence, then [Lt-Gen (R) Shoaib] can be discharged from the case." The TLTP further leant that he argued that the sections registered in the case were "not even applicable" as Lt-Gen (R) Shoaib had "only given an example regarding a specific situation". Abbasi asked, "Did Lt-Gen (R) Shoaib say something on which the law has imposed a restriction?" He asserted his client had "till today, not said anything that would harm the country". Deeming his client's statement "constructive criticism", the counsel said, "The case has been filed on political bases only."

He added, "Lt-Gen (R) Shoaib is almost 80 years old and is being harassed for a long time. He was sent behind bars within an hour of filing the case." Imam, another member of Lt-Gen (R) Shoaib's defence team, said his client had acknowledged giving the said statements on the TV channel. "If he has admitted his statement and presence [on the TV show], then why does a photogrammetric and voice matching test need to be done?" he asked. Upon this, the prosecutor said, "The evidence of voice matching and a photogrammetric test is necessary for the trial." At one point, the retired general's counsel said "the arrests of [only] two institutions' officials had been pending," adding that "the next arrest could perhaps be of a member of the judiciary." Following the conclusion of the arguments from both sides, the court reserved its verdict.

## Court rejects Imran's request to transfer 'attempted murder' case to Judicial Complex

ISLAMABAD (APP): A local court on Monday rejected the request of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan for shifting the venue of the 'attempted murder' case hearing to the Judicial Complex in Islamabad. Additional Sessions Judge Zafar Iqbal announced the verdict, which was reserved earlier. The court also extended the interim bail of Imran Khan and directed him to appear in person on Tuesday.

Imran Khan's counsel Dr Baber Awan filed two applications seeking a one-day exemption from attendance for his client and a transfer of the Judicial

Complex citing security concerns. He argued that the PTI chief was going to appear before the banking court at Judicial Court tomorrow and it would be appropriate if the hearing of the instant case was also shifted to that venue. As per the reports of state institutions, there were security threats in the District Courts, he added.

The judge observed that for the first time, the court was hearing such an application regarding a change of venue. The matter did not fall in its jurisdiction. He said Imran Khan should have appeared to before the court as the date for the hearing was

fixed with the the consent of defence counsel.

The judge observed that Imran Khan had been filing requests for the exemption from appearance repeatedly, and sought an affidavit from his lawyer that the accused would appear before the court tomorrow. During the hearing, the counsel for Mohsin Shahnawaz Ranjha prayed to the court to get a medical examination of Imran Khan conducted from the PIMS Hospital. He also opposed the request for an extension in Imran Khan's interim bail, pleading that the accused could appear before the court today if he wanted to do so.

## Imran to depart for Islamabad today

LAHORE (INP): PTI chairman Imran Khan will depart for Islamabad on Tuesday, sources said on Monday. Sources told that Khan completed consultations with the party leaders prior to his departure for Islamabad from Lahore. He will depart for the federal capital by air.

The PTI workers have been ordered to complete preparations ahead of Khan's hearing. On Saturday, it emerged that the PTI chief decided to appear before the banking court on February 28 in a prohibited funding case. The PTI central leaders will also accompany Imran Khan to the court.

The party leaders and workers were informed to arrange the preparation to welcome PTI chief Imran Khan. Earlier, a banking court ordered the former prime minister and PTI chairman to appear before the court on February 28 in a prohibited funding case. It is pertinent to note here that the Investigation Agency had registered a case against the PTI chief and 10 others over accusations of receiving foreign funding. The case had been registered by the FIA Corporate Banking Circle.

Meanwhile, Imran Khan also condemned the arrest of retired Lt Gen Amjad Shoaib. Taking to Twitter, he condemned the detention of the former general and said his arrest demonstrated that democracy and freedom were being dismantled in the country.





## LWMC arranges cleanliness awareness seminar

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) conducted a 'Cleanliness awareness seminar' at the Divisional Public School, Model Town on Monday.

According to a spokesperson for the LWMC, awareness raising programmes continue in the metropolis throughout the year for changing citizens' behaviour about proper disposal of solid waste.

He said to keep educational institutions clean, the clean campus ambassador programme was launched in Lahore. In that connection, he said, a seminar was organised at the educational institution where nearly more than a hundred students, and faculty members took part.

LWMC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Babar Sahib Din attended the awareness seminar as the chief guest, while Senior Head Master Azhar Mehmood, LWMC management and mobilisation team was also present.

The LWMC CEO briefed students and faculty members about the role of the waste management company in the city and how citizens could participate in maintaining cleanliness.

## Dry weather likely in most parts of country

KARACHI (PPI): Met office informed on Monday that during next 24 hours, mainly dry weather is expected in most parts of the country. However, light rain-thunderstorm is likely in north Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir and Potohar region during evening/night.

Past 24 Hour Weather  
Dry weather prevailed over most parts of the country, while partly cloudy in upper parts. However, rain-wind/thunderstorm occurred at isolated places in upper Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir and upper Punjab.

Rainfall(mm): Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa: Pattan 03, Kakul, Malam Jabba 01, Kashmir: Garhi dupatta 04, Punjab: Jhelum 03, Chakwal 02, Mangla and Murree 01.

## Renowned Gynecologist Dr. Baji passed away

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Renowned gynecologist Dr. Baji has been passed away on Monday. She was the sister of Dr. Dor-e-Kamil and of Dr. Abdul Mateen, Vice Chancellor Peshawar University.

She was the wife of ex-Swabi Bar President Mr. Fazle Rahim Khan (Late). She was the mother of Afzal Rahim. Her funeral prayer will be offered at 11:00 AM at her native village Sheikh Jana, Swabi.

# Sindh CM discusses flood victims' rehabilitation with Punjab governor

LAHORE (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah called on Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman and discussed with him rehabilitation of flood victims in Sindh and current political situation at Governor's House, here on Monday.

The governor said the coalition government in the Center was making all-out efforts to steer the country out of hard times and save it from bankruptcy. He stressed the need for imparting the young generation technical education for development of the country, adding that education could be imparted even in far-flung areas with minimal resources through informal schools. He said more steps should be taken for reducing the number of out-of-school children in the country.

Sindh CM Murad Ali Shah said the government was facing multiple challenges like rehabilitation of flood victims and improving poor economic situation. He said some elements wish to create instability in the country, adding that all political parties, except one, were unanimous that the general elections for all assemblies should be held on the same date. He said the Sindh government had started construction of homes for the flood-hit people. He told the Punjab governor the Sindh government had increased public transport facility for masses, adding that homes were being built for the flood-hit.

Governor Balighur Rehman took CM Murad Ali Shah for a round of the Governor's House.

## ‘Banazir Mazdoor cards issued to 60665 workers’

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Labour Minister Saeed Ghani on Monday said that under Sindh Employees Social Security Institution (SESSI) more than 88,000 labourers have been registered with NADRA for issuance of Benazir Mazdoor Cards while over 60,000 cards has been issued so far.

The minister, in a meeting with Chairman NADRA Tariq Malik, expressed satisfaction with progress in the issuance of Benazir Mazdoor Card and stressed on completion of the process by May 2023.

Chairman NADRA and the provincial Labour Minister had a detailed discussion on the progress of issuance of Benazir Mazdoor Card and the problems being faced and their immediate solution.

Tariq Malik assured that NADRA would take all measures to issue Benazir Mazdoor Cards at the earliest and more desks and teams would be appointed in hospitals, industries and labour colonies in this regard.

NADRA officials at the occasion briefed that registration of more than 88 thousand workers had been done so far with the printing of over 70700 cards while 60665 cards have been issued to workers.

The minister said that NADRA in collaboration with all major industrial units, their labour colonies and industrialists' associations should complete the work expeditiously so as to provide maximum facilities to the workers.

The minister suggested fast-track enrolment of labourers and issuance of cards on daily basis and said that NADRA teams should be sent to industrial units on weekly holidays and teams should also be posted in labour colonies, SESSI hospitals and industrial units. He instructed the directors of SESSI to coordinate with the program and project directors of NADRA and the industrialists' associations to ensure the registration of workers of all industries and issuance of the cards.

## ‘Students must have passion for study’, urges KU VC

KARACHI, (APP): The Vice-Chancellor University of Karachi Professor Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi urged that the students must have passion for studies else they would not be able to succeed in any competitive exams. He expressed these views while inaugurating the renovated Audio Visual Centre of the University of Karachi here on Monday.

He mentioned that top government officials play a very vital role in the development of any nation and in countries like Pakistan, we have a platform of Central Superior Services through which qualified, intelligent, hardworking, and visionary youngsters come into the civil services and bureaucracy and other government offices to serve the country.

He shared that the CSS-qualified persons help the government in formulating policies according to the national needs and implement them for the progress of the nation. Intelligent, talented, talented officers are selected through competitive examination.

The KU VC Professor Dr Khalid Iraqi mentioned that he hoped that students enrolled in the CSS preparation program on the campus would become a bright future for the country.

On this occasion, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Professor Dr Nusrat Idrees, Director Office of Research Innovation and Commercialization Professor Dr Bilquees Gul, former Dean of the Faculty of Management and Management Sciences, Professor Dr Abu Zar Wajidi, faculty members including Dr Maqsood Ali Ansari, Dr Naheed Parveen, Dr Shaista Tabasum, Dr Atiq Razak, Dr Salman Zubair, Adviser of Student

Affairs Dr Syed Asim Ali and others were present.

Meanwhile, the KU Director of Students Guidance Counseling and Placement Bureau Dr Ghazal Khawaja Humayun said that the SGC&PB conducts competitive exam preparation courses twice a year to facilitate a large number of students.

She mentioned that renovation work has been completed and now all classes and lectures would be conducted at the same place and students would have the opportunity to meet CSS-qualified civil servants and bureaucrats.

The KU Director of SGC&PB Dr Ghazal Khawaja Humayun said that people who are creative and can think outside the box can make new paths, can achieve their dreams and goals, and could clear the CSS exam with ease.

An associate Professor from NED University Dr Abdul Hai Madani while addressing the seminar said that one of the major reasons for failure in CSS exams is students' neglect of the CSS syllabus and content.

Dr Moiz Khan, Dr Hina Khan, Dr Muhammad Ali, Areba Shafi, and Dr Kamran while addressing the seminar said that instead of being a victim of lack of confidence, stressed students must develop self-confidence by utilizing abilities.

"We are blessed with many abilities, it is our responsibility to utilize these abilities and recognize them. Lack of awareness is also one of the major reasons for low participation in competitive exams. Still, many people do not know anything about civil services."

They said that students should play a positive role in the betterment of society and serve the country and people.



KARACHI: Provincial Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon talking to the media at the Sindh assembly media corner.

# Crackdown to be launched against fake number plates from today

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Provincial Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon has said that a massive crackdown is being launched across the province from today against fake number plates, unregistered vehicles and display of arms. He warned people that government does not intend to trouble them. It is better for people to follow the SOPs and fix their vehicles themselves.

He expressed these views while talking to the media at the Sindh assembly media corner.

He said that no one is above the law and it applies to everyone equally. The minister added that those who possess arms license can carry their arms in concealed manner but no one can display it. The minister said that no one will be allowed to create terror among the citizens by displaying weapons. In response to a question, he said that Imran Khan's Tigers have been given a good offer.

The minister invited PTI to celebrate their Jail Bhara Tehreek festival

in Sindh and added that pick and drop service will be provided to them.

He said that PTI MPs, parliamentarians and supporters should give their names for voluntarily arrest. If they are reluctant to forward their name to Sindh government, they should disclose it to media. He said that Imran Khan is disappointed with Jail Bhara Tehreek as not a single person in Sindh ready to render arrest in jail Bhara Tehreek.

The provincial minister said that Imran Khan considers himself a world leader and has large followers and admirers in the UK and the whole world, then he should start a Jail Bhara movement in the UK as well. He said that he should start the Jail Bhara Movement there from his home and present his three children for the Jail Bhara Movement as Imran Khan is only forcing youth of Pakistan to participate in Tahreek.

In response to another question, the provincial minister said that the great leader of Pakistan Shaheed Zulifqar Ali Bhutto, who gave the constitution and nuclear power to the country, had been judicially mur-

dered.

He said that former President Asif Ali Zardari filed a reference in the Supreme Court seeking justice for Shaheed Zulifqar Ali Bhutto but the Supreme Court of Pakistan has no time to initiate hearing on the reference and it was still pending, while Suo Moto action is taken immediately on small matters. He said that wherever relief has to be given to the 'ladlas', the courts are opened at 12 o'clock at night and on Sundays as well. He said that Pakistan People's Party has remained biggest victim of judicial activism.

He said that Pakistan People's Party had criticized the decisions of the court but never targeted the judiciary. He said that the country could not be run in this manner. It is an alarming situation in the country. On the question of digital census, Sharjeel Inam Memon said that Sindh government will support every such initiative under which the process of digital census is ensured in a transparent manner and added they have no political disagreement with anyone on this matter.

# JUI senator Haidari calls on Mohsin Naqvi

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi has assured to resolve all issues related to religious scholars and Madrasahs.

He was talking to Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) secretary general Senator Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haidari who called on the Chief Minister here on Monday.

JUI leaders Maulana Amjad Khan, Maulana Saleem Ullah Qadri, Afzal Khan, and Maulana Safi Ullah were also included among the guests.

Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haidari congratulated Mohsin Naqvi on becoming the Chief Minister.

The political situation of Punjab and other issues were discussed in

the meeting.

They apprised the Chief Minister of the problems related to madrassas and mosques in the meeting. Mohsin assured them to solve their problems on the war footing.

Thanking Mohsin Naqvi, senator Abdul Ghafoor Haidari expressed hope that he will take all the political parties together in Punjab.

**Punjab CM calls upon Governor:** Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi called upon Governor Balighur Rehman, 24NewsHD TV channel reported on Monday.

The ongoing situation and administrative affairs came under discussion during the meeting at the

Governor's House.

Mohsin Naqvi took charge as the chief minister following the Punjab Assembly stood dissolved 48 hours after former chief minister Parvez Elah moved the advice.

On December 17, PTI Chairman Imran Khan announced that his Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments would dissolve their assemblies to pave the way for fresh elections. The ex-premier has been on a campaign for snap polls since his ouster from the PMO through a no-confidence motion by the opposition. He blamed regime change on the US but Washington denies any wrongdoing.

## Bohra community arranges food fest to present its cultural richness

KARACHI (NNI): Different communities have their unique ways to cook and serve food. Pakistan is a country rich in ethnic and cultural diversity with people belonging to a variety of communities.

In Karachi, Pakistan's largest city in terms of population, the diversity and uniqueness are even more as this is a metropolitan with almost 25 million people. Karachi's Bohra community has its unique way of preparing and serving food to the people of other groups. This year the Dawoodi's Bohra Community arranged the food festival from February 24 to 26 at the North Walk Mall in the city Nazimabad's neighbourhood. The food was of multiple range with Bohra chicken, Bohra biryani, cutlets, malai khaja, khoasay, gur pappi, bharta, sev puri, paani puri, dosa, pao bhaji, vada pao, and beverages topped the list.

The important aspect about the food fest was a specific way the people consumed food – by adopting Bohra's style. In this particular way, eight people sat around one thaal (a large tray) and enjoyed their food. The event organizers said that the major purpose behind the fest was to make people familiar with the foods of Bohra community.

# Cambridge Principals Forums in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad for educators in Pakistan

KARACHI (PPI): Cambridge International has held Cambridge Principals Forums in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad for educators in Pakistan this month for the first time since the Covid-19 pandemic. More than 509 leaders and educators from 411 Cambridge schools came together at the events in three cities to discuss the theme 'Ready for the World'.

Dr. Mark Winterbottom, Professor of Education at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge delivered the keynote session on "Positive classrooms, positive students: creating a positive learning environment". Participants discussed key topics such as creating student and teaching autonomy, how it helps students in developing world-ready skills and how it encourages teachers to create a positive learning environment for students in classrooms.

The keynote was followed by an informative panel discussion titled "Building Better Futures: developing world-ready skills in students".

The diverse panels in all three cities included education thought leaders, industry experts as well as students from top universities who shared their perspec-

tives on the skills students need to develop to navigate future challenges, and how education can help develop these skills. "As our world rapidly changes, we must equip our students with essential skills that transcend academic achievements and prepare them for real-life experiences," said, Uzma Yousuf, Country Director, Pakistan at Cambridge International.

"By instilling these skills early on in a student's education journey, we are empowering them to traverse and solve the challenges of the future with confidence and resilience. Now, more than ever, we must prioritise the development of these skills in our students", she added.

Cambridge is breaking new ground in education once again. At the recent Principals Forum, they made an exciting announcement of launching an Early Years curriculum specifically designed for children aged 3 to 6.

Developed by experts and based on cutting-edge research, this internationally benchmarked curriculum will give young learners a solid foundation to build on as they progress through their education journey. By mastering essential skills at an early age, students will

be better equipped to tackle challenges and thrive in all aspects of their lives, from school to work and beyond. Cambridge is committed to setting the bar high for education, and this new Early Years curriculum is no exception! Cambridge is not just about earning qualifications; it's about developing skills that will serve students for a lifetime. The Cambridge philosophy was also supported by leaders from universities and other industries at a panel discussion at the event.

The panellists unanimously agreed that by combining a structured learning process with extracurricular activities, schools can create a holistic environment that fosters growth, creativity, and innovation. The panellists also emphasised that apart from enabling students to learn knowledge and skills, the learning process should also enable students to discover their full potential and to unlock a world of possibilities! Highlighting the importance of such events, one participant noted, "By gathering at events like this, we have the opportunity to share our experiences and perspectives, and to learn from one another about how we can best prepare our students for success in the real world."



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister Atta Tarar addressing an important press conference.





# Graduated students real ambassadors of Pakistan, says Governor KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali has said that students can play a key role in the development of the country and meeting the challenges faced by the nation. He was addressing the 6th convocation at the University of Malakand as chief guest here on Monday.

The caretaker minister Shafiullah Khan and vice chancellor Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad also addressed the function. The Governor awarded 173 students who graduated in BS, master, M.Phil and PhD courses with degrees while 59 students were awarded with gold medals.

Addressing the function the Governor said the students and researchers should focus on their studies as they were the real ambassadors of the country abroad.

He said that education

was the only way out of all the basic problems and challenges faced by the nation. He said the students had the responsibility of taking the country out of the ignorance on their shoulders.

While congratulating the graduated students and their parents, he said that the literacy rate in Korea was 97 % while in Pakistan it was only 11 % ( 62.5 % in actual). The Governor announced the recruitment of one of the special persons at the varsity who also graduated from the University of Malakand.

Earlier addressing the function the VC Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad said the UoM started its journey in 2002 with less than two hundred students in only 7 disciplines but had progressed to achieve its goals and today it offered services in more than 70 programs at the undergraduate level in its 30 departments. He said that over 10,000

students were enrolled in the varsity.

The VC informed the chief guest about the needs of the university and demanded the regularization of contract employees, construction of a Jamia Masjid and provision of Sui gas and adequate funds for the purchase of five buses for the students.

The ANP senator Haji Hidayatullah Khan, provincial minister Hamid Shah, Pro Vice Chancellor UoM Prof Dr Attaur Rehman, registrar Hayatullah, faculty deans Prof Dr Jameel Ahmad, Deputy Commissioner Iftikhar Ahmed, DPO Tariq Iqbal, social and political activists were also present.

Later on talking to the media the Governor said the ball of elections for the provincial assembly was now in the court of the Supreme Court. He said that he had responded to the letter sent to him by the election commission of

Pakistan regarding holding of the KP elections. The Governor said that the security situation in the province was not favourable for the elections and protecting human lives was more important. He said the ECP wanted 67000 security officials to perform duties during the election and in such conditions it was difficult to hold free and fair elections.

Meanwhile the Islami Jamiat Tulba, a students' wing of the Jamaat-i-Islami condemned the UoM administration for closing the varsity for two days during the Governor's visit. In a press release issued here on Monday the IJT provincial nazim Wasim Haidar said that it was pathetic to restrict students' studies on the pretext of a VIP movement. He said the hostels were forcibly vacated from the students. He said the IJT strongly condemned the closure of the varsity for two days.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali addressing 6th convocation at University of Malakand.

## PHC dismisses WPs against DSPs promotion

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Rooh-ul-Amin and Justice Ijaz Anwar has dismissed writ petitions against recently promoted Deputy Superintendents of Police (DSPs).

The counsel for promoted officers Amin-ur-Rehman Advocate informed that provincial government has prepared working papers for promotion of Inspectors to DSPs on vacant seats. He argued that

Advance Course is mandatory under Police Rules for promotion to DSP rank.

Following Supreme Court judgements in this regard the merit list was reshuffled in which some policemen came up for promotion while someone gone to bottom. The newcomers to the merit list was directed for 16th Advance Course to become eligible for promotion DSP rank, the counsel argued.

However, Sikandar Shah along with other DSPs who gone to bottom has challenged the 16th Advance

Course at PHC and seeking to consider previous advance course while High Court has granted status quo in this regard.

Although, Aman-ur-Rehman along with other approached Peshawar High Court (PHC) arguing that junior officers are promoting by Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) while seeking to didn't finalize the procedure till disposal of writ petition.

It is worthy to mention that the second writ leads to concealment of earlier writ

in which status quo was granted by Peshawar High Court.

The divisional bench of PHC comprising of Justice Rooh-ul-Amin and Justice Ijaz Anwar has dismissed both the writ petitions after conclusion of arguments while Provincial Police Chief, Additional Inspector General of Police headquarters, AIGP Investigation, Capital City Police Officer, RPO Mardan& Kohat and AIGP Establishment were made respondents in the petitions.



PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Imdadullah Bosal presiding over Provincial Census Coordination Committee meeting.

## ‘Census to help obtain quality data for better development planning’

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Imdadullah Bosal has said that census, detailed population enumeration, is imperative for better development planning and resource allocation, adding that census is an excellent exercise to obtain quality data for this purpose.

The Chief Secretary expressed these views while presiding over the Provincial Census Coordination Committee meeting here on Monday. Provincial Census Commissioner, Additional Chief Secretary, concerned administrative secretaries

and others attended the meeting while commissioners and deputy commissioners participated through video link.

The meeting reviewed preparations and arrangements for the 7th National Housing and Population Census (first digital census) in which officials from education and other government departments will participate.

The meeting was informed that the facility of self-enumeration has also been introduced under which all individuals can submit their data on the online web portal of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

However, from March 1 to April 1, 2023, enumerators will go door-to-door to collect information.

Highlighting the importance of census, the Chief Secretary said that it is a national duty and enumerators should be provided with all necessary facilities to carry it out efficiently.

He said cooperation between enumerators and respondents was essential and hoped that the first digital census would ensure data quality.

The Chief Secretary urged all the stakeholders to jointly take steps to play a meaningful role in the entire census process.

## PHC stops division of PESCO

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court comprising of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Syed Arshad Ali has stopped division of Peshawar Electricity Supply Company (PESCO) in two distribution bodies, on Monday.

Hydro-electric Labor Union has challenged Prime Minister notification issued in this regard while Shumail Ahmad Butt argued the case on behalf of petitioners before High Court.

The counsel Shumail Ahmad Butt Advocate argued that Prime Minister has announced establishment separate distribution company for Hazara while issued notification this regard for division of PESCO which is against the law.

It is possible following approval from Board of Directors while Prime Minister has no jurisdiction to divided power distribution company, the advocate argued.

The divisional of PHC comprising of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Syed Arshad Ali stopped division of PESCO into two companies and issued notices to respondents after initial arguments.

## Shopkeepers agree on removal of encroachments

PESHAWAR (APP): Shopkeepers of the Liaquat Bazaar Peshawar Cantonment have agreed on voluntary removal of encroachments from the bazaar.

In this connection, a meeting was held here with Shaukatullah Hamdard in the chair. Besides, Station House Officer (SHO) Police Station West Cantt, Javed Khan, Arsalan Khan, Faizan Khan, Haji Riyasat, Haji Nazim, Haji Jehangir and Haji Fayyaz Shakeel, president Tajir Itehad, KP Mujeeb-ur-Rehman also attended the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, president Tajir Itehad KP, Mujeeb-ur-Rehman urged the trading community to take collective decisions in the interest of their bazaar and particularly regarding encroachments.

All shopkeepers agreed on drawing a four-foot line to identify encroachments and then Cantonment Board and Police should jointly carry out an operation to remove all vendors outside shops.

## ECP fixes dates for filing applications for postal ballot papers

PESHAWAR (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has fixed dates for submission of applications for obtaining postal ballot papers from government employees.

According to a press release issued by the Provincial Election Commission here on Monday, for first phase of by-election on 8 vacant seats of National Assembly on March 16, all those government employees and their families,

whose votes are registered in these constituencies and residing outside it due to employment can submit applications for casting their votes through postal ballot till March 2 while last for submission of such applications for the residents of 16 constituencies of the second phase till March 5, 2023.

The facility is especially also available for persons with disabilities having national identity cards (NICs) for special people and also for imprisoned persons, who are the registered voters of these constituencies.

Meanwhile, all such employees including security personnel, who are deployed for duty at polling stations and their votes are also registered in the same constituency are also directed to file applications for postal ballot paper within the period of three days of the issuance of posting order with their respective Returning

Officer (RO) on the drafted form.

The draft application form could be obtained from the office of the concerned Returning Officer or downloaded from the website of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). These applications will be dispatched to the heads of their departments.

The persons issued postal ballot papers will not cast direct votes in polling stations.

## Technical orientation session on planning and budgeting held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Planning & Development Department of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with technical assistance from The Sub-National Governance (SNG) Programme, funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) of the UK, organized a technical orientation session on Planning & Budgeting for Elected Representatives of the Newly Merged Districts of Orakzai and Hangu, 31 officials, including women and minorities attended the session, held at Hangu's DC office.

The orientation aimed to equip the elected local representatives with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively perform their duties under the new local government system. The workshop was the first of its kind in the Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and focused on development planning, budget making process, and budget execution.

The attendees included Chairmen of Tehsil Councils, Hangu, Thall, as well as Lower Orakzai and Upper Orakzai of District Orakzai.

The Chief Guest, DC Hangu, Mr. Fazle Akbar, appreciated the SNG programme for providing capacity building support to District Hangu. He emphasized the importance of strengthening public institutions, enhancing the quality of governance, and



improving service delivery.

The SNG programme works towards achieving these objectives by providing technical assistance and capacity building to support the government in implementing policies and reforms at the provincial

and local levels. Its goal is to strengthen democracy, promote economic growth and reduce poverty in Pakistan through governance reforms and service delivery improvement.

This technical orientation session is a step

towards achieving the SNG programme's objectives and will help elected representatives of the Newly Merged Districts of Orakzai and Hangu to perform their duties effectively under the new local government system.

## KP Bar Council announces protest on March 1

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council on Monday announced protest not to appear in the courts on March 1, in order that since 2017 no elevation from Peshawar High Court is made despite number of seats are vacant in August Supreme Court of Pakistan.

According to a press release issued here that the vacant seats should be filled through elevation from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Peshawar High Court due to the reasons that Pakistan is a federation and Supreme Court of Pakistan being the Apex constitutional court of the federation must have proper representation of all the federating units.

In case any constitutional and legal issue arises between the center and the ederating units or among the different federating units then proper represen-

tation of people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is necessary in the Supreme Court of Pakistan to resolve that issue.

Regarding the issue of elevation, even the pending petition of Late Chief Justice Waqar Ahmed Seth was not decided by the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Therefore, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council demanded early meeting of Judicial Commission of Pakistan under article 175 A of the constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973 to resolve this important constitutional issue to minimize sense of deprivation in the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and to record our protest the lawyers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa not appear in courts on Wednesday throughout the province.

In this regard very soon all Pakistan Lawyer's Representatives convention will also be called in Peshawar.



PESHAWAR: Insaf Doctors Forum's Dr. Nabi Jan Afridi addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

## Bus Rapid Transit launches new Zu Cards for commuters

PESHAWAR (APP): Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Peshawar introduced a new design for Zu Card on Monday.

The colour of the new card has been designed green in the context of the brand colour of Zu Peshawar, which is also the national colour of Pakistan,

said a spokesperson of the TransPeshawar, operator of the BRT service.

New design for the Card has been launched on (Monday) and the price of the card is fixed at the rate of Rs.300/- and will be available at all BRT stations. However, the issu-

ance of new cards will not affect hold card holders and commuters can use it as usual.

It said that due to increase in the value of dollar, the cost of the production of card has increased, which has prompted the service to increase the price

of the card.

The spokesperson told in initial phase 1.5 million Zu Cards were made and out of which 0.4 million were distributed free of cost and now about 1.5 million cards have been issued so far. No increase is made in the fare of the BTR service.





## In brief

### BHU Surkas inaugurated F.P. Report

KHYBER: Newly constructed Basic Health Unit (BHU) Surkas has been inaugurated which is completed by security forces, on Monday. The construction work for the BHU started in May 2022 and was completed in February 2023. The project's scope included the construction of the main building, staff living quarters, a boundary wall, a lavatory block, drilling for water and installation of a piping system. The inauguration ceremony was attended by local Malik and residents of the area. Bilawal Afridi, former MPA, was the chief guest at the occasion. The newly constructed BHU will cater to the medical needs of the local population and provide them with access to quality healthcare services. The facility is expected to benefit several people in the area who previously had limited access to healthcare facilities. Security Forces has been working tirelessly to improve the infrastructure in Khyber, and the inauguration of the BHU is another milestone achieved in this regard. The inauguration ceremony ended with a prayer for the success of the BHU and the Security Forces' continued efforts to improve the living conditions of the people in Khyber.

### Food shops inspected F.P. Report

MARDAN: Additional Assistant Commissioner Aftab Alam on special duty inspected the food shops and inspected the sale of expired and unsanitary items, cleaning, the official price list and handing over sales accordingly. According to details, imposed fines for poor sanitation, violation of official rate list and issued instructions to enforce health principles. The Additional Assistant Commissioner checked the sale at petrol pumps as per the gauge and the official fixed rate and imposed a penalty for collecting excess rate. While visiting more flour mills, checked bag weight, flour quality and records, issued instructions to flour mill managers not to compromise on flour quality and bag. Instructions were issued to ensure uninterrupted supply.

### Ice-drug addict kills son F.P. Report

TAKHTBHAI: A drug-addict has opened firing on his wife and son in which his succumbed to injuries while the spouse was shifted to Mardan Medical Complex, on Monday. According to details, the alleged murder is also principal at government schools Kalam Swat. The alleged murder identified as Shahjahan while he is also disable from one leg. Police has registered First Information Report on deceased statement at hospital and arrested alleged murderer and Ice-drug addict. Police also recovered two pistols from his possession and started further interrogation from the alleged murderer.

**Three commits suicide**  
SIALKOT (PPI): A man committed suicide by jumping into a canal along with his two children over a domestic row in Sambrial city of Sialkot on Monday. Rescue 1122 said that the bodies of father, Abdul Rauf, and one child have been recovered while the divers are making efforts to fish out the body of the other child.



**HYDERABAD: Workers of TLP burning tyres on road during a shutter down strike against skyrocketing inflation.**

## Hassan town became sewage

**Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman**

HAFIZABAD: Despite the order of Deputy Commissioner, dirty water could not be removed from Hassan Town of Hafizabad area, due to which the said area turned into sewage (pond) and started spreading stench. Residents of the area protested against the negligence and carelessness of the officers and staff of the Municipal Committee.

According to the details, several feet of dirty water has stood in the streets due to the filling of sewers and non-cleaning of the drains near Mohallah Hassan Town, not only stench are spreading in the area, but it has also become impossible for the residents of the area to come out of their homes and come to the mosque for Prayers (Namaz).

It is pertinent to mention that the Deputy Commissioner visited the said area a few days ago and ordered the staff to remove the dirty water, but the Municipal Committee which has become a white elephant, its staff and officers have not yet taken any measures to remove the dirty water, due to which the residents of the area have strongly protested and said that their area is turning into stagnant pond every day. If the dirty water is not cleaned here, they will stage a protest in front of the Deputy Commissioner's office, the residents warned the authorities concerned.

**Fun fair & sport gala held:** A sports gala and fun fair was organized in the Government Centre of Excellence (Danish School) in connection with Jashan-i-Baharan. A large number of teachers and students, including Principal Madam Rabia, participated in the sports gala and fun fair, while Deputy Commissioner Umar Farooq Warraich inaugurated the Jashan-i-Baharan celebrations.

On this occasion, Deputy Commissioner said that events like sports gala and fun fair increase the mental and physical abilities of students as well as their academic performance. The Punjab government is happy to organize Jashan-i-Baharan for the promotion of sports and positive activities and various colorful events are going on across the district. He said that along with teaching and learning in educational institutions, by organizing activities like sports and art fairs, the hidden abilities of students are highlighted

and they get the best opportunity to show their essence in practice. The DC encouraged the schoolgirls for organizing various sports competitions, food stalls, paintings and other programs. Deputy Commissioner also planted a sapling in the school as part of the plantation campaign.

**Islamia women college secure 1st position in sport gala:** Government Islamia Graduate College for Women, Hafizabad won the first position across the division in the Government Intercollegiate Sports Gala competitions in cricket, gymnastics and triple jump in connection with Jashan-i-Baharan.

According to Principal College Prof. Shumaila Yaseen, the teams of Government Islamia Graduate College for Women had achieved the most success in the district level competitions and now in the divisional competitions the cricket, gymnastics and triple jump teams of the college won the first position while achieved third position across the division in discus throw, long jump, javelin throw and volleyball matches. She said that the teams that won the divisional competitions will now participate in the provincial level competitions. She congratulated all the players and their in-charge teachers for winning the competition.

**Police arrests 10 in anti-kites flying drive:** Police have arrested 10 people involved in selling and flying kites in the city Hafizabad and recovered huge quantity of kites and string from accused. City police have registered separate cases against accused.

In-charge Citizen Police lesion Committee Hafizabad Rana Khalid Mahmood appreciated steps taken by the District Police Officer Hafizabad Dr. Fahad Ahmad for eliminating menace of kite flying and displaying of arms in the district.

He said that due to affective measures against displaying arms, not only occurring of untoward incidents have been decreased the great extant but sense of security also prevailing among society. He demanded the Punjab government to increase police strength in the district according to proportion of population and at least two thousand vacancies of cops be approved for the district Hafizabad so that law and order situation could be further improved in the area.

## Minister assures redressal of journalist's problems

**F.P. Report**

PARACINAR: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resources Sajid Turi has said that the sacrifices of journalists in the merged tribal districts are not hidden from anyone and the government is taking serious steps to solve the problems of journalists.

Speaking at the swearing-in ceremony of the new cabinet of Kurram Press Club Parachinar, Chief Guest Federal Minister Sajid Turi said that the jour-

nalists of Parachinar and Kurram district are reporting in a very positive manner and Kurram Press Club is an active organization of which they are proud. Addressing the ceremony, President Majlis Additional Deputy Commissioner Moazzam Khan Bangash said that the journalists of Karam are dealing with public issues in a better way, which efforts are being made to solve them.

Earlier in his speech, President of Kurram Press Club Parachinar Ali Afzal Afzal thanked the Federal

Minister Sajid Turi and other honored guests and described the performance of the Press Club. In addition to giving two lakh rupees and also announced the construction of a head tank, Sajid Turi said that a meeting will be held with the responsible authorities of the delegation of all the merged tribal districts including Parachinar District Kurram because journalists are also the most active part of the society and their government will make every possible effort to solve the problems.

## Forest Dept foils timber smuggling

**F.P. Report**

TIMERGARA: Forest department has foiled attempt of timber smuggling in different areas while took custody of five vehicles while transporting high-value timber.

While carrying out operations against the timber-laden vehicles, the attempt to smuggle highly valuable timber failed and hundreds of feet of valuable timber were confiscated by the government while a heavy fine was collected from the accused. He said that practical measures have been taken to protect forests and

prevent smuggling and wherever a complaint of deforestation and smuggling is received, the forest department takes immediate action.

**Residents flayed unscheduled load shedding & Low voltage:** The long load shedding and low voltage of electricity in Tehsil Khal has raised its head once again due to which traders and citizens are facing severe problems. Rabat, Manjai, Odigram has once again started a series of long load shedding of electricity and the electricity remains missing for hours day and night due to which the business life has

been paralyzed and the citizens are facing serious problems, the people of the area say.

On the one hand, there is no electricity in the area for hours on end, on the other hand, the people of the area are being cheated on their pockets with heavy electricity bills and the people of the area have become unable to pay the heavy bills and fines. It has been threatened that if the series of long load-shedding, low voltage and heavy bills of electricity is not stopped immediately, then the people of the area will come out on the streets.

## Preparation for 7th Census reviewed Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Commissioner Malakand Division Shahid Ullah Khan chaired an important meeting regarding preparations for the 7th Digital Census were reviewed. Deputy Commissioner Swat, Shangla and Divisional Census Officer Malakand Division participated in the meeting while Deputy Commissioners of the rest of the districts of the division participated through video link.

Commissioner Malakand Division directed all the Deputy Commissioners to complete the arrangements for the door-to-door campaign for the population and household census in the districts starting from March 1, 2023 and supervise all the processes to complete this national duty in the best way possible. Commissioner Malakand further said that this is the first digital census in the history of the country for which the training of the survey staff has been completed and the door-to-door survey will start from March 1, 2023.

Commissioner Malakand added that census has an important and key role to know the future needs and in order to fulfill this national duty smoothly, the residents of Malakand Division are requested to fully cooperate with the Census Survey Team.

## 4 coal miners shot dead

HARNAI (PPI): Four miners were killed while three others sustained injuries after unidentified gunmen opened fire in the residential area of Khost Coal Mines in district Harnai of Balochistan province of Monday. Armed gunmen set ablaze eleven coal mines.

According to levies, unidentified gunmen opened indiscriminate fire in the residential area of Khost Coal Mines area of Harnai, resolutely, four miners namely Nur Khan, Abdul Hanan, Syed Hanan and Abdul Rehman were killed while three miners namely Shair Zaman, Syed Akram and Baz Muhammad sustained injuries. Before managing to escape, unidentified gunmen set ablaze eleven coal mines. On information, levies and other security forces reached the site, cordoned off the area and shifted the bodies and injured to Khost Hospital. Search for apprehending perpetrators of crime was underway.

## Tribesmen block road F.P. Report

GHALANAI: Tribesmen blocked Bajaur-Peshawar road for traffic against unscheduled load shedding and demanded arrest of driver responsible for accident in which two persons were dead, on Monday.

The tribesmen blocked the road at tehsil Pandyal bazaar while chanted slogans in favor of their demands. The protestors were dispersed peacefully after negotiation with administration. The protestors argued competent authorities to ensure provision of electricity otherwise they will be compelled to arrange protest on larger scale.

## Jirga threatens of blockade of grid station



**F.P. Report**

LANDI KOTAL: The tribesmen threatened that they will siege the local grid station if their demand for provision of at least six hours power supply is not resumed to the area. The decision was made in a grand jirga held here in Tehsil chairman office, administration compound on Monday.

Under the chair of Tehsil chairman Haji Shah Khalid, a large number of people, representing political, social, religious and various sections of the society from the whole sub-division participated in it. Addressing on the occasion those who led the Jirga

were including Haji Shah Khalid, Murad Hussein Afridi, Mirajuddin Afridi, Kaleemullah and others categorically condemned the irresponsible attitude of the federal government and said instead of assist the most ignored citizens of the country, it withdrew the facility of provision power supply that was unfair.

The routine life of the local tribal disturbed due to unavailability of electricity and they were compelled to pitch potable water from water streams in remote localities, they remarked. They rejected the recent direction of TESCO to supply only two hours of electricity round the clock and

said it could not meet their needs.

Through unanimous resolution, the participants also demanded the early transfer of the TESCO chief who had turned blind eyes towards their problems.

Giving three days ultimatum, they warned that if their demand was not addressed then they would have no other option but to blockade the local grid station. When the local grid station crew was contacted on the issue they said that they had been directed by the highup to supply two hours electricity to civilians of merged tribal districts in 24 hours due to energy crises across the country.

## WHO inaugurates nutrition center, water filtration plant

**F.P. Report**

LOWER DIR: The World Health Organization (WHO)'s country representative in Pakistan Dr Palitha Gunarathna Mahipala along with his team on Monday visited the district headquarter hospital Timergara and inaugurated a nutrition stabilization center for newborns and water filtration plant at the facility. The hospital medical superintendent Dr Ali Asghar and other staff warmly welcomed the visiting team.

The WHO team visited different units of the facility and expressed its satisfaction with the hospital performance. The MS briefed the visiting team about the health care facilities provided to local patients. Dr Palitha Mahipala also visited the labour room and announced to provide modern equip-

ment, funds for the labour room renovation and an ambulance vehicle for the hospital.

A function held at the hospital was also attended by district health officer Dr Irshad Rughani, DMS Dr Sheraz, doctors, nurses and area elders. Speaking on the occasion the WHO country director said that according to verified reports every third child in Pakistan had nutritional deficiency that was why special attention had been given to it. He pointed out that the WHO was providing medical care facilities to the flood affected people including a mobile hospital, ambulance vehicles and other equipment with a cost of Rs 40 million.

He said that his organization would never leave the needy people alone. The hospital MS Dr Ali Asghar on behalf of the Lower Dir

people thanked the WHO team for provision of health care facilities to the hospital.

Meanwhile the Al-Khidmat Foundation Women Trust also distributed winter food packages among 200 families from different areas. Speaking during a function held here on Sunday, the AKF women trust district president Saima Muhsin and general secretary Shaista Azam said the recent price hike and inflation had badly affected the lower and lower middle class. They said the AKF had been active in its relief and rehabilitation activities in various parts of the country in order to facilitate the affected families. They said that winter food packages were distributed among the registered families from the Toormang, Samarbagh and Adenzai areas.



**QUETTA: Members of Junior Teachers Association holding a protest in favour of their demands.**

## Residents demand end to unscheduled load shedding

**F.P. Report**

MARDAN: The electricity load shedding in different areas of the city has made life miserable of the citizens while businesses were also affected due to load shedding. The duration of load shedding in rural areas has reached 18 hours, mosques and houses have run out of water.

The people of Char Banda Shankar have said in contact with "Frontier Post" that on one hand the people are suffering from economic crisis and stuck in the mire of inflation and on the other hand they are making up for it with the power cut of WAPDA.

In this regard, the citizens have demanded from caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan,

Commissioner Mardan, Deputy Commissioner Mardan, Mayor Mardan to take measures on an emergent basis to control electricity load shedding, otherwise they will be forced to protest on the streets.

**Excise police arrests two alleged drug dealers:** The Excise Police Station, Mardan region, while conducting an operation on Monday, recovered 2.1 kg of ice and 114 kg of hashish from a drug smuggler, while 2 suspects were arrested.

According to police, narcotics mobile squads under the supervision of Engineer Dr. Eid Badshah, Director Narcotics Control and Zahid Iqbal Khan Excise and Taxation Officer (CNO), under the supervision of Syed Naveed Jamal

Circle Officer Muhammad Riaz SHO Police Station Excise Mardan Region and Azlan Aslam Additional SHO, Shahzad Bacha SI and Dawood Khan ASI during the operation in Charsadda arrested the accused who was going to Qatar through Islamabad Airport an attempt of smuggle of 1.2 kg ice in the bag of the accused Abdullah while 114 kg of hashish was foiled.

The passport and other documents of the accused have also been seized. Accused Sher Khan, the accomplice of the accused was also arrested on the spot. Both the accused belong to Khyber district. After filing a case against the accused, raids are being conducted to arrest other accused of the group.





## Jill Biden sees East Africa drought up close, seeks more aid

LOSITETI, Kenya (AP): US first lady Jill Biden got an up-close look at the historic East Africa drought as she walked along arid land and listened as some Maasai women described how their children and livestock are going hungry. She appealed for more countries to join the United States to help alleviate the suffering.

Some areas of the Horn of Africa have endured five consecutive failed rainy seasons, meaning there was no rainfall or an insufficient amount to help farmers with their crops and livestock. An upcoming sixth rainy season, beginning in March, is expected to be about the same or worse. Biden, who was on the final day of a five-day visit to Africa, toured an outreach center in the town operated by World Vision with support from UNICEF and the World Food Program. She chatted with people who had brought their children to be screened for malnutrition and she participated in a discussion with a group of women, including a mother of 10 children, who shared their stories.

"They talked about how their livestock are dying. Obviously, you can see the drought here, how bad it is," the first lady told reporters afterward. "The one source of water here feeds 12 villages and each village has approximately a thousand to 1,200 people." "So they are coming here, the people are coming to get water, they're bringing their livestock to get water. But unfortunately, for many of them, the way they make their living is from their livestock and for most of them, the livestock are dying, so they're having a hard time," she said.

Biden noted that the United States has provided 70% of the money sent to the region to help alleviate the suffering, "but we cannot be the only ones." "We need to have other countries join us in this global effort to help these people of the region," she said, adding that the drought was competing with humanitarian efforts tied to Russian's war in Ukraine and an earthquake that killed tens of thousands of people in Turkey and Syria. "I mean, there are a lot of competing interests but, obviously here, people are actually, livestock, people are starving," she said.

Meg Whitman, the US ambassador to Kenya, who accompanied Biden, said people know intellectually what's going on in the region but "it's different when you just see it." Underscoring Biden, Whitman said that "everyone needs to help as best we can here because this is going to continue for the foreseeable future." Members of the Maasai community, who are predominantly herders, live in Kajiado county where Biden visited.



Nearly 23 million people in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya are thought to be highly food insecure, which means they do not know where they will find their next meal, according to a food security working group chaired by the UN. Food and Agriculture Organization and the regional Intergovernmental Authority on Development. A Maasai elder, Mingati Samanya, 69, said he lost 10 cows during the recent prolonged dry season and struggled to find hay for the rest of his herd. "The short rains last year were insufficient and right now we are back to struggling for pasture. We hope the long rains will be enough," he told The Associated Press in a telephone interview.

Biden sought to use her stature to help focus the world's attention on the worsening humanitarian crisis in East Africa by touring the drought-stricken area near Kenya's border with Tanzania. On the nearly three-hour drive south of Nairobi, the capital, Biden's lengthy motorcade passed over dry river and creek beds. Numerous cows were walking alongside the highway - many so thin that their ribs were showing. Throngs of people lined both sides of the motorcade route at various points, waving or using their cellphones to record the event.

Some 4.4 million people in Kenya are facing high levels of food insecurity, with the number projected to rise to 5.4 million in March, according to an analysis by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. Already, 11 million livestock that are essential to many families' health and livelihood have died. Many of the people affected are farmers who have watched their crops wither and die, and their water sources run dry. Northern Kenya, which is arid and semi-arid and is where pastoralist communities live, is most affected.

The country's agriculture sector

heavily relies on rainfall, and the meteorological department is predicting delayed rains in the upcoming short rainy season that should begin in March. President William Ruto announced last October that his cabinet had lifted a decade-old ban on openly cultivating and importing genetically modified crops. The decision came amid pressure from the US government, which had argued that the ban affected US agricultural exports and food aid. Last week, Ruto led the country in praying for rain.

The first lady has been highlighting the drought along with women and youth empowerment since arriving in Namibia. Biden had visited Kenya in 2011, when her husband, Joe Biden, was serving as vice president, to help raise awareness about what then was considered a severe famine. US officials and aid organizations say the current drought is far worse. About halfway through drive to Lositeti, the first lady traded her black SUV for a smaller one more suited for the rugged terrain ahead. The village was the final stop on a five-day, two-country visit that took her from Namibia, along the Atlantic coast in southern Africa, to Kenya in the east.

It was her sixth visit overall to Africa, and her first as first lady. She traveled with her granddaughter, Naomi Biden, who is 29. Biden met throughout the week with young people, women and entrepreneurs as she promoted US-backed programs that teach about HIV/AIDS, preventing infection and safe sex practices. Other programs she visited help people learn skills to find jobs or start businesses to support their families. Along the way, she managed to make some news with her comments in an interview with the AP in which she gave the strongest indication yet that her husband will seek to be reelected in 2024.

## China should be judged by its actions, not words

BERLIN (Reuters): German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius reacted with scepticism to a Chinese ceasefire proposal for the war in Ukraine. "When I hear reports - and I don't know whether they are true - according to which China may be planning to supply kamikaze drones to Russia while at the same time presenting a peace plan, then I suggest we judge China by its actions and not its words," he told German public broadcaster Deutschlandfunk in an interview.

Pistorius was echoing comments by NATO and the European Commission who both raised doubts about Beijing's credibility as a mediator after it published a ceasefire proposal. Beijing offered the proposal, the first anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. President Volodymyr Zelenskiy welcomed some elements of the Chinese proposal but said only the country where a war is being fought should be the initiator of a peace plan. Pistorius underlined it was up to Kyiv to decide when and under what conditions to enter talks with Moscow, and he suggested the same was true for any decision on recapturing the Crimea peninsula that Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014. "I am leaning towards saying, yes, Crimea is Ukrainian territory and it therefore has to be given back," he said in the interview. "But again: This is not a decision that's up to us to take." Zelenskiy says his troops will eventually drive Russia from all the captured territory, including the Crimea peninsula.

## Perry court fight keeping over 2,000 records

WASHINGTON (Reuters): A Republican congressman's court battle to protect his cellphone records has prevented federal investigators from reviewing over 2,200 documents in their investigation of then-President Donald Trump's efforts to overturn the result of the 2020 election, according to newly unsealed court documents. Judge Beryl Howell, chief judge for the US District Court of the District of Columbia, unsealed four opinions in which she found that "powerful public interest" outweighed Republican Representative Scott Perry's asserted need for secrecy under the US Constitution. The documents were released.

Perry - a Trump ally who helped spread false claims that the 2020 election was stolen through widespread voting fraud - has sought to prevent the Justice Department from reviewing the contents of his cellphone since it was seized last summer. The lawmaker maintains that his cellphone's contents are shielded from disclosure under a constitutional provision that gives members of Congress immunity from civil litigation or criminal prosecution for actions arising in the course of their legislative duties. Perry's conduct is under scrutiny by Special Counsel Jack Smith's office because of the prominent role Perry played in the lead-up to the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol by thousands of Trump supporters trying to block Congress from certifying Democrat Joe Biden's election victory.

An investigation by the US House of Representatives' Jan. 6 committee last year revealed Perry was in frequent contact with Trump White House officials in the weeks before the attack. An attorney for Perry asked an appellate court to reverse Judge Howell's lower court ruling that his communications were not within a "legitimate legislative sphere." A Justice Department attorney urged the judicial panel not to block the congressman's cellphone from investigators.

Howell had ordered Perry to turn over 2,055 SMS text messages, emails and attachments out of 2,219 documents contained on his phone, after concluding that they were only incidentally related to his status as a lawmaker and not central to that role as a member of Congress.

## Refugee-averse Japan welcomes Ukrainians after war

TOKYO (AP): Dmytro Remez quietly shows on his laptop before and after photos of buildings, clicking to once elegant offices and hotels that turned into lopsided abandoned rubble. One crumbling building was right in front of his home in Mykolaiv, southern Ukraine.

Remez, 24, a fledgling medical doctor studying at Juntendo University, is among the 2,291 Ukrainians who have moved to Japan since the war with Russia began a year ago. "It's ridiculous. The main purpose is to destroy everything. If you look at the cities for which they are fighting, the cities are totally destroyed," he said, sitting in his tiny, but clean, modern dorm in Tokyo. "No one will live in the cities in the future. So for what? Why? Why do you do this?" His flight-to-safety story is a rare one in a nation that has a reputation for closing its doors to asylum seekers.

Japan accepted just 74 refugees, mostly from African nations in 2021, the latest year for which such data are available, according to the Justice Ministry. That's fewer than 1% of 2,413 applicants. Technically, Ukrainians aren't even categorized as "refugees," but called "evacuees." The system for accepting Ukrainians works without Japan having to change its overall refugee policy. The Japanese government has repeatedly expressed its solidarity with the US and other Western nations in supporting Ukraine in its war against Russia. A significant portion of the money helping Ukrainians in Japan has come from Nippon Foundation, a nonprofit that directs motorboat racing revenue to philanthropy. Nippon Foundation initially committed 5 billion yen (\$37 million) to help Ukrainians, including travel costs, housing and living expenses, and has since raised the amount to 8.58 billion yen (\$64 million) over three years.

It's among the largest donations made in reaction to Russia's invasion of Ukraine a year ago, with other major gifts in cash and services coming from American technology companies like Microsoft as well as European foundations and companies with a charitable mission. Private donations tallied by the US nonprofit Candid found that \$1.2 billion was donated since

the outbreak of the war. For comparison, the UN, has received \$3.4 billion in commitments or donations mostly from governments to fund its humanitarian response to the war. Nippon Foundation, founded by politician and businessman Ryoichi Sasakawa in 1962, has now given aid to 1,921 Ukrainians in Japan. The group has been honored with various international awards. The organization is now headed by Yohei Sasakawa, Ryoichi Sasakawa's son. Its charity work includes fighting leprosy, disaster relief, help for people with disabilities and various scholarships, under its motto "to achieve a society in which all people support one another."

Hayao Nijijima, who oversees protection and assistance at the Japan Association for Refugees, says the way Japan grants refugee status is very narrow, and the procedure difficult, compared to the global standard. Her organization helps refugees in Japan in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, or UNHCR. Nijijima said that dozens of people hoping to live in Japan are now homeless. Those numbers are expected to grow, since entry restrictions for the coronavirus pandemic were lifted in October.

"There is definitely a big difference in treatment for Ukrainians," Nijijima said, while noting she is supportive of all people who seek safety in Japan, including Ukrainians. Remez doesn't appear overly interested in the inner workings of his aid package. He is just grateful for the support he's received, especially from the university and his professors, and all that he is learning, going every day to the university hospital. The other day, he learned about the CT scan. Another day, he had fun taking part in a relay running race with nurses and doctors, the only Ukrainian on the team.

The full-tuition opportunity, complete with plane tickets, to continue his studies was the only such option he found online. It just happened to be Japan, he recalled with a smile. And he considers himself lucky. The people are friendly. If he gets lost, people go out of their way to help him.

## Italy's left picks Elly Schlein to rebuild party

ROME (Reuters): Italy's opposition centre-left Democratic Party (PD) picked Elly Schlein, a 37-year-old US-Italian national who grew up in Switzerland, to be its new leader and rebuild the group after its election rout last year. Despite trailing in the polls, Schlein defeated veteran PD stalwart Stefano Bonaccini in a ballot of PD supporters by around 54% to 46%, after promising to make her party more radical to challenge the ruling conservative coalition.

Schlein will lead opposition in parliament to Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, with two women for the first time in Italian history heading the country's two main parties. Schlein and Meloni have different stances on an array of issues. Meloni portrays herself as the defender of tradi-

tional families and the Roman Catholic Church teachings on sex and abortion. Schlein is in a relationship with a woman and supports LGBTQ+ rights and gender equality.

Schlein worked on former US President Barack Obama's campaign team in 2008 and 2012 and has been compared in the Italian media to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a Democratic politician from New York, for her unexpected rise and activist zeal. She has said she wants to unite her divided party and work on transitioning to a greener economy, labour reform and wealth distribution. "The democratic people are alive and are ready to rise up. This is a clear mandate for real change," Schlein said. "We will put the battle against every type of inequality and

precariousness centre stage."

Although she has promised a new start for the party, many of the PD's grandees have rallied behind her in recent weeks. Bonaccini is president of the wealthy region of Emilia-Romagna and promoted himself as a sound administrator. Polls suggested he would easily beat Schlein, but in the end he only drew strong backing in the more traditionalist south. Schlein faces a monumental struggle if she hopes to heal divisions within her party and beat Meloni's conservative bloc in the next national election in 2027. Although the PD came second in the 2022 ballot, polls show it has lost touch with working-class voters and it failed to present any strong rallying cry in last year's campaign.

## Assad meets senior Arab lawmakers

DAMASCUS (Reuters): A delegation of senior Arab parliamentarians met with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus, another sign of thawing ties after more than a decade of isolation over the conflict in Syria. The heads of the Iraqi, Jordanian, Palestinian, Libyan, Egyptian and Emirati houses of representatives, as well as representatives from Oman and Lebanon, traveled to Syria as part of a delegation from the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union.

They met with Syrian parliamentarians and with Assad, according to Syrian state news agency SANA. "We cannot do without Syria and Syria cannot do without its Arab environ-

ment, which we hope it can return to," said Iraqi parliament speaker Mohammed Halbousi. Syria was largely isolated from the rest of the Arab world following Assad's deadly crackdown against protests that erupted against his rule in 2011.

The Arab League suspended Syria's membership in 2011 and many Arab countries pulled their envoys out of Damascus. But Assad has benefited from an outpouring of support from Arab states following the devastating earthquake on Feb. 6, which killed more than 5,900 people across his country, according to a tally of UN and Syrian government figures. Donors have included Saudi Arabia and

the United Arab Emirates, which both supported rebels seeking to overthrow Assad in the early years of the Syrian conflict.

Egypt's President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi spoke with Assad by phone for the first time on Feb. 7 and Jordan's foreign minister made his first trip to Damascus on Feb. 15. Assad then traveled to Oman on Feb. 20 - the first time he left Syria since the quake. He had rarely left Syria during the war, travelling only to close allies Russia and Iran whose military support helped him turn the tide of the conflict. Assad's 2022 visit to the UAE was his first trip to an Arab state since the 2011 outbreak of war.

## Southern California braces for wind and rain after rare snowfall

CALIFORNIA (Reuters): After a rare snowfall dusted Los Angeles, Southern California is bracing for a series of weak storms that will bring wind and rain this week to coastal areas while Northern and Central California mountain communities could see more heavy snow. Over the past three days, the storm brought the rare sight of snowflakes in Los Angeles, more known for palm trees and sun. But it also brought

heavy rain and some flooding. A motorhome fell into the Santa Clara River after an embankment collapsed, according to a video.

About 70,000 customers in California remained without power, according to PowerOutage, which tracks disruptions. Starting and through, a series of "weak storms" will move through Los Angeles with highs reaching 55 Fahrenheit (13 Celsius), according to The National Weather Service

(NWS). Meanwhile, more severe storms threatening West Coast mountain ranges will bring "significant impacts" on travel, the NWS said in a tweet. The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power tweeted it had restored power to roughly 40,000 people. However, it cautioned that 53,000 people remained without power, and people facing an outage should plan for 24-48 hours before crews could respond.

## Turkey's last Armenian village fears for its future after quake

VAKIFLI, Turkey (Reuters): In Turkey's only remaining ethnic Armenian village, Vakifli, the elderly population thank God that not one of them died during the devastating earthquakes that struck the region. But they fear for the future of their cherished home. Thirty of the village's 40 stone houses, which are single or double storey and surrounded by orange and lemon orchards, are heavily damaged, and since a third huge earthquake hit, the 130 villagers are without power. They gather at the tea house for shelter and warmth.

"Vakifli is all we have, the only Armenian village in Turkey. It is our home. Seeing it like this is breaking my heart," said Masis, a 67-year-old retired jeweller, who moved back to his hometown after spending 17 years in Istanbul. "This village is tiny and our children mostly prefer to live in Istanbul... This is the only home we've ever known. After this disaster, I don't know how long it will take for the village to be rebuilt. I get really scared that most people will leave

and the village will be abandoned," he added. Masis, who gave only his first name, vowed to stay as long as it takes to reconstruct.

Vakifli sits on Moses mountain in the province of Hatay, overlooking Samandag, a city on the western edge of Turkey's long border with Syria. Villagers speak to each other in a local Armenian dialect, known as Moses Mountain Armenian, which is diluted with Arabic and Turkish words. Turkey is overwhelmingly Muslim but hosts some ancient Christian communities - dwindling remnants of sizeable populations that lived in the Muslim-led but multi-ethnic, multi-faith Ottoman Empire, predecessor to modern Turkey. Today, Turkey and Armenia are at odds primarily over the 1.5 million people Armenia says were killed in 1915 by the Ottoman Empire. Armenia says this constitutes genocide.

Turkey accepts that many Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire were killed in clashes with Ottoman forces during

World War One, but contests the figures and denies it was systematic. Last week Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said humanitarian aid sent by Armenia for quake victims could boost efforts to normalise their relations. Berc Kartun, the village head of Vakifli, said his two-storey house had been split open sideways and he was waiting for building inspectors. He had nowhere to store his valuables from the house, he added, sipping Turkish coffee in a paper cup outside the tea house.

Armen Hergel, 64, said she has got used to living in the tea house, which has a small generator and which she dubbed 'the Hilton', but the power outage in the village was a real problem. "We need heating. We are trying to stay warm by drinking tea but the nights are cold and really scary in pitch darkness, with constant aftershocks." She was visiting her daughter in Istanbul when the first two quakes struck. She returned to Vakifli to tidy up.

"We thought the earthquakes had stopped. Then the third one hit on Monday evening and the

damage was so much worse. Now our house is uninhabitable and we live half the time in the tea house and half the time in the tent." Women and men work together in the small kitchen, making soup and rice. Close to the edge of the village stands the Holy Mother of God Armenian church.

Pastor Avedis Tabasyan said the third quake had caused the most damage. The church's stone walls had fallen down and the baptismal font was broken. An altar cloth with embroidered pictures of Mary and Jesus was strewn with pieces of paint from the ceiling. Since the Feb. 6 quake, no Mass has been said. "We were planning to renovate... God has shown us a different way to fix and renew our beloved place," he said.

Can, a 26-year-old man, makes wine in the village, which is mostly sold to tourists. "I studied wine-making in northern Turkey to spend my life here. Now that everything has to be demolished and rebuilt, I have no idea when we will get back on our feet," he said.

Hellerstein sentenced Huberfeld to 30 months, aiming for "approximate equivalence" between his and Seabrook's punishment, as the judge explained in ruling. Then Huberfeld successfully appealed his sentence, which was trimmed to 13 months. In light of that development, Hellerstein concluded that releasing Seabrook now "reflects the seriousness of Seabrook's crime and lack of timely acceptance of responsibility, while also remedying what would otherwise be an unjust sentencing disparity" between the defendants.

## Judge orders ex-jail union boss to be freed in bribery case

NEW YORK (AP): A powerful New York jail union boss-turned-prison inmate is poised to go free less than halfway through his sentence in a corruption case, after a judge decided this week that the nearly five-year term should be reduced.

Norman Seabrook originally was sentenced to 58 months in prison on his federal conviction for taking bribes to put \$20 million in union pension money into a risky hedge fund. The union lost \$19 million. But US District Judge Alvin K. Hellerstein said Seabrook's sentence is now unfair - because a co-defendant appealed and got his own prison term

reduced to just over a year. "There is now an unjust disparity" between the defendants' sentences, Hellerstein wrote in an opinion. Hellerstein himself originally sentenced both defendants. Seabrook, 63, has served about 21 months. He remains in custody for now, as Hellerstein put the ruling on hold for 10 days while prosecutors decide whether to appeal.

Prosecutors declined to comment. A message was sent to Seabrook's attorney. As head of the New York City Correction Officers' Benevolent Association for two decades, Seabrook became a political powerbroker

and held huge influence over how the city's Rikers Island jail complex operated. He made as much as \$300,000 per year.

Prosecutors said he accepted a \$60,000 kickback - delivered in a luxury Ferragamo handbag - in exchange for getting the union to invest in the hedge fund. Seabrook maintained that he did nothing wrong, and that the union simply made a bad investment. After a 2017 mistrial, Seabrook was convicted the next year, though he ultimately didn't have to report to prison until May 2021. Meanwhile, co-defendant Murray Huberfeld, a principal in the hedge fund,

pledged guilty to arranging the payoff.

Hellerstein sentenced Huberfeld to 30 months, aiming for "approximate equivalence" between his and Seabrook's punishment, as the judge explained in ruling. Then Huberfeld successfully appealed his sentence, which was trimmed to 13 months. In light of that development, Hellerstein concluded that releasing Seabrook now "reflects the seriousness of Seabrook's crime and lack of timely acceptance of responsibility, while also remedying what would otherwise be an unjust sentencing disparity" between the defendants.



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# Illegal migration and East's dilemma

A migrant vessel reportedly broke apart while trying to land with about 150 people aboard near the coastal town of Crotone in Southwest Italy. According to the reports, 58 migrants including a baby have died and over 80 people survived including those who managed to reach the shore after the sinking in rough sea waters. Italian authorities told the media that those onboard were mainly from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Iran, and some African nations.

Migration is a divine and healthy phenomenon if it comes through legal means because it benefits both the country of origin and the host nation, in the shape of the transfer of a skilled workforce, exchange of knowledge and expertise, social diversity, economic growth, and modern innovations through the relocation of brilliant minds to developed nations while at the same time, this activity supports the developing countries in lowering the unemployment, help support budgetary needs through foreign remittances and brings prosperity in the poor nations. legal and regular migration has some negative impacts also on both nations including causing a brain drain in developing countries and leading to an increase in population and crimes, waged depression, and stress on public services in the host nations.

Presently, an unimaginable influx of migrants of people of different colors and clans across the world has caused various administrative, fiscal, and law and order issues in the west, and western nationalists leader including America's Donald Trump, Hungarian Viktor Orban, Italy's Georgia Meloni, and others introduced anti-migrants policies and put curbs on legal immigration in their countries. However, people living in famine and violence hit African nations, Afghanistan, and Syria along with Pakistanis fleeing increasing poverty and lawlessness using all possible means to reach the wealthy nations to secure the future of their coming generations.

In fact, poverty, unceasing military conflict, ethnic and religious rivalries, and violence immensely contribute to legal and illegal migration and prompt people residing in Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe to leave their native nations in search of economic opportunities in peaceful and Developed western nations. Meanwhile, criminal gangs, human traffickers, and smugglers exploit people's needs and mobilize worldwide illegal migration which leads to the annual turnover of billions of dollars across the world. Presently, illegal migration has shaped into an industry due to weak legislation, lax border, and immigration regimes, and corruption, while millions of migrants annually move through the dangerous sea and land routes, across mountainous terrains in Eastern Europe, Brazil, and Mexico, while dozens of refugees ships/boats illegally land on Italian and Spanish shores or dock on sea harbors in emergency and humanitarian grounds.

Multiple carnages of mass killings, border shootings, and ship swamps happened over the past years that cost thousands of lives of innocent migrants in the Adriatic and Mediterranean seas and mountainous wild jungles in Brazil and Mexico. The reports suggest that the majority of the victims of the recent migrants' vessel were Pakistanis who risk their lives to reach mainland Europe. Realistically, the resource-rich Pakistan fell victim to the incompetence and corruption of its leaders, which turned the South Asian nation into a unlivable land, thus people consider themselves insecure in their country and rush toward Europe and America to live a prosperous life. Awfully, no one knows how long that situation will persist.

**AFTER South Ossetia, Crimea and Ukraine, Russia may now be coveting two Eastern European territories, Moldova and Transnistria. Russia's interest in Moldova had already become manifest when it proclaimed Transnistria, a disputed area in the east of the country, an independent state. The Russian army has deployed 1,500 soldiers in a military base in Transnistria, qualifying them as peacekeepers. Few countries paid attention to this move.**

The UN does not recognize Transnistria as an independent state, while the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe last year identified Transnistria as a Moldovan territory occupied by Russia. Moldova's efforts to gain independence go back more than a century. In 1812, Moldova, then known as Moldavia, was ceded to Russia by the Ottoman state. In the 1850s, it became part of Romania. Russia recaptured the Moldovan territories in 1878. In 1917, Moldova, then Bessarabia, became an autonomous state within the Russian Republic. It proclaimed its independence the following year, but shortly afterward it agreed to join Romania. Russia contested this move and in 1924 it established the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist

Republic.

The Soviet Union had wanted for a long time to incorporate Bessarabia, which constituted most of present-day Moldova. It carried out this plan in 1940 with a pact signed by the Soviet and German foreign ministers, Vyacheslav Molotov and Joachim von Ribbentrop. The pact allowed the Soviets to annex part of the Romanian territory of Bessarabia to Moldova.

Yasar Yakis

though its diplomatic recognition is very low at present. If new countries recognize Transnistria's statehood, Russia may take additional steps in order to secure its recognition by the UN. This is part of continuity in Russia's state memory. Ironically, the Azerbaijani autonomous region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which is not

common structures with Transnistria. Russia has already cut off most of its natural gas supply to Europe, including Moldova, claiming maintenance and payment issues. Moldovan authorities also complain about Russia's violations of its airspace. This geographical region of Eastern Europe has a very complex ethnic composition.

ed at Transnistria because, for Russia to intervene in this unrecognized territory, it would have to first cross vast Ukrainian lands. This assessment turned out to be wrong. On April 22 last year, Russian Gen. Rustam Minnekayev threatened that the Russian control over southern Ukraine would open the route to Transnistria, which means that Russia is now threatening both Ukraine and the far-

Economic Cooperation. It has also become a member of the Russia-dominated Commonwealth of Independent States. Moscow is now trying to disengage both Transnistria and Moldova from the European structures. Turkiye is closely interested in Moldova because there is a Turkish-speaking autonomous region within the country. It is called Gagauzia, which is inhabited by a Turkic tribe from Central Asia. The Byzantine archives mention that Oghuz tribes, from the 11th century on, settled in Macedonia, Greece and Bulgaria. They were converted to the Orthodox sect of Christianity. The Gagauz, together with the Jewish Karaites living mostly in the Baltic state of Lithuania, are the only non-Muslim peoples who speak Turkish. Karaites are the descendants of the Turkish-speaking Khazar people, who adopted Judaism as their state religion in the early decades of the 10th century.

As a result of Gagauzia, Turkiye-Russia relations may soon face another reversal, but Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin may find common ground to ignore their disagreement on this subject. They have done it several times in the past. And they can do it now that the two leaders need each other's support more than they needed it in the past.

Arab News

***In the 1850s, it became part of Romania. Russia recaptured the Moldovan territories in 1878. In 1917, Moldova, then Bessarabia, became an autonomous state within the Russian Republic. It proclaimed its independence the following year, but shortly afterward it agreed to join Romania. Russia contested this move and in 1924 it established the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. The Soviet Union had wanted for a long time to incorporate Bessarabia, which constituted most of present-day Moldova. It carried out this plan in 1940 with a pact signed by the Soviet and German foreign ministers, Vyacheslav Molotov and Joachim von Ribbentrop. The pact allowed the Soviets to annex part of the Romanian territory of Bessarabia to Moldova.***

We may presume that Russia had a long-term strategy to gain a foothold in the area and explore future opportunities if and when they arose. Russia may consider Transnistria and Moldova as a deal in two steps. In the first step, Moscow may further promote Transnistria, which has a population of less than 1 million, as an independent state, even

recognized either by Russia or Armenia (and which the Armenians call Artsakh), has recognized Transnistria as an independent state. The two other countries that have recognized Transnistria are Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The next step after this may be to shake the foundations of the state of Moldova, as the latter has

tion. Russia has always claimed that Russian-speaking Transnistrians were being oppressed. Moldova's pro-Western Prime Minister Natalia Gavrilita this month handed in her resignation after the violation of her country's airspace by Russia. During the dismemberment of the Soviet Union in 1991, many observers thought that no serious threat was direct-

away Transnistria, as well as, eventually, the Republic of Moldova.

During the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Moldova acted quickly, declaring its independence and becoming a member of major Western European organizations, including the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Black Sea

## Iraq's constitutional reform process must avoid past mistakes

Zaid al-Ali

***IN October last year, the Iraqi parliament approved a new government with a mandate to jump-start political reforms. Among its priorities is the amendment of Iraq's problematic constitution. Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani made the first step in this process by appointing Hassan al-Yasseri as his constitutional adviser. Meanwhile, the parliament has announced that it will form a constitutional revision committee.***

This will not be the first time that Iraq attempts to reform its constitution since it entered into force in 2005. Constitutional revision committees were formed in 2009 and 2019, but both of those efforts petered out, mainly as a result of a failure to build momentum. If this latest initiative is to be successful, lessons should be learned from the previous failed attempts to amend the constitution, but also from positive examples of constitutional reform in other countries.

When previous Iraqi governments undertook constitutional reform, they closed off the general population from the process. Some attempts to be inclusive were made, including through a very small number of consultations with civil society organisations, but those meetings were unstructured, and the results were generally ignored. The discussions that took place were limited to elite circles, and no momentum or public interest was built around the process.

If the new initiative is to work, a much broader range of voices must be included to help constitutional negotiators determine the real order of priorities, instead of just focusing on the same issues that have been consuming them in the past. This should and

can happen through a number of means, including by encouraging Iraqis to express their priorities en masse. In this, the Iraqi government can follow the example of South Africa. When it launched a constitutional process following the end of apartheid, the South African government invited the general population to express their priorities in writing. Some 1.7 million submissions were received, which the drafters took into account.

South Africans were motivated to participate because the relevant authorities led a successful campaign to generate interest in the process and because there was a general feeling that the constitution could bring real change to the country. In 2005, during Iraq's own constitutional process, a public outreach body was established but it came to be dominated by one political party - the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (then known as the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq) - which sought to skew the results in its favour. As a result, no one took the initiative seriously.

If such a process is launched today, it must cast the net widely and remain independent from the main political groups in order to preserve its credibility. Inclusivity cannot just be limited to reaching out to as many people as possible at a horizontal level. It is also about giving the process more depth, by providing specialist groups with decision-making authority on how the constitution can and should be shaped.

The example of Kenya's 2010 constitution is instructive here. During the drafting phase, a committee of experts was given virtually equal decision-making power as the parliamentary committee. The end result was a constitution that

allowed Kenya to make significant progress in strengthening the rule of law. One of Iraq's major flaws has always been that reform efforts are dominated by a small circle from within the political class, and that any input from outside that small circle is often ignored. That manner of proceeding has contributed to significant weaknesses in policymaking, a trend that must be overturned by allowing others to wield real influence over the process.

Finally, and just as importantly, the negotiation process itself must be organised differently from previous attempts. The 2019 constitutional reform process, which I had the chance to witness personally, started on the wrong footing. The first meetings of the relevant committees were dedicated to discussing alternative wording of specific provisions. Committee members talked past each other, as they each suggested specific types of changes, ignoring whatever else was being said. That manner of proceeding contributed to the sense that nothing would be achieved, which itself led to the process eventually being abandoned altogether.

That is why, this time around, negotiations should start as a discussion between the different sides on what their interests are. It is only after each side understands the other's interests that common ground can be explored to reach a possible agreement. How individual provisions are worded can come after that has been achieved.

In 2019, Iraq witnessed the largest popular uprising in the country's history. The demands of the protesters should have triggered political impetus to reform the relationship between citizen and state, to deepen the pro-

tection of socioeconomic rights and to revolutionise Iraq's anti-corruption framework. Instead, the constitutional revision committee that was established focused most of its attention on debating the structure and system of government and paid very little attention to individual rights and the state of public services.

Any meaningful constitutional effort that is undertaken in 2023 must address popular grievances. One of the main problems Iraq has been experiencing throughout its modern history is that the constitution theoretically provides for civil and political rights, but does not clearly indicate what constitutes a legitimate limitation of those rights and what does not. For example, while freedom of expression is theoretically guaranteed, the constitution does not provide policymakers or the courts with any guidance as to whether or not the right to criticise public officials or accuse them of corruption is protected.

The absence of clear guidance has encouraged policymakers to unreasonably restrict rights and has robbed the courts of the tools that they need to curb executive overreach. In this, Iraq could learn from the experience of other countries, including Tunisia's 2014 constitution, which explicitly provided that all limitations of rights had to respect the principle of proportionality, a progressive standard that is spreading across modern democracies. Iraq should also learn from other Global South countries, such as Colombia, which have eliminated the distinction between civil and political rights on the one hand, and socioeconomic rights, on the other. This makes the right to education, healthcare, housing,

and other benefits directly enforceable.

If Iraq were to include such provisions in its new constitution, this would allow citizens to bring claims in the courts in the event the government has failed to satisfy its constitutional obligations to them. It would also allow the judiciary to order the government to do so. Such a move would not be a panacea for Iraq's many socioeconomic problems, but it would be a step in the right direction. Equally important is the constitution's oversight framework, which is ill-conceived, poorly worded and full of contradictions. The constitution's highly imperfect arrangements have made it easier for corruption to spread through the state virtually unchallenged.

Each of the country's main oversight institutions (the audit institution, the anti-corruption body and the courts) will need robust mandates and far greater guarantees of independence, including greater control over their budgets and the appointment of senior staff. Constitutional reform should also address political challenges that the country has faced since 2003, which will also allow the state to focus more of its attention on the population's pressing needs.

In particular, Iraq's federal system will remain a source of instability unless a new bargain is struck between the central government and the Kurdistan Regional Government. This issue will require the different political forces in the country to negotiate a common understanding of what federalism is supposed to achieve and build an institutional relationship around that understanding. Baghdad and Erbil must understand each other's core interests, develop creative solutions that allow

for those core interests to be defended and guaranteed, and offer compromises where appropriate.

Above all, both sides must understand that federalism is not just a means to carve out decision-making authority across territory and political lines. Rather, it is a means through which social solidarity can be protected within the borders of a single country. The form of government in Iraq has also been brought up for discussion. Some political forces in Baghdad have called for a move towards a presidential or semi-presidential system. But past experience in Iraq, and recent experience in countries such as Tunisia, demonstrate beyond doubt that directly elected presidents invariably seek to monopolise decision-making (and usually succeed) without any meaningful improvement in the country's governance.

That outcome is neither desirable nor possible in a country such as Iraq. Indeed, a move towards greater presidential power will likely never be accepted by many of the country's main political groups. As a result, any discussion of the system of government should focus not on how to give a chief executive more authority, but on how to move towards a more successful form of parliamentary democracy. Iraq faces a number of overwhelming challenges and trying to address them through the same methods that have failed in the past will not achieve anything. A new approach is necessary, and one that focuses on the interests of the population as a whole, and not just the interests of the political class. If that can be achieved, Iraq will have come a long way towards truly turning the page.

Aljazeera

## China leads the way as green energy investments soar

Dr. Bashayer Al-Majed

***IT is probably not surprising that investments in low-carbon energy have rapidly increased and last year equaled the capital deployed in support of fossil fuel supply. It has been a long time coming. BloombergNEF last month reported a global spend on the low-carbon energy transition of \$1.1 trillion in 2022, with half of this coming from China and much of the investment being spent on electric transport and green/renewable energy. All areas of low-carbon tech investment were up, apart from nuclear energy, which has remained flat for the obvious reasons of bad press regarding toxic waste disposal and the potential (despite the very low risk) for an accident.***

There are three main issues pushing these

changes. Firstly, the Ukraine war has reduced the reliable supply of gas and oil, thus bumping up prices. Secondly, the burning of fossil fuels creates high levels of pollution in areas of dense population. So, cities with lots of industry and lots of petrol and diesel vehicles can become highly contaminated with smog (ground-level ozone) and acid rain due to nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide, which get breathed in and are toxic, causing respiratory diseases. This is a real problem for busy roads near schools and anywhere children play in outdoor playgrounds. The third issue driving change is, of course, climate change and the destruction of the planet's ozone layer, which protects us from the sun's heat and damaging ultraviolet rays. While, in some cases, fossil fuels may still be used to

generate the electricity for electric-powered cars, buses and trains, and therefore may contribute to global warming, they do remove pollutants from densely populated areas. And although perpetual motion trains are a pipe dream, there are companies working on more fuel-efficient trains, such as Australia's Fortescue mining company, which is developing the "Infinity Train." This train recharges the engine's battery as it travels downhill, ensuring minimal fuel requirement for the uphill return of an empty train. Of course, this technology is very location specific, but it could undoubtedly be recreated elsewhere.

This sudden influx of cash into green energy is vital, but still severely lacking if we are to reach the Paris Agreement's targets to

limit the serious effects of climate change. To achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, global investments need to be closer to \$4.5 trillion per year. China has a lot to lose due to its diverse geography, which will be hit by global warming in many ways. It also has five of the world's top 10 megacities with some of the worst inner-city pollution, so its huge investment makes sense beyond it just being the first to market with new technologies and a profit-driven exercise. While it is the world's No. 1 carbon dioxide emitter, producing a third of emissions, a large proportion of its emissions come from manufacturing for the rest of the world. India, which is ranked third (6 percent of global emissions), is in a similar position.

The US, ranked second,

produces about 12 percent of the world's carbon dioxide with a much smaller population. When comparing carbon dioxide emissions per capita, the Gulf states rank near the top, suggesting we need to contribute at a greater level. Saying that, each of the Gulf nations has a strategy in place to do just that. Considering the downturn in global fossil fuel investment, these strategies are urgently needed if the GCC states wish to maintain a strong economy. The Middle East is looking to green hydrogen as a means for energy storage and transport, but it will require investment in other means to generate the energy initially, such as wind, solar and hydropower. Green hydrogen attracted the least investment - \$1 billion worldwide - although it is the fastest-growing sector. There is also a need for car-

bon capture technology development.

With the surge in electric car manufacture and use, part of the \$466 billion invested in electrified transport last year will be needed to develop charging infrastructure, which is limited, and battery technology, as spent car batteries cost the user and the environment if not fully stripped and recycled. Interestingly, the growth in investment for the manufacture of clean-energy batteries has shot up to \$45 billion, half of all manufacturing facilities' investments. Overall, China is a shining example for the global community to follow in terms of developing green manufacturing and logistics to combat climate change. The rest of the world needs to follow suit, particularly the large carbon dioxide per capita emitters and large importers from China.



# It's time for a borderless Africa

**ON February 7, Kenyan police arrested 41 undocumented Ethiopian migrants and two human smugglers at a house in Nairobi. The all-male group, which was reportedly on its way to South Africa, will be prosecuted for breaching Kenya's immigration laws and likely deported to Ethiopia. Strange as it might sound, these migrants should consider themselves fortunate to have been arrested because their ordeal in Kenya stopped them - at least for now - from embarking on an uncertain and highly dangerous journey.**

Between 2020 and 2022, authorities in Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia discovered the bodies of more than 100 undocumented migrants from Ethiopia who have died from hunger or suffocation while travelling clandestinely towards South Africa. According to the International Organization for Migration, irregular migration from the Horn of Africa to Southern Africa is largely "facilitated by an intricate network of smugglers and traffickers" whose "aggressive attempts to avoid detection by authorities put migrants' lives in danger". As detailed by the African Union, people migrate within Africa due to "a multiplicity of factors that include the need for improved socio-economic conditions through employment, environmental factors, as well as respite from political instability, conflict and civil strife".

Labour migration, and especially migration of low-skilled workers, is the most consistent source of movement within the continent. Yet most immigration regimes in Africa don't have visa provisions for such workers and economic refugees, so many desperate immigrants, like those arrested recently in Kenya, seek help from human smugglers to reach countries they perceive as having better employment opportunities. After shouldering enormous personal risks to emigrate, undocumented migrants are confronted with a new set of threats and dangers once they reach their destinations. In South Africa, for instance, the anti-migrant organisation Operation Dudula is leading campaigns and actions aimed at making the country as hostile as possible for undocumented African migrants.

Since January, the group has been preventing undocumented migrants from accessing healthcare at a clinic in central Johannesburg and is also trying to remove undocumented children

from government schools in Diepsloot, a densely populated settlement. The group has also been targeting migrants who operate small businesses, market stalls and informal convenience shops in townships and urban centres across the country, demanding they close shop and go home. Migrants in South Africa and beyond are facing such senseless acts of hostility despite Africa's leading thinkers and prominent politicians repeatedly calling for no African to be regarded as a foreigner anywhere on the continent. Julius Malema, the firebrand leader of South Africa's Economic Freedom Fighters party, for example, has frequently expressed this sentiment and called on the continent to collapse its colonial borders.

Similarly, PLO Lumumba, the popular Kenyan public intellectual, has said, "No African country should declare any African persona non grata, it defeats the spirit of African unity." Such enlightened and inclusive thinking is admirable, but unfortunately, the political determination to fulfil the widely shared aspiration for a borderless Africa is still inadequate. In January 2018, the African Union assembly adopted the Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating to the free movement of people and rights of residence and establishment.

If ratified by every member state, this protocol would allow Africans to work and live in any African country without needing a work permit. Rather disappointingly, however, only 32 out of 55 countries in Africa have signed it to date, and just four - Rwanda, Niger, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Mali - have ratified it. The insistent resistance of many African governments to continent-wide free movement, coupled with their impractical, inefficient and at times inhumane attempts to police irregular migration point to a lack of understanding and appreciation of the considerable benefits of migration. Indeed, migration - irregular or not - is beneficial not only to migrants and their kin but also to the communities hosting them.

I can attest to this fact because my family is a product of irregular migration. In the early 1930s, my grandfather immigrated from Watsomba, a village in Mutasa District in Southern Rhodesia (present day Zimbabwe), to apartheid South Africa. He left home armed with nothing but determination, a strong work ethic

Tafi Mhaka

and the clothes on his back. As a man of immensely modest means and inconsequential education, he entered South Africa at an illegal crossing point on the Limpopo River. From there, he travelled southwards to Germiston, a small city in the East Rand region of Gauteng, known as South Africa's economic hub. He found work as a messenger and settled down there. After leaving home, my grandfather visited Watsomba once every five years or so. And whenever he did, my grandmother conceived a child - five in total. The income my grandfather earned in South Africa helped to feed, clothe and educate his children, including my father. After 40 years of working abroad, my grandfather eventually parked his bicycle for good and returned home. But my grandfather's return to Zimbabwe did not mark the end of our family's relationship with South Africa. The decades my grandfather spent living and working in South Africa encouraged many of his descendants to also eventually make their way to the country.

His eldest grandson became a medical doctor and ultimately qualified as an orthopaedic surgeon. In the mid-1990s, he relocated to South Africa and worked in a local hospital in Limpopo province. Later, his second eldest grandson, an economics graduate from Rhodes University, moved to South Africa and established several successful businesses that have generated employment for countless South Africans. And his great-grandson graduated as a pharmacist from Rhodes University and found work in a government hospital in KwaZulu-Natal.

I can expound on the miscellaneous outcomes of my grandfather's labour in his second home. But the most important aspect to my family's migration story is this: In 1930, no one could have imagined that a humble undocumented migrant from a remote village in Zimbabwe could eventually give back to the land that helped him so much - and that he served so well. My family's story is just one of thousands or possibly millions. Famous South Africans like Albert Luthuli, Dorothy Masuka and Jolidee Matongo came from immigrant families.

And in 2020, award-winning rapper, businessman and boxer Cassper Nyovest revealed that his grandfather had walked from Malawi to settle in Potchefstroom, North West province. This is not

about South Africa though. This is about Africa's catastrophic political inertia.

Every year across Africa, tens of thousands of honest, hard-working people like my grandfather are forced to leave their home country to escape war, political instability, climate change, bad governance or poverty and build themselves a new life in another African country. Due to circumstances outside their control, many of these people are undocumented. They face hostility from authorities and struggle to live their lives with dignity, let alone contribute to their new communities. This is a massive, unnecessary loss not only for these migrants and their families but also their adopted countries and the wider continent.

For the benefit of Africa and Africans, so-called "illegal" immigrants must be swiftly recognised, documented and protected from the immeasurable dangers of economic and sexual exploitation, discrimination and organised xenophobia. Only 3 percent of the African population live outside their home countries, so this is not an impossible task. Last year, despite investing billions of dollars in high-tech surveillance technology, border infrastructure, and land and sea patrols, the United States and European Union both experienced exponential increases in irregular migration.

Africa's leaders should learn from these failures and accept that in the absence of legal migration pathways accessible to all vulnerable people, including economic migrants, irregular migration cannot be regulated or expunged successfully. They must avoid politicising irregular migration and instead implement policies that recognise and render useful African predisposition to migrate in both fair and hard times. In 1963, Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's founding president, said, "The forces that unite us are intrinsic and greater than the superimposed influences that keep us apart."

Sadly, it will take time to unite Africa in practice and establish a visa-free continent. In the meantime, the African Union must move to protect lives and take steps to enable unrestrained migration on a provisional basis. With adequate political will, Africa is well positioned to manage migration in a secure, orderly and humane manner. No African should ever have to die in search of a decent life in Africa. It is high time Africa demolishes its colonial borders.



## Is a new Nigeria really 'Possible'?

**IF Nigeria's presidential election was scheduled for next year, Peter Obi, candidate of the trade union-backed Labour Party (LP), would likely win outright. But Nigerians are going to the polls this Saturday, and despite being the candidate with the highest momentum, it is not at all certain that Obi will be the one declaring victory. Whether he eventually wins or not, however, Obi's current position as a leading contender for Nigeria's highest office, after just a few months of campaigning with a relatively minor opposition party and limited funds, is a remarkable achievement.**

One year ago, the election had all the markings of a contest between two old warhorses: Atiku Abubakar of the main opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Bola Tinubu of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC). Tinubu has been eyeing the presidency forever, strategically working his way to the front of the queue over more than two decades. Atiku, meanwhile, has been moving for years from party to party in search of a presidential ticket, saying and doing whatever is necessary to position himself as a worthy contender for the highest office in the country. A longtime democracy campaigner who confronted military rule in the 1990s, Tinubu's two-term Lagos governorship and subsequent role in building the political merger that enthroned the Muhammadu Buhari presidency have served to position him as the candidate to beat in this election.

In an ideal world, where all candidates are exactly who they claim to be on the campaign trail, Obi's current momentum would have perhaps been Tinubu's. But we are not living in an ideal world and a long list of red flags is seriously hindering the ruling party candidate's chances of securing a victory on Saturday. Although he has never been convicted of any crime, allegations of money laundering and drug dealing have been looming over the 70-year-old candidate since the 1990s. And even after a political career spanning many decades, the source of Tinubu's immense wealth still remains a mystery. In 2016, he claimed that he became an "instant millionaire" while working for auditing giants Deloitte and Touche. In 2022, he changed his story completely to suggest that he "inherited great real estate [and] turned the values around". In the interview where he made the latter claim, he also suggested those questioning the source of his fortunes may be "enemies of wealth".

Tinubu's age, ancestry and education history also remain in doubt. While contesting the governorship in 1999, he claimed to have attended primary and secondary schools in Ibadan, southwest Nigeria. Four

Fisayo Soyombo

years later, while running for a second term, he unceremoniously withdrew those claims. Ahead of the current election, he stunningly claimed his academic certificates were "stolen by unknown persons". His deteriorating health, evidenced by his unsteady gait, shaky hands and repeated gaffes on the campaign trail, meanwhile, raises concerns that if elected president, Tinubu may struggle to do justice to the demanding job and may require frequent visits abroad for medical reasons, just like the current president.

In many ways, despite his seemingly impressive political resume, Tinubu embodies in himself everything that is wrong with Nigeria's political culture and gives Nigerians, especially young voters hungry for change, little reason to support his candidacy. The main opposition candidate, former Vice President Atiku, also appears to be offering more of the same.

Atiku blew his best chance at becoming president in 2003 by conceding the PDP's candidacy to his boss, despite being a favourite, and he has been desperately trying to make up for this mistake since. At 76, and some three decades after his first attempt at becoming president, many consider Atiku's best years to be behind him. His party is also no longer the all-conquering force it once was. Moreover, just like Tinubu, Atiku has a long trail of corruption allegations in his past. In 2010, for example, an investigative subcommittee of the United States Senate detailed in a substantial report how Atiku used off-shore companies to siphon millions of dollars to the US bank accounts of his former wife, Jennifer Douglas.

Just like Tinubu, Atiku has neither the reputation nor the youthful stamina necessary to do justice to the presidency and meet the expectations of Nigerians eager to see fundamental changes in the way their country is governed. In other words, he is an "opposition" candidate only in name and a shock victory by him on Saturday would achieve nothing other than keeping the current political arrangement fully intact. And this is exactly why Labour Party's Peter Obi, or "PO", stands a chance of causing an upset on Saturday. Today Obi boasts a large army of young supporters who say "a new Nigeria is Possible". Unlike the other two leading candidates, he has never faced corruption allegations - a rarity among Nigeria's political class.

Calm, measured and respectful in his ways, Obi offers a welcome alternative to the hyperbolic performances of other leading candidates. Once Nasir el-Rufai, the irascible governor of the Kaduna State, branded Obi a "Nollywood actor" to drive his argument that the presidential contest is solely between Atiku and Tinubu. Obi refused to hit

back with insults of his own and instead urged all of Nollywood to vote for him since he has been proclaimed to be one of them. Obi insists he is in the race for the people and not for himself, and his message appears to be hitting the right notes with young voters, many of whom are disillusioned with widespread poverty and misery in their country.

Obi's rise as a contender has sent shockwaves through the political landscape and truly rattled his opponents. Despite the much-criticised lack of structure within the Labour Party, he managed to organically build a large support base and share his message with the masses, convincing many that he may after all be what Nigeria needs at this moment. But Obi's campaign is also facing several significant and perhaps unsurmountable problems - problems that are mostly of his own making.

Obi remained in Atiku's PDP until May 25, 2022, until it became clear that Atiku would win the party's presidential primary three days later. Ditching the PDP so late and positioning himself as the new order's poster boy just nine months before the election has left him with a mountain to climb, particularly as he would be running against two grand masters of Nigerian politics.

His late entry into the race also caused him some practical problems, as the deadline for voter registration in Nigeria ended on August 31, 2022, just a few months after he began campaigning as the Labour Party candidate. This means, all of Obi's latter-day supporters, including recent converts due to the long-drawn-out insecurity, fuel scarcity and naira crisis, cannot vote to elect him if they did not register for a voter card a whopping six months ago. In essence, the real worth of Obi's support is limited to the pre-September voting population.

Voters without party affiliations see this Saturday's election as an opportunity for the emergence of a new Nigeria - one where citizens don't have to buy their own currency at the black market, queue for fuel despite their country being blessed with crude oil reserves, feed off the crumbs from politicians' tables, know a "big man" to stand any chance of securing a government job, or watch helplessly as their collective wealth gets stolen. Many believe Peter Obi is the man who can, as president, make all this happen. But while the popularity and competence of candidates will have some influence over the result of Saturday's election, it is obvious to many Nigerians that in the end, it will once again be political capital, religion, ethnicity, and most importantly, wealth that determines who will be the country's next president. So, under these conditions, is a new Nigeria really "Possible"? We will all find out soon enough when Nigerians make their decision.

## Darfur conflict revisited: Lessons un-learned

**I first stumbled on the formative phase of the ongoing conflict in Darfur almost by accident during a brief visit to el-Fasher, the region's capital, in January 1988. I was accompanying the then-Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi to a tribal reconciliation conference. Amid the deceptively peaceful sandy terrain of this charming town, it came to me as a shock that horrors had been taking place in this part of Sudan.**

I heard claims of dreadful atrocities, even attempts at extermination, particularly from representatives of the Fur ethnicity. It took me some time to figure out what was going on: an unprecedentedly brutal "ethnic" war was in full swing, pitting a bizarre "Arab" coalition of tribes against the Fur, a Nilo-Saharan ethnic group that gave the region its name (Darfur, the land of the Fur). While tribal conflicts had been a perennial feature of this region, they had been usually localised and brief, with limited casualties. That one was different; unlocking its complexities is key to fathoming the continuing crisis in Darfur, which erupted 20 years ago. Despite being one of the most discussed, studied, and mediated tragedies in recent history, many of the puzzles surrounding this crisis remain unsolved: its unusual level of brutality and rapid escalation, extremely high human cost, and its instant "spectacularisation".

The roots of the conflict in Darfur have both regional and local dimensions. The region borders Libya and Chad to the west, which has had a destabilising effect on it. In 1965, the Chadian Civil War erupted, as various groups in the sparsely populated country rebelled against the government. Most of the factions fighting in the conflict were based in Darfur and many Sudan-based "Arab" tribes got involved. The situation became even more complicated in the 1970s when Libya under Muammar Gaddafi started backing some rebel groups and Egypt and the US lent support to the government. This only increased the influx of sophisticated weapons into the region.

The flow of immigrants from Chad and beyond also led to a new spirit of self-assertion by the Arabs and their allies among minor tribes, and frequent incursions by them into traditionally Fur (and Masalit) territory. The conflict was exacerbated by the proliferation of militias, and by land and water scarcity. This created inter-tribal tensions and the Fur reacted by restricting traditional access to farmlands and water resources for the nomadic "Arabs". As the Chadian Civil War fizzled out, another conflict was reignited in Sudan's south in the early 1980s. The rebellion against the government was led by the

Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which purported to represent the demands of all marginalised people in the country. The SPLA penetrated into Darfur, launching attacks against government forces there and later encouraging local rebellion.

The response from Khartoum was to arm the tribes of Darfur so they would act as a buffer against future attacks and enlist tribal militias to fight the rebellion. Tensions between the Fur and Arab tribes escalated in 1987 into a two-year-long conflict. Since it involved many non-Sudanese actors, the traditional tribal restraints on excessive violence were not respected. That war ended when a new and more moderate Fur governor was appointed in Darfur in 1989, making the regional government a mediator rather than a party to the conflict. Ironically, the June 1989 coup led by Omar Al-Bashir also helped, since it removed the partisan rivalry in Khartoum, which had exacerbated tensions in Darfur. Within one week of the coup, the last remaining obstacle to the agreement was resolved, and peace was restored.

However, as the new military regime intensified its war in the South, especially after using Arab militias to quell the 1991 SPLA attack in Darfur, it began to lean more towards the Arabs. Tensions persisted and were exacerbated by recurring droughts and the entanglement of various groups in regional conflicts. In early 2003, a group calling itself Darfur's Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) started attacking military and public institutions in Darfur. In April, it launched a spectacular raid on el-Fashir's airport, in which several military planes were destroyed. In May, the regime removed the more sober governor of North Darfur, a loyalist non-Arab, who had tried to contain the conflict by reaching out to the rebels and seeking to promote consensus among Darfurians.

The regime's pursuit of a quick "military solution" backfired badly, leading to an even more misguided decision to mobilise "Arab" militias, pejoratively known as the Janjaweed. A scorched earth policy was then implemented in combined attacks by these irregulars, the army and the air force, resulting in the destruction of hundreds of villages, the indiscriminate killing of tens of thousands and the displacement of millions. This did little to quell the rebellion. The devastation was horrendous. In this regard, it was natural that the atrocities should capture considerable international attention. But the intensity and breadth of interest remain unique, compared, for example, to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

(1998-2003), where 5 million were killed, or even to the Rwandan genocide of 1994, which the US initially refused to classify as such. Even the war in South Sudan, which by then had been raging for two decades and had taken the lives of some 2 million people, did not receive comparable attention.

This occasioned some amazement and plenty of conspiracy theories. Even more sober voices, like Columbia University's scholar Mahmood Mamdani, marvelled at this disproportionality. In his case, he compared the simultaneous US intervention in Iraq, where the number of civilian casualties was much higher (by American figures), but was dubbed a "counter-insurgency", rather than a genocide. Mamdani blamed US propaganda for the disparity, and described the "Save Darfur Movement", which championed the Darfur cause internationally, as a "humanitarian face of the war on terror". But the reality is a bit more nuanced. A combination of factors brought the conflict in Darfur to the international media spotlight, including the world marking the 10th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide in 2004 and Sudan's struggling with its reputation as a "rogue state", "terror sponsor" and perpetrator of atrocities in the war in the South.

The media itself also played a role. In March 2004, Mukesh Kapila, the UN humanitarian coordinator in Sudan, decided to go public with his misgivings about the international inaction on the "ongoing genocide" in Darfur. He did so on the influential Today programme, a flagship of BBC Radio 4. He lost his job, but the impact of his interview was similar to that of British journalist Michael Burke's 1984 report for the BBC on the famine in Ethiopia. The popular reaction was phenomenal. Soon after, Western politicians scrambled to catch up with the popular mood. Every Western foreign minister worth their salt interrupted their summer holiday and flew to Darfur, in appropriate summer attire, of course. US Secretary of State Colin Powell was joined by the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on the visit. Neither of them would have normally visited Sudan. The UN agreed on a peacekeeping mission in Darfur within just two weeks. In July 2004, the Committee on Conscience of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum made its first-ever "genocide emergency" declaration, warning that "genocide is imminent or is actually happening in the Darfur region of Sudan". From there on, the issue snowballed and became self-reinforcing.

The Save Darfur Coalition, an alliance of about 130 human rights

and religious organisations - disparaged by Mamdani and meticulously and candidly documented by Law Professor Rebecca Hamilton - took it from there. Unfortunately, this intense international activism did little to help the victims in Darfur, most of whom still remain in displacement camps, two decades later. A UN peacekeeping mission, costing \$1.5bn a year was set up in a place where there was no peace to keep. The "peacekeepers" were not even able to protect themselves.

Many UN vehicles were car-jacked and recycled to fund and equip militias or rebel groups. The UN peacekeepers dutifully reported the theft to the local police. Had these funds been diverted to peacebuilding, the crisis would have been resolved. The international actors remained as inactive as Kapila had alleged, but they engaged in gesture politics: the equally expensive International Criminal Court has yet to punish somebody and would not have been much good if it had. An internationally sponsored peace deal was concluded in Abuja in 2006, but with only one of the three main rebel factions joining. It collapsed within four years. An agreement brokered by Qatar in Doha in 2011 did function minimally but was also shunned by the key actors.

By 2018, the military dimension of the conflict receded, following serious defeats suffered by the main rebel groups, but the crisis situation persisted. The armed conflict practically ended following the fall of al-Bashir's regime in 2019, and the conclusion of a new deal involving most rebel groups in Juba in October 2020. However, even before the chaos that followed, the agreements had little impact on the lives of the millions of victims, and (too many) sporadic tribal conflicts still erupt. To sum up, the conflict in Darfur, like that in the South, was caused by a combination of an implosion of self-rule in the region, combined with immorality and ineptitude at the centre, adverse regional and intentional dynamics, and mismanagement of political, economic, and environmental challenges.

The fragmentation and infighting of rebel groups accentuated the misery of the people, as did international inaction and misguided action. A whole generation of youths has grown up knowing nothing but life in camps. If there are lessons, and a way forward, it is to put the victims into focus, and channel resources towards direct solutions. Half the annual expenditure on ineffective "peace" missions would have funded the repatriation and reconstruction for the displaced, and the de-mobilisation of armed groups, thus saving lives, resources and livelihoods. Let everyone get on with it.

### Important Notice

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or tehsil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



# 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange gains 76 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Monday gained 76.37 points, a slight positive change of 0.19 per cent, closing at 40,784.13 points against 40,707.76 points the previous day.

A total of 158,084,396 shares were traded during the day as compared to 153,441,220 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs. 5,718 billion against Rs. 4,958 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 331 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 135 of them recorded gains and 173 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 23 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall

Telecom with 39,568,060 shares at Rs.1.33 per share; Hub Power Company with 22,665,002 shares at Rs. 70.61 per share, and TPL Properties with 11,954,113 shares at Rs. 15.32 per share.

Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum increase of Rs. 1,430.00 per share price, closing at Rs. 20,957.50, whereas the runner-up was Pak Services with an Rs.95.00 rise in its per share price to Rs. 1,965.00.00.

Bata (Pak) witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs. 106.90 per share closing at Rs. 51,810.00; followed by Pak Tobacco with Rs. 31.24 decline to close at Rs.720.01.

**Rupee gains 07 paisa against dollar**

The Pakistan rupee appreciated by 07 paisa

against the dollar in the interbank trading on Monday and closed at Rs 259.92 against the previous day's closing of Rs 259.99.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs 263.3 and Rs 266 respectively.

The price of Euro decreased by 97 paisa and closed at Rs 274.29 against the last day's closing of Rs 275.26, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen lost two paise to close at Rs 1.90, whereas a decrease of Rs 1.88 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 310.78 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 312.56.

The exchange rates of Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal decreased by 02 paise each to close at Rs 70.76 and Rs 69.27 respectively.

**Local gold prices stay unchanged, increase by \$2 in int'l trade**

The per tola price of 24 karat gold remained unchanged at Rs.194,100 on Monday, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold and 10 gram 22 karat gold also remained stagnant at Rs.166,409 and Rs.152,542 respectively.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.2,080 and Rs.1,783.26 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by US\$2 to \$1,812 from US\$1,814, the association reported.

## Tokyo's Nikkei index closes lower

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo's key Nikkei index closed lower on Monday as global investors worried the Federal Reserve could further lift interest rates after the latest US inflation data came in higher than expected.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index slipped 0.11 percent, or 29.52 points, to 27,423.96, though the broader Topix index added 0.22 percent, or 4.38 points, to 1,992.78.

"Tokyo shares fell following the trend on the US market where high-tech shares were sold after higher-than-expected inflation data," Iwai Cosmo Securities said in a note.

They added that the Tokyo market briefly moved higher partly thanks to the yen's decline to the 136 level against the dollar, which supported exporters.

The US currency stood at 136.30 yen, against 136.46 yen Friday in New York. The Fed's preferred gauge of inflation, the personal consumption expenditures index, "depicted a US economy running too hot at the start of the year, increasing the urgency for the Fed to do more tightening over coming months", said Rodrigo Catril of National Australia Bank.

Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management echoed that view.

"It could be difficult for the market to find much comfort this week unless the sentiment data surprises to the downside," he said.

In Tokyo trading, market heavyweight SoftBank Group plunged 2.25 percent to 5,469 yen.

Chip-testing equipment maker Advantest lost 1.55 percent to 10,760 yen while Tokyo Electron, which makes tools to build semiconductors, dropped 1.88 percent to 46,870 yen.

# Workshop on 'innovation, strategy for energy sector' held



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) arranged a workshop on "innovation & strategy for energy sector" with Dr. Hitendra Patel, an international strategy expert & Managing Director of IXL as the key note speaker.

The idea was conceived by Dr. Musadik Masood Malik, Minister of State for Petroleum who also participated & moderated various sessions.

The event was also attended by Secretary Petroleum, Special Secretary Petroelum, Senior Ministry officials and top

management of public sector Oil & Gas Companies.

Dr. Hitendra Patel during the session underscored the importance of innovation & strategy to meet the challenges of fast changing economies, global politics and technological advancements.

The event was arranged against the backdrop of future outlook of hydrocarbons which are expected to be challenged by renewables, solar and exponential growth in the EV sector.

It was widely agreed among the participants that in order to achieve growth targets & long term sustainability, out of box ideas and

innovation would be needed. The participants were also unanimous in underlining the need to have a cultural change in day to day working, operations and business plans of commercial entities.

The event was designed in the form of plenary session, group discussions and various exercises to make it interactive and closer to real life situations.

Event concluded with commitment from the participants that innovation shall become the hallmark of public sector working. Hospitality and support extended by OGDCL for holding the event were acknowledged by all.

## Dollar gains as higher-for-longer US rate views drive markets

SINGAPORE (Agencies): The dollar held firm near a seven-week peak on Monday, after a slew of strong US economic data reinforced the view that the Federal Reserve will have to raise interest rates further and for longer, according to Reuters.

Data on Friday showed US consumer spending rebounded sharply in January, while inflation accelerated.

The personal consumption expenditures price index, the Fed's preferred gauge of inflation, shot up 0.6 percent last month after gaining 0.2 percent in December.

The dollar index, which measures the US currency against six major peers, was up 0.038 percent at 105.21, just shy of the seven week high of 105.32 it touched on Friday after the hotter-than-expected data was released.

The index is up 3 percent for February and set to snap a four-month losing streak as investors adjust their expectations of US interest rates remaining higher for longer.

"We're in a bit of a nervous environment," said Moh Siong Sim, currency strategist at Bank of Singapore, adding that the market is uncertain about the future pace of Fed interest rate hikes.

"Whether (Fed) can maintain 25 basis point hike? Or will they be forced to re-accelerate the pace? So I think these are the questions that the market is grappling with," Sim said.

"And there is no clear answer right now."

# Pak-UK vow to play role to increase bilateral trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mayor of Pendle of Lancashire County, Yasser Iqbal said that he would play a role to further increase bilateral trade ties between Pakistan and UK as both countries have good potential of trade in many areas for mutual benefit.

He said this while exchanging views with Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) during his visit to the Chamber. Ch. Iftikhar, Khalid and Raja Azhar also accompanied him at the occasion, said a press release issued here Monday.

Yasser Iqbal said that the Pakistani diaspora in the UK was keen to invest in Pakistan as they wanted to see Pakistan as a strong economy. He said that a further conducive business environment would attract more investment from

overseas Pakistanis settled in the UK and other countries.

He invited the ICCI delegation to visit the UK to explore business collaboration with Britain counterparts and assured that he would cooperate in making their visit successful.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the UK was an important trading partner of Pakistan and we wanted to further enhance trade and exports with the UK.

He said that bilateral trade between Pakistan and the UK was still less than US\$ 3 billion and stressed the need of developing strong business linkages between the private sectors of both countries to take bilateral trade to higher levels. He said that the Chinese and Indian diaspora has played an important

role in making the economies of their home countries better and stressed that the Pakistani diaspora should also come forward to steer Pakistan out of the current economic turmoil.

He said that the UK has already invested in Pakistan in many sectors including financial services, oil and gas exploration, petroleum refining, electricity generation, pharmaceutical, publishing, industrial chemicals and cement and stressed that Pakistani diaspora in UK should transfer technology and explore joint ventures and investment in Pakistan.

Khalid Iqbal Malik, Zafar Bakhtawari and others also spoke at the occasion and shared useful ideas for further improving bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and UK.

## VinFast slashes lease prices

HANOI (Reuters): Vietnamese electric vehicle maker VinFast has cut the lease price for its first model shipped to the United States by more than 50% for its first customers in California, with delivery starting this week, according to the company and emails to customers reviewed by Reuters.

VinFast, a subsidiary of conglomerate Vingroup JSC (VIC.HM), had said in January its first VF8 all-electric crossovers would be available to lease at a monthly payment of \$599 for 24 months.

Its website showed as of Monday a monthly lease price of \$399 for the vehicle for a 24-month lease.

VinFast told people who had already paid a refundable deposit on the car that the payment would be \$274 per month in California, the first US state to receive the vehicles, according to messages to those potential buyers reviewed by Reuters.

That amounts to a discount of between 33% and 54% from the initially advertised monthly lease price.

"This is our special offer to VinFast customers for the VF 8 City Edition models in order to stay competitive with other brands," VinFast said in a statement.

"We will officially deliver the VF 8 City Edition vehicles to customers on March 1," it said, without specifying the number of units in the 999 batch shipped to California late last year.

The move represents the latest sign of increased price competition by EV makers. Tesla (TSLA.O), the global EV leader, cut prices globally by up to 20% in January, although it has increased prices on some models and in some markets by smaller margins since.

The Biden administration's EV credits, which took effect at the start of the year, have also changed the calculus for automakers and US consumers.

Electric vehicles like those made by Tesla in North America qualify for a consumer tax credit of \$7,500.

Businesses, including the finance companies that underwrite car leases, can also claim a credit of up to \$7,500 for EVs if the cars are sold by one of the companies certified by the IRS.

# Europe stocks rebound after sinking on US rate

LONDON (AFP/APP): European equities rebounded Monday after sinking last week on renewed fear of more aggressive US interest rate hikes, dealers said.

London gained 0.8 percent nearing midday, while Frankfurt and Paris stocks won about 1.5 percent in early afternoon eurozone deals.

Oil prices nudged lower Monday on concern over the demand outlook in top energy consumer the United States.

"Investors shrugged off the inflation and interest rate concerns which bedeviled markets last week," said investment director Russ Mould at stockbroker AJ Bell.

"This went against the prevailing mood in Asia which followed in the footsteps of the United States in seeing material declines."

Asian indices sank after a pre-weekend selloff in Europe and on Wall Street, as forecast-beating US inflation data reinforced expectations the Federal Reserve would continue to ramp up interest rates for some time.

The personal consumption expenditures price index followed bright jobs figures and other data showing prices coming down slower than hoped.

This month's news has wiped out optimism that the Fed will be able to soon pause its monetary tightening and possibly cut borrowing costs before the end of the year.

Traders will be keeping a close eye on further comments from bank officials this week.

Some officials have already suggested they are open to hiking by 50 basis points at the next gathering,

and several said they saw room for further tightening after Friday's data release.

"The clouds of uncertainty remain with us -- the market's consensus view that inflation would head lower through the year has clearly been challenged," Chris Weston of Pepperstone Group said in a note.

The prospect of more Fed rate hikes sent the dollar surging against its peers Friday and it held those gains in Asian business, sitting at a two-year high versus the yen.

Adding to the yen's weakness were comments Friday from the man expected to take over as head of the Bank of Japan indicating he will maintain an ultra-loose monetary policy for now.

That came even as data showed Japanese inflation at a four-decade high.

# Markets drop on rate fears as inflation runs hot

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets sank Monday following a Wall Street selloff, as forecast-beating US inflation data reinforced expectations the Federal Reserve would continue to ramp up interest rates for some time.

The report on the personal consumption expenditures price index followed blockbuster jobs figures and data showing prices coming down slower than hoped.

This month's readings have wiped out optimism that the Fed will be able to soon pause its monetary tightening and possibly cut borrowing costs before the end of the year.

Traders will be keeping a close eye on comments from bank officials this week.

"We have six voting members on the (policy board) scheduled to appear this week -- ample opportunity for officials to air their views on the latest data and, more importantly, the implications for their policy outlooks," said SPI Asset

Management's Stephen Innes.

"But given the rude health of the US economy and with inflation flames reigniting, it's challenging to envision Fed commentary veering in anything but a more hawkish direction."

"Hence it could be difficult for the market to find much comfort this week unless the sentiment data surprises to the downside."

Some figures have already suggested they are open to hiking by 50 basis points at the next gathering, and several said they saw room for further tightening after Friday's data release.

All three main indexes on Wall Street ended deep in the red Friday, and Asia followed suit on Monday.

Hong Kong, Tokyo, Sydney, Shanghai, Seoul, Singapore, Manila, Jakarta, Mumbai, Bangkok and Wellington were all in the red.

"The clouds of uncertainty remain with us -- the market's consensus view

that inflation would head lower through the year has clearly been challenged," Chris Weston of Pepperstone Group said in a note.

The prospect of more Fed rate hikes sent the dollar surging against its peers Friday and it held those gains in Asian business, sitting at a two-year high versus the yen.

Adding to the yen's weakness were comments Friday from the man expected to take over as head of the Bank of Japan indicating he will maintain an ultra-loose monetary policy for now.

That came even as data showed inflation at a four-decade high.

Kazuo Ueda told lawmakers aimed Monday that he considered the current policies in place to be correct.

"I think it's appropriate for monetary easing to be continued," he said.

"In order for policy to be revised, I think there needs to be a major improvement in the price trend."

# Nokia changes iconic logo to signal strategy shift

BARCELONA (Reuters): Nokia announced plans on Sunday to change its brand identity for the first time in nearly 60 years, complete with a new logo, as the telecom equipment maker focuses on aggressive growth. The new logo comprises five different shapes forming the word NOKIA. The iconic blue color of the old logo has been dropped for a range of colours depending on the use.

"There was the association to smartphones and nowadays we are a business technology company," Chief Executive Pekka Lundmark told Reuters in an interview. He was speaking ahead of a business update by the company on the eve of the annual Mobile World Congress which opens in Barcelona on Monday and runs until

March 2.

After taking over the top job at the struggling Finnish company in 2020, Lundmark set out a strategy with three stages: reset, accelerate and scale. With the reset stage now complete, Lundmark said the second stage is beginning.

While Nokia still aims to grow its service provider business, where it sells equipment to telecom companies, its main focus is now to sell gear to other businesses. "We had very good 21% growth last year in enterprise, which is currently about 8% of our sales, (or) 2 billion euros (\$2.11 billion) roughly," Lundmark said. "We want to take that to double digits as quickly as possible."

Major technology firms have been partnering with telecom gear makers such

as Nokia to sell private 5G networks and gears for automated factories to customers, mostly in the manufacturing sector.

Nokia plans to review the growth path of its different businesses and consider alternatives, including divestment. "The signal is very clear. We only want to be in businesses where we can see global leadership," Lundmark said.

Nokia's move toward factory automation and datacentres will also see them locking horns with big tech companies, such as Microsoft and Amazon.

"There will be multiple different types of cases, sometimes they will be our partners... sometimes they can be our customers... and I am sure that there will also be situations where they will be competitors."

**Court Notice**

In the court of Muhammad Umair Qasmi Civil Judge -V, Bannu, Suit No.106/1 institution 03.01.2021 Next date is 03.03.2023. Title: Jumaraz Khan vs Syed Nawaz Khan etc, To: 2. Noor Wali Khan 3. M. Nawaz Khan 7. Noor Kamal 8. Hazrat Bilal Sons Ardil khan R/O Sardi Khel Wazir Tehsil Bakka Khel Bannu presently abroad. The defendants are informed through this notice to appear in this court on 03.03.2023. After this no excuse would be accepted and ex-parte proceedings shall be initiated against you. Given under my hand and seal of this court.

**Court Notice**

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No.21/1. Institution 25/1/2023. Date of hearing. 8/3/2023. Saifur Rehman VS Mst. Naheda Bibi. Notice no. 24/13.Shafiqur Rehman son of Ashtar Khan resident of Kalpani thesel Daggar district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 8/3/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.





## In brief

## Sports festival continue

PESHAWAR (APP): The three-day Snow and Sports Festival continued on the second day in Gabin Jabba under the auspices of the district administration Swat and Culture and Tourism Authority. Gabin Jabba is fully covered with heavy snow and an attractive site for tourism with hundreds and thousands of local and foreign tourists turning up this year too by enjoying the snow-covered peaks besides the ongoing Snow Sports and Culture event being in progress under the aegis of Regional Sports Officer Malakanad Kashif Farhan, having the support of district administration Swat and KP Culture and Tourism Authority. Stalls of handicrafts including regional handicraft items have also been set up in which tourists have shown great interest. District Youth Officer Farhad Ali Khan and other important personalities were present. The snow sports festival is featuring a snow marathon race, tug-of-war, martial arts, cycling and weightlifting competitions. In the Taekwondo competitions held on the first and second day, Universal academy won the trophy while the players of Swat Taekwondo Academy got the second position. Syed Haseebullah, Ahmed Hayat, Muhammad Hayat, Sartaj, Shaukat, Abdullah, Talah Khan, and Hasher in different weight categories got positions. Nauman won the gold medal while Swat Academy's Azaan Khan, Zaryab Khan, Shawal Khan, Ubaidullah, Ilyan, Okasha, Faizan and Shahid won the silver medal in the Women's event Alvina bagged the gold medal. Cycling events, marathon races, and other competitions were also held in which the youth took an active part. On the last day of the festival, a prize distribution ceremony would also be organized.

## Karachi Games

KARACHI (PPT): Administrator Karachi Dr. Syed Saif-ur-Rahman has said on Monday that the Karachi Games 2023 starting from March 3 is a great gift and a great success for the citizens of the city at the urban level, which includes 42 different sports that are worthy of honor. It will be organized in such a way that its impression remains for a long time and a positive image of Karachi is spread across the world. These games are being organized with the full support of Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori, and also includes the consultation of our famous players like Shahid Afridi, Jahangir Khan, Sarfraz Ahmed, Rashid Latif and others. He expressed these views while talking to the representatives of various social media and social networking websites in the media cell established in KMC Sports Complex Kashmir Road on Monday. A media corner has also been created for journalists where computers, internet and other necessary facilities will be available for full coverage. He said that it is not unusual to organize such large-scale games at the same time and the participation of more than 5 thousand athletes in them. He said that most of the sports competitions are being held at KMC Sports Complex, while about 20 percent of the competitions will be held at various other venues in the city, including cricket, hockey and football.

# Dominant Qalandars thrash United to capture top spot in PSL 8 standings

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Lahore Qalandars put on a dominant all-round performance to thrash Islamabad United by a massive 110-run margin to go on top of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) eight standings. Set to chase a massive total, the United bundled out for a meagre 90 runs in the 14th over to hand defending champions a dominating 110-run victory that propelled them to the top in the PSL 8 points table. Earlier in pursuit, United were off to a decent start as their openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Colin Munro raised 41 runs for the first wicket before David Wiese dismissed the latter to hand a much-needed breakthrough to the Qalandars. Munro could score 18 off 14 deliveries with the help of one boundary and a six. The United then succumbed to another major setback at the brink of the power play when Gurbaz fell victim to Zaman Khan in the sixth over after a brief knock of a 17-ball 23 and top-scored for his side

amid their dismal show with the bat.

Gurbaz's dismissal triggered a match-defining collapse in United's batting lineup and the visitors, consequently, were bundled out for a paltry 90 runs in the 14th over with Tom Curran offering brief resistance with his gritty 10-run knock. Wiese led the Qalandars' ferocious bowling attack with 3/17 while Sikandar Raza and Rashid Khan bagged two wickets each. Haris Rauf and Zaman Khan made one scalp each.

Opting to bat first, the Qalandars' batters carried on their form as they post their second successive 200-plus total in the ongoing extravaganza. The home side finished at a massive 200/7 in the allotted 20 overs, thanks to significant contributions by the majority of their batting lineup.

Earlier, openers Fakhar Zaman and Tahir Baig scripted a solid start for their side as the duo raised a 58-run partnership before United skipper Shadab Khan dismissed the latter in

his first over to get a much-needed breakthrough for his side.

Tahir could score 20 off 17 deliveries, laced up with two boundaries and a six.

Fakhar soon followed his opening partner in the next over as Tom Curran castled the in-form batter to bring United back in the hunt as Qalandars slipped to 62/2 in 7.2 overs. He scored 36 off 23 balls, hitting five boundaries and a six.

Following his dismissal, Abdullah Shafique put on a crucial partnership with Sam Billings and made sure that their side stay on track of amassing a big total as the pair added 71 runs in just 38 deliveries amid their stand before the former fell victim to Tom Curran.

The right-handed batter top-scored for the Qalandars with his sensational 24-ball 45, which featured four boundaries and two sixes.

The hosts then lost three quick wickets in the middle overs as Hussain Talat (6), Sam Billings (33) and David Wiese (12) fell in the

space of just 11 deliveries.

The Qalandars, however, soon recovered from the brief collapse as Sikandar Raza and Rashid Khan launched a counterattack on the United bowlers with their brisk 40-run partnership which ended with the latter's dismissal on the second-last delivery of the innings.

Rashid played a crucial cameo of 18 runs in just 12 balls with the help of two boundaries and a six, while Sikandar struck an unbeaten 10-ball 23, smashing as many boundaries. Curran led the bowling attack for the United with 3/34, while Shadab followed with 2/34. Hasan Ali and Abrar Ahmed struck out a batter each.

## Jake Paul takes first ring defeat by split decision to Fury

RIYADH (Agencies): YouTube star Jake Paul took the first defeat of his professional boxing career Sunday night, losing a split decision to Tommy Fury.

Paul (6-1) knocked down Fury with a short left hand early in the final round of their cruiser-weight bout, but the younger half-brother of heavyweight champion Tyson Fury controlled long stretches of the eight-round meeting at Diriyah Arena. Two judges scored the bout 76-73 for Fury (9-0, 4 KOs), while the third favored Paul, 75-74.

"I've already won every single way in life," Paul said. "I made it farther than I ever thought I would, and beyond. This is a humbling experience. I'll take it on the chin and come back."

Fury is the first actual professional boxer fought by Paul, who built his lucrative second career by taking on mixed martial artists and a fellow YouTuber in boxing bouts that generated huge social media attention despite featuring more enthusiasm than skill.



Fury also is much better known as a celebrity sibling — and much more accomplished as a reality television star — than as a boxer, leading to a relatively even matchup with Paul. Fury's unbeaten record entering this bout was built against a series of wildly overmatched opponents with a combined record of 24-176-5.

"In my first main event, 23 years old, I had the world on my shoulders, and I came through," Fury said. "This, to me, is a world title fight. I trained so hard for this. This was my destiny."

Both fighters had good moments in the first four rounds in front of a star-studded crowd in Saudi Arabia, but Fury landed more significant shots behind a consistent jab that allowed him to keep Paul at a distance.

Paul appeared to stun Fury with an accurate left hook early in the fifth round, but he also lost a point when the referee penalized him, apparently for pushing down on Fury's head in a clinch. The referee then took a point from Fury in the sixth, apparently for excessive clinching.

Fury had a strong seventh round despite a cut near his left eye from a clash of heads, repeatedly tagging Paul with combinations. But Paul abruptly reversed the momentum with a perfectly timed left that wobbled Fury, who put his left glove on the canvas to steady himself and bounced up immediately.

Fury finished strong and claimed the decision.

Fury and Paul were slated to meet two times previously, but Fury was unavailable for both showdowns. He injured a rib before their scheduled bout in December 2021, and he was denied entry to the U.S. last summer ahead of a planned meeting in August.



LAHORE: Sam Billings and Abdullah Shafique added 71 off just 39 balls.

# Djokovic surpasses Graf with record 378th week as world No. 1

DUBAI (Agencies): Novak Djokovic has achieved another milestone in his illustrious tennis career, surpassing Steffi Graf to spend the most weeks at No. 1 in the world.

On Monday, Djokovic started his 378th week as the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) world No. 1, spending the most weeks in that spot since the ATP ranking system began in 1973. A week ago, Djokovic matched the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) leader, Graf, who held the top spot for 377 weeks in her career.

"With your love and great strength that you have given me over the years, I've managed to achieve many fantastic achievements throughout my career," Djokovic said in a video message to fans, shared by the ATP.

"The most recent one breaking the record of 378 weeks on No. 1 rankings, surpassing one of the greatest, most legendary tennis players — both men and women — that ever played, Steffi Graf. So I'm flattered, obviously extremely, extremely proud and happy for this achievement."

Djokovic jumped back up to No. 1 when he won the Australian Open last month. It was his 22nd major title, tying him with Rafael Nadal for the most grand slam singles titles in men's tennis. The 35-year-old will return to the court this week as the top seed in the Dubai Tennis Championships, his first tournament since the Australian Open.

The Serb has been out of action with a hamstring injury but told reporters he has been "pain free" for a week heading into his first

match against the Czech Republic's Tomás Machác on Tuesday. It's yet to be seen where and when Djokovic will play after Dubai, with his participation at next month's Indian Wells and Miami Open tournaments in doubt.

The United States still requires international visitors to be vaccinated against Covid-19, and Djokovic, who has previously confirmed that he remains unvaccinated, has now applied for special permission to enter the country ahead of both tournaments, which start on March 6 and March 20 respectively.

"All I can do is hope at the moment because, you know, my position stays the same. There's not much else I can do except wish for a positive result," Djokovic previously told reporters.

# Peshawar clinches All Pakistan Veteran Football League trophy

PESHAWAR (APP): Super-fit Peshawar clinched the trophy of the 2nd All-Pakistan Veteran Football League-2023 after defeating the strong Chitral team on a penalty kick here at historical Tehmas Khan Football Stadium on Monday.

There were vociferous crowds witnessing the thrill-packed final but super-fit Peshawar claimed the trophy after a sensational ended final enjoyed by a large number of spectators. The Chitral team has an edge over Peshawar, having the support of Chitralise based in Peshawar and other areas who supported their team continuously by cheering hands and chanting slogans.

The Peshawar team played with determination and did not take the pressure put in by their strong rivals. ADC Finance Anwar Akbar is the guest on this occasion. DFA Chitral

Patron-in-Chief and good football promoter Hussain Ahmad, and DSO Chitral Amir Muhammad Khan were also present.

The final match of the eight teams battle started at a fast tempo and Peshawar first got the lead through Gohar Zaman, the former national team skipper. The senior player of Chitral made the best moment including former national team players Rasool and Alamgir and succeeded in equalizing the goal score until the end of the scheduled time.

The team was 1-1 at the end of the first session play and the same was the score at the end of the stipulated 90-minute and 15-minute extra time. To get a certain result in the match, both teams were awarded five penalty kicks each on which Peshawar succeeded in scoring on all five attempts while Chitral missed a target and only

scored four times. Thus Peshawar won the match 6-5.

The Veteran Football League lasted for three days at Tahamas Football Stadium in which eight teams participated and thus Peshawar Veteran was victorious. Chitral won the runner-up trophy. Eight teams from Pakistan participated. The matches will be played on the basis of the league.

Hussain while commenting on this occasion said that the people of Chitral love the game of football very much. The players of Chitral are associated with the teams of all departments, including the Pakistan team, and are showing excellent performance. He also paid tribute to the Deputy Commissioner Lower Chitral and said that the success of this event goes to him because he extended support to the organizing committee.

# Lillard sets Blazers records with 71 points, 13 3s in win



PORTLAND (Agencies): Damian Lillard scored 71 points - the joint eighth highest in an NBA game - as the Portland Trail Blazers beat the Houston Rockets 131-114.

Only NBA greats Wilt Chamberlain - five times, with a high of 100 - Kobe Bryant (81) and David Thompson (73) have scored more points in a game. "I got it going early on and I stayed aggressive," said 32-year-old Lillard. "It was a masterful performance - a piece of art," said Blazers coach Chauncey Billups.

"We don't get the chance to experience

things like this a lot, and I've been around the league a long, long time - 71 points, that's just incredible.

"Having 41 points at half-time was insane, and then he came out in the second half and in the third quarter he just made every right play," Lillard, whose haul was a record for the Trail Blazers, scored 13 three-pointers at the Moda Center in Portland, one short of the NBA record held by Klay Thompson. "I wanted to be in attack mode," said Lillard. "I know it's a team effort, but I feel like I've got to do what I can to make sure we get some wins. We've got 22 or 23 games left and we need to win as many as possible."

The Trail Blazers are just outside the play-in places with a 29-31 record in the Western Conference. Lillard has scored more than 60 points in a game five times, behind only Chamberlain (32) and Bryant (six). The Cleveland Cavaliers' Donovan Mitchell also scored 71 points against the Chicago Bulls last month.

# Messi scores 700th club goal & Mbappe ties PSG record

MARSEILLE (Agencies): Lionel Messi scored his 700th club goal to help Paris St-Germain extend their lead at the top of Ligue 1 with a convincing win over title-rivals Marseille.

The Argentina captain became the second player - after Cristiano Ronaldo - to reach the landmark total in Europe's top-five leagues.

Kylian Mbappe scored twice to become PSG's joint-record scorer alongside Edinson Cavani on 200 goals. The win leaves PSG eight points clear.

Mbappe opened the scoring in clinical fashion in the 25th minute from a Messi assist. The France striker then returned the favour for Messi to tap home at the Velodrome just four minutes later.

He then linked up with the Argentine to volley his second of the match 10 minutes into the second half. That took the 24-year-old to a double century of goals for PSG - level with former team-mate Cavani - in fewer than 250 appear-



ances since signing from Monaco in 2017.

World Cup winner Messi has now scored 28 times for PSG since signing from Barcelona in December 2022. Considered one of the greatest players of all time, he scored a record 672 goals in 778 games for Barca, the club he joined as a 13-year-old.

He has won the Ballon d'Or a record seven times and lifted 35 trophies with the Catalan club, before adding two more in his time with PSG. Messi, 35, is expected to win the FIFA Best award on Monday.

Ronaldo surpassed the 700 mark earlier this season, while still at Manchester United, before leaving for Al-Nassr in Saudi Arabia with 701 European club goals.

Messi is also Argentina's record goalscorer and, on 98 goals, is closing in on becoming just the third player to score 100 times for his country. PSG defender Presnel Kimpembe will undergo surgery after rupturing his right Achilles tendon during the match, the club confirmed on Monday.

# England set up chance of historic victory

WELLINGTON (Agencies): England need 210 more runs to win the second Test after finally dismissing New Zealand for 483 on day four in Wellington.

Kane Williamson made a faultless 132 and Tom Blundell 90 as the Black Caps ground their way back into the game after being asked to follow-on.

It left England needing to pull off the highest run-chase by any team that has enforced the follow-on in a Test, while only three other teams have ever made more than New Zealand following-on against England.

The toil of England's bowlers on a docile pitch was made harder by captain Ben Stokes not joining the attack because of his troublesome left knee.

Even Harry Brook was called on to bowl his medium pace, remarkably claiming Williamson as his first Test wicket and sparking a New Zealand collapse of 5-28. Left-arm spinner Jack Leach took the final three wickets to fall to end with 5-157.

England were left with 11 overs to bat at the end of the day, in which time the under-pressure Zak Crawley was bowled through the gate by Tim Southee for a skittish 24.

Ben Duckett remains on 23 in the company of night-watchman Ollie Robinson on one, with England 48-1.

Bizarre day sets up superb finale

From looking one-sided when England asked New Zealand to bat again on Saturday, this Test has the potential to provide a superb finale on day five.

Day four veered from the sublime of Williamson's hundred to the ridiculous of Brook bowling, a move that ultimately limited England's target. It would not have been



Kane Williamson and Daryl Mitchell notched half-centuries.

England's plan to face such a large chase, but the pitch remains good for batting and they have recent pedigree for successful pursuits.

With England repeatedly stating their commitment to not draw matches, it leaves the prospect of a historic final day whatever the outcome. The tourists will either set a new record chase or become the first England team to lose a Test after enforcing the follow-on.

England, 1-0 up in the series, will start as marginal favourites to earn their seventh successive Test win. New Zealand, though, have given themselves a chance of protecting an unbeaten record in home series that stretches back six years.

Wonderful Williamson back to his best

Williamson had managed only 10 previous runs in the series, but after becoming New Zealand's all-time leading run-scorer in the first over of the day, went on to compile the most serene century.

Always playing late and with the softest of hands, the

former captain clipped off his pads and repeatedly punched off the back foot. He added 75 for the fifth wicket with Daryl Mitchell, who made a run-a-ball 54, then piled on a stand of 158 with Blundell.

While Williamson went to a chanceless century, his 26th in Tests, by cutting Stuart Broad for four, Blundell survived sharp chances to James Anderson at backward square leg on 30 and bowler Leach on 70.

Williamson was devastated to fall to Brook's bowling after a tickle down the leg side was detected on review. The New Zealand collapse left Blundell with only last man Neil Wagner for company. Aiming for his second century of the series, he fell 10 runs short with a charge and swipe at Leach that ended in the hands of Joe Root at slip.

Foakes and Leach keep England going

This was a third long day in the field for England's weary bowlers, who cycled through any number of tactics and plans after New Zealand resumed on 202-3.





## In brief

### IRSA releases 97,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 97,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 54,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1460.96 feet and was 62.96 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 15,000 cusecs while outflow as 50,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1112.60 feet, which was 62.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded 17,400 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded 58,900, 41,400, 30,400 and 7,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 13,500 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 2,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### DC wants kite-flying barred

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Irfan Nawaz Memon has urged the citizens of the Federal Capital to avoid kite-flying as the activity poses serious risk to human lives. Memon warned the shopkeepers, manufacturers and citizens to abstain from the said activity, as the district administration had imposed ban on kite flying for two months, said an ICT statement issued on Monday. He further said the administration under Section 144 of CrPC has prohibited the owners and occupants of house, shops, hospitals, buildings for kite-flying activity on their rooftops. Moreover, manufacturing or selling kites, flying strings (Maanjha), metallic wire and nylon cord which endangers the human life was also banned in the territory. He also encouraged the citizens to join the cause and help put an end to the hazardous activity. Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioner City along with police officials raided city areas and held one violator who was selling the said items for kite-flying. The team seized the material and shifted him to the police station. Furthermore, Assistant Commissioner Secretariat also arrested three absconders and confiscated kites and material.

### Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued a power suspension programme for Tuesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM. Islamabad Circle, Abdul Rahim, T&T, Pandorian, Highway, Ghorri Garden, Karpa, Abpara, F-8/3, G O R, I-9/4, Carriage Factory, G-11/1, F-11/2, Shahpur, Sunny Bank, Cecil, Dhalla, Kotli Sattian, Balawara, Treat, I-8/4, I-8 Markaz, Sohdran Road, Tufail Shaheed, Karpa Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Bank Road.II, Dhok Farman Ali, Rahmatabad.I, PWD.II, Model Town, Gulistan Colony, Gulshanabad, Chakri, Shah Jeevan, Rawat, Sagari, Kahota City, I, Lahtar. I, Hanif Shaheed, KRL.

## ‘Special persons be imparted marketable skills, with socio-economic inclusion’

ISLAMABAD (APP): First Lady Begum Samina Arif Alvi on Monday called for enhancing the socio-economic inclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs) by equipping them with marketable skills and providing them job opportunities as per their skills and abilities in the government and private sectors.

She expressed these views while addressing a certificate and diploma distribution ceremony to students with different abilities (SDAs) here at the National Training Center for Special Persons (NTCSP). Director General Special Education Azhar Sajjad, representatives of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and Christopher Blind Mission, differently-abled people, parents, and teachers of the NTCSP participated in the event. Addressing the ceremony, the First Lady urged the private sector to come forward and employ the PWDs in greater numbers as they were skilled and hard-working, and the feedback from their employers had been satisfactory.

She termed the fulfillment of job quotas for the PWDs in the public and private sectors essential for their enhanced economic integration.

The First Lady appreciated the NTCSP and the ICCI for collaborating to provide jobs to 104 PWDs in different sectors of the economy. She also lauded the Christopher Blind Mission for providing sewing and mobile repairing kits to 25 PWDs and enabling them to become self-employed. She called upon other organizations, especially the chambers of commerce & industry and welfare organizations, to expand their efforts for the welfare and financial empowerment of the PWDs.

Begum Samina Alvi underscored the need to enhance coordination among federal and provincial departments to learn from each other's best practices, and expertise, benefit from the training facilities and make coordinated efforts for the socio-economic inclusion and empowerment of the PWDs.

She added that teachers of government and private schools should be trained in greater numbers to make schools inclusive and friendly for the PWDs.

She said online training for school teachers could be provided to improve their capacity to impart education and skills to students with disabilities.

The First Lady called for ensuring the availability of safe and usable ramps for the PWDs in banks, parks, markets, and other public places to improve the mobility and access of differently-abled people.

She also emphasized the need to treat the PWDs with respect and called for greater awareness about their rights and the problems being faced by them.

Earlier, the First Lady was briefed by Director General Special Education Azhar Sajjad about the National Training Center for Special Persons (NTCSP) and the facilities being provided to students with disabilities. It was informed that students with disabilities were trained in different trades, including computer skills, graphic design, mobile repairing, tailoring, and other professions.

He further stated that 1,715 students with different abilities (SDAs) were currently enrolled in different government and private schools in Islamabad, adding that the NTCSP had so far trained 850 teachers to equip them with skills to provide education to the SDAs.

## Mushaal laments world silence over Indian regime's barbarism, cruelty in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organization, Mushaal Hussein Mullick lashed out at the Hindutva fascist regime for unleashing a wave of terrorism and the world's worst human rights violations in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and vowed that brave Kashmir would break the shackles of Indian slavery at all costs.

Speaking at a seminar titled Humanitarian Tragedies in OIC geography, which was attended by the Ambassador of Azerbaijan as a chief guest, Mushaal thanked Azerbaijan for its continued and unwavering support of Kashmir's freedom fight against Indian unlawful subjugation, said a press release. Mushaal, the wife of incarcerated Hurriyat

leader Yasin Malik, stated that the people and government of Azerbaijan also supported and backed the Kashmiri people in their just fight for the right to self-determination.

She stated that the people of the occupied valley always reciprocated in the same fashion and strongly condemned Armenian armed forces' aggression against Azerbaijan and especially the tragic Khojaly genocide, which was one of the bloodiest pages of the policy of ethnic cleansing and genocide carried out by Armenian nationalists against Azerbaijanis.

The Hurriyat leader stated that like Armenian forces, the fascist Indian forces continued with their brutal policy of mass murder and slaughter of the civilian Kashmiri

population with unprecedented cruelty. Mushaal stated that the supremacist Indian forces made life hell for Kashmiri people, as they crossed all limits of barbarism and inhuman acts; however, she added that ironically the human rights organisations and world powers adopted a callous approach toward the brewing human crisis in the IIOJK and did not take any action against Hindutva regime.

The Chairperson stated that inhuman forces neither spared Kashmiri leaders nor women and children, as they subjected to brutality all and sundry with their planned nefarious plan to spread fear in the valley to silence the dissenting voices but no such policy of barbarity worked rather it further fanned the fire.

## Khan should surrender first for ‘Jail Bharo’ tehreek: Tahira

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member National Assembly and senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Tahira Aurangzeb Monday asked Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Imran Khan should surrender first in ‘Jail Bharo’ Tehreek then support his party workers, especially the youth who are disappointed.

She expressed these words while talking to PTV news channel on Monday. She said IK does not want to get arrested and had named the Jail Bharo movement after the party's workers, adding, PTI's senior leadership is seeking bail from the courts and asking their supporters to get arrested.

Imran Khan's only aim is to use the innocent youth workers for his conspiracy, she added.

The ‘Jail Bharo Tehreek’ was a flopped circus show where PTI's leaders and MPAs were seen taking pictures and videos inside the prison vans and when they saw the police were coming to arrest them, they ran away.

MNA further warned that government will not allow those who attempt to hold the nation hostage for their personal gains.

Replying to a question, she said the PML-N workers' convention has already started by Maryum Nawaz, adding, we are not afraid of elections and that her party is ready to contest elections and will win with a majority of seats.

She also mentioned that the party's supreme Nawaz Sharif and his wife Begum Kalsoom Nawaz had the historic struggle for the country and they had launched a successful tehreek in past as well. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif had always brought the country out of a quagmire, and again PML-N under his leadership would revive the economic situation soon, she expressed her confidence.

The public is now fed-up of listening to the conspiracy mantra of the PTI chief, she said, adding, without Mian Nawaz Sharif, the situation cannot improve. People must prepare, Nawaz Sharif will come to Pakistan very soon.



ISLAMABAD: First Lady Begum Samina Arif Alvi being briefed about training facilities for students with disabilities, at the National Training Center for Special Persons.

### ANF recovers over 69 kg drugs; arrests nine

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in five operations managed to recover over 69 kg drugs and arrested nine accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed that ANF conducted a raid near Islamabad Motorway and recovered 56.4 kg charras and 8.4 kg opium from the possession of four accused resident of Sialkot.

In another raid, ANF seized over 2.1 kg Ice drug from the possession of a Doha-bound passenger resident of Khyber, arrested at Islamabad International Airport, going on flight no QR-633. In third operation, ANF recovered two kg heroin from the possession of an accused resident of Nowshera intercepted near Islamabad Motorway.

The spokesman informed that in fourth operation, ANF conducted a raid near Burhan Toll Plaza and managed to recover 500 grams Ice drug from the possession of two accused. ANF and ASF in an operation at Bacha Khan International Airport recovered 123 grams charras from an Abu-Dhabi bound passenger going on flight no PK-217.

### ICT admin conducts 2,647 raids

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Territory (ICT) Administration, Islamabad has conducted 2,647 raids across the city against profiteers, violators and imposed fines amounting to Rs 2,62,500 during the month of February.

During these raids, the teams have sealed 62 shops and arrested 53 violators while five (5) First Information Reports (FIRs) were also lodged against profiteers. Similarly, 193.7 kilograms of polythene bags were seized from various shops besides warning was issued to shopkeepers of strict action against use of prohibited plastic bags, ICT Spokesperson told APP on Monday.

In an exclusive, he said 174 professional beggars were also arrested during different raids. Giving further details, he said the raiding teams sealed three Sheesha Centers and Cafés, arrested Managers of two Sheesha Bars, seized Hukkas, their substances, flavored tobacco and coals, warned violators and directed them not to serve such puffing material until finalization of rules.

## Elections to be held as per schedule after fulfilling all formalities: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Interior and Legal Affairs (SAPM) Attaullah Tarar on Monday said that elections should be held in the country as per schedule after fulfilling all legal formalities.

Speaking here at a press conference, he said that two provincial assemblies were dissolved prematurely to satisfy a person's ego.

SAPM said that establishing care taker government is constitutional requirement for conduct of general elections and there are different stakeholders including Ministries of Interior and Finance and others in this process which should be consulted for conduct of elections.

He said that Article 224 of the Constitution is related to time of election and all the constitutional formalities should be fulfilled for conduct of elections. “It is a legal discussion and should be conducted at appropriate forum,” he maintained. Attaullah Tarar

said that four judges recused themselves from hearing the case related to the elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. He said that two judges separated themselves from the nine-member larger bench and two others expressed their reservations over it and their valid points should be answered.

He said that remaining five judges in the bench would decide about the maintainability and jurisdiction of the case as two higher courts had been already hearing the similar cases before suo motu.

He said economic condition does not allow the country to hold elections separately and a huge amount of money is required to conduct elections in two provinces. He said that budget was not earmarked in this fiscal year for conduct of elections and separate allocation would be made for it in upcoming fiscal year.

Attaullah Tarar said that Imran Khan would be ultimately indicted in

Toshakhana case as he sold out state gifts worth billion of rupees in nexus of his spouse, Farah Gogi and Ahsan Jamil Gujjar. “A gang of four minted money after selling state gifts and through posting and transfers,” he said.

He said that Imran Khan would have to be accountable in Parliament attack case and to answer for his wrongdoings. A medical report, he said, had been submitted with Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and it has been stated that Imran Khan would appear before it with certain precautionary measures.” The doctor advising him to adopt precautionary measures for this hearing should remember that why such measures were not adopted in long march and travel in helicopter for addressing people,” he added. On the question of the Rajanpur by-election, he said that the PML-N secured around 50,000 votes in it while PPPP candidate obtained almost 20,000 votes.

## 8,647 graduates get training in freelancing centers

ISLAMABAD (APP): About 20 training centers were established across the country under the National Freelance Training Program, initiated and funded by the Ministry of Information Technology.

As many as 8,647 graduates were trained through International standard IT courses and these students contributed to the country's economy by earning \$23 million through freelancing after training, said an official of the Ministry of IT.

He said, during the year 2022, around 1,638 new IT companies got registered

with Pakistan Software Export Board, while 761 call centers and 1,463 freelancers were also registered with the PSEB.

He said the ministry was also establishing specialized incubation centers in agriculture and textile, aerospace technologies, gaming and animation to create more businesses in these areas and boost exports. For the provision of early-stage investment, he said Ignite was starting an accelerator program so that early-age startups can sustain their businesses.

Ignite is collaborating with international partners like Plug & Play, orbit, DMZ, 500 global and hub 71 so that the local startup ecosystem can be exposed to international investors.

He said that about 33 million people have got themselves registered for freelancing courses under the DG Skills Programs of Ignite, which is 75% more than the target.

By June 2022, the freelancers trained with DG Skills have earned a whopping \$290 million, adding to the country's foreign exchange reserves.

## Railways to complete rehabilitation work on Quetta-Bostan track soon

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways was putting maximum efforts to compete rehabilitation work of 33.50-kilometer track ‘through sleeper renewal’ between Quetta-Bostan and Quetta-Chaman section shortly.

“The track will not only facilitate the passengers, small businessmen, but also connect three major cities of the province,” an official source in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

He said railway network in Baluchistan province mainly consisted of Quetta Division having Dera Allah Yar Sibi-Quetta, Quetta-Chaman, Sibi-Khost, Spezend-Dalbandin-Taftan and Bostan-Zhob which were closed for the last 15 years. The source said there were two passenger trains namely Jaffer Express (40Up, 39 Down) and Chaman Passenger (349Up, 350 Down) operating in Balochistan while no stations had been closed during the last 15 years in Quetta division. He said the overall length of the railway track in Balochistan was 1470.36 kilometer including the closed Bostan-Zhob section.

“The most of the track was more than one hundred year old and on certain stretches, engineering speed restrictions have been imposed due to deferred maintenance and owing to resource constraints,” he said adding that the routine maintenance of track was being carried out with available resources.

To improve railway services in Balochistan, he said the department was taking several steps like approval of PC-I

for the track's rehabilitation and the rehabilitation of another 100-km track between Ahmedwal Dalbadin on Quetta-Taftan section. He said that 100-km rehabilitation of track between Nokundi Kohi-Taftan on Quetta-Taftan section while 160.024 kilometers rehabilitation of track between Bostan-Chaman on Quetta-Chaman section would be carried out.

The source said tourist train's two trips had been started between Quetta-Bostan while Bolan Mail passenger train would also be operational shortly to facilitate the passengers. He said the establishment of Chaman Terminal in collaboration with Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and track renewal Sibi-Khost section was also in progress. To a question, he said Pakistan Railways had suffered losses worth over Rs 150 billion during the last three-and-a-half years' rule of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government.

To control the deficit and earn more revenue, he said the department had introduced ‘Raabta’ - a platform for the improvement of its financial conditions. Raabta was essentially an attempt to enhance customer facilitation via artificial intelligence. Around 60 million passengers have used Pakistan Railways annually, for which 40 percent of the tickets were sold using an outdated process without any audit, he said. To resolve this problem, Raabta allows customers to plan trips with the help of different options. Single interface customers can check train statuses, choose and purchase seats, book hotels, and order car rentals, meals, and refreshments.



ISLAMABAD: A visitor is taking keen interest in a collage work on the cultural tradition of textile in Pakistan at an exhibition “PAIVAND-KAR” organized by AICS & SHEWORKS at Pakistan Nation Council of the Arts.



KABUL (Agencies): Da Afghanistan Bank auction 17 million USD today (Tuesday) to keep the local currency rate stable in the market. DAB in a statement asked all eligible commercial banks, and money exchangers to participate in the auction. The partial transaction is not allowed and the winner of the auction is obligated to deliver the amount in cash at a specific time to DAB, added to the statement. DAB last two days back auctioned off \$15 million for strengthening the Afghani currency.

**Shabaan 07, 1444 — Tuesday, February 28, 2023**

**GHAZNI (Agencies):** A truck fully loaded with ammunition in Ghazni, discovered by the Intelligence forces of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. The GDI on Monday in a statement said that the ammunitions include thousands of projectiles, hand grenades, explosives and other military equipment. The ammunitions skillfully placed in the lower part of a truck, which was discovered by the of Intelligence officers in Ghazni province, the source added.

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

KABUL (TOLUNGS): Students are calling for the reopening of girls' schools as the new academic year approaches. The students said that continuing to deny females access to education would result in serious problems for them, and they asked the Islamic Emirate to reopen grades 7-12 for girls in the upcoming academic year. "I ask the Islamic Emirate to put an end to this issue, we have made many preparations for the next academic year," said Farhat, a student.

"There are 23 days remaining until the start of the new academic year, and schools will resume next month following the winter break. We ask them to reopen our schools," he said.

Some teachers said that they are prepared to teach in the upcoming academic year—both girls and boys—because they consider that women's education is essential to the advancement and prosperity of the country. "We ask the Islamic Emirate and the Amirul-Muminin to reopen schools for our sisters as soon as possible," said Nasibullah Patan, a teacher.

"Don't deprive them of the right to education, so Afghan girls will be able to continue their studies again," said Murtaza, a tutor at one of the Kabul province educational centers.

Meanwhile, Kabul residents asked the current government to allow female students to go to school along with the boys in the new academic year.

"An uneducated person is blind, but a literate person has sight and can see everything," said Gulzad, a resident of Kabul.

"The Islamic Emirate should allow both girls and boys to study, according to the religion of Islam and the will of Islam," said Zalmay, a resident of Kabul.

It has been two years since the Islamic Emirate was reestablished in Afghanistan, and females are still waiting for the reopening of their schools.

In the next 23 days, the new academic year is expected to begin. However, the caretaker government has not yet decided about the reopening of girls' schools.

## A group of men, including religious leaders, participating in a ribbon-cutting ceremony. One man in a light blue shawl is cutting a red ribbon with scissors.

**KANDAHAR CITY** (TOLNews): The work of two projects at the cost of \$130,000 was started by the World Bank and the management of the United Nations project service office in Kandahar.

Officials in Kandahar province said that after the Islamic Emirate took over, the World Bank has delayed work on 26 projects that cost \$8 million in this province.

"We welcome these projects, it's good for our country's progress and people can have a job," said Nimatullah Hassan, mayor of Kandahar.

"26 projects of the World Bank in different areas of Kandahar remained half-finished," said Ahmad Jawed Maiwand, head of the Sectoral and Technical Services of Kandahar Municipality. According to officials, in these projects work has been provided for two hundred people.

Meanwhile, some Kandahar residents asked for the beginning of the other half-finished projects in this province to provide more work for people.

"We demand more projects so work can be provided for more people," said Juma Gul, a Kandahar resident.

"There must be these kinds of projects so people can have jobs and cannot fall into bad habits," said Fazil Mohammad, a Kandahar resident.

"We call on the government to start other projects and we are happy these projects have provided work to do," said Mohammad, a Kandahar resident.

Officials of the municipality in Kandahar said that efforts are ongoing with aid organizations to provide work for youth.

BADGHIS (TOLOWS): Some Badghis residents want the pistachio orchards of the province to be turned into a national park.

They said that by turning the areas of pistachio trees into national parks in this province, the number of domestic and foreign tourists will increase, and work will be provided for more people in the province.

"It will be good if the pistachio forests are turned into a national park," said Mohammad Hatam, a Badghis resident.

"We call on the government to make a plan and turn pistachio forests into a national park," said Walid, a Badghis resident.

According to Badghis residents, the area of the pistachio orchards, with its vast forests and unique natural scenery, has attracted the attention of many citi-

zens of the country, and on the eve of the new year, a large number of residents from different provinces travel to the area.

"We hope the Islamic Emirate changes this place to a national park for national and international visitors," said Syed Atiqullah, a lecturer.

"With its capacity, beauty, and nature, it must be turned into a national park in Afghanistan in order to attract domestic and foreign tourists," said Fahim Entizar, a lecturer.

Meanwhile, local officials said that efforts are being made to turn pistachio orchards into national parks.

"The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan said that efforts are ongoing to provide work for the people," said Matiullah Mutaqqi, head of information and culture in Badghis.

Recently, the Department of Agriculture and Livestock of Badghis, with the cooperation of a number of supporting institutions, revived many areas of pistachio orchards, and it is expected that this process will continue in the future.

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## OCHA:

KABUL (Khaama Press) — Afghanistan needs \$4.6 billion in humanitarian aid for the year 2023, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid (OCHA) said.

OCHA on Twitter said that more than 28 million people are in desperate need of humanitarian aid. So humanitarian aid organizations can help vulnerable families during the planting

KABUL (TOLOnews): The union of universities and educational centers said that the recent restrictions on female education has severely affected the universities.

The media director of the union, Mohammad Karim Nasiri, said that the number of participants has dropped by 70 percent.

"If we speak generally, enrollment has dropped from 60 to 70 percent in the universities. Prior to this many people were registering," he said. Owners of educational centers and universities expressed concerns that if the situation continues like this, they would be forced to close their universities and other educational facilities.

"It has affected our activities because we used to have income from two

The acting Minister of Higher Education, Mawlana Mohammad Nadeem, in a religious ceremony said they would support the educational sector of the country.

The university instructors believe that banning girls from going to school above grade six and poverty are the main reasons for the drop in enrollment of universities in the country.

"The Islamic Emirate should reopen the universities for the girls and prevent strict policies and allow the students to continue their education," said Fazal Hadi Wazin, a university instructor.

"If policies that can be trusted are made for the future, the return of students to universities and studies will increase," said Sayed Jawad Sijadi, a university instructor.

Based on figures of the union, if the restrictions on girls' access to education are not changed, 40 universities will be forced to close.

TEHRAN (Khaama Press): The Iranian foreign ministry has denied any involvement in any changes to the hangover and development of the Afghanistan embassy in Tehran.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran issued a statement that read, "The issue of handing over and transformation of the Afghan embassy in Tehran is an internal matter and related to Afghanistan, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran has not entered into the matter by any means."

It said the Iranian Foreign Ministry had not received any documents, equipment, or other supplies from the Afghan Embassy in Tehran.

This comes after the announcement by the Taliban government saying that the Afghanistan embassy in Tehran was "formally" handed over to the Taliban on Sunday.

The Taliban government has appointed Fazl Mohammad Haqqani, the first secretary of the former ambassador of Afghanistan in Iran, as the group's chargé d'affaires in Tehran, and all documents and equipment of the embassy have been handed over to him.

The Afghan embassy in Tehran was supposed to be handed over to the Taliban government after months of negotiations, according to an unofficial source.

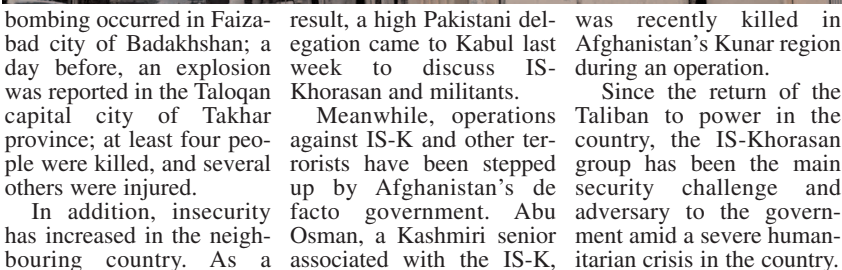
KABUL (Khaama Press): In an overnight raid in the Kabul, Taliban security forces killed two Islamic State of Khorasan group militants; they captured a third according to a government spokesman on Monday.

The Islamic State, also known as the Islamic State in Khorasan province, is the main adversary of the de facto government led by the Taliban.

According to Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban government spokesperson, the operation was conducted in a residential area and targeted IS terrorists who were preparing to organize strikes in the capital city of Kabul.

After the Taliban seized control of the country in August 2021, the militant group has increased its attacks targeting Taliban forces, citizens, foreign nationals and properties.

Last week, a suicide



KABUL (TOLOnews): Shah Mohammad Mehrahi, Central Bank supreme council member and board member of the Afghan Trust Fund in Switzerland, said that the \$3.5 billion fund—including \$36 million and \$34 million in interest—should be used for achieving monetary stability and reducing volatility in the Afghan currency exchange.

“During the meeting, the board took decisive actions to further operationalize the Afghan fund with a focus on protecting and preserving its assets on behalf of the Afghan people. The board agreed to seek external funding to cover the Afghan fund’s operational expenses. At the same time, they decided to allocate a specific portion of the



assets should be used to stabilize the afghani currency and international debts.

"The assets and its interests are used for monetary stability and price management and also for the payment of international debts," said Meer Shikib Meer, an economist.

"This money is going to help the government or rulers of Afghanistan indirectly. One of the goals is to help with the humanitarian issues and payment of expenses," said Sayed Masoud, an economist.

The Afghan trust fund was established in September 14th of 2022 and is intended to preserve and manage the \$3.5 billion Afghan assets in Switzerland.

KABUL (TOLOnews): The head of the Afghan Business Council in the UAE, Haji Obaidullah Sader Khail, said that 80 percent of Afghans who invest abroad (in around 50 countries including Afghanistan) are based in the UAE. Sader Khail said that around 300,000 Afghans are based in the UAE. "80 percent of the major Afghan traders have homes here and central offices and they have business in 45 to 50 countries including Afghanistan," he said. This comes as the

# UNHCR 3 health centers

KANDAHAR (Agencies): The head of UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for southwest zone in a meeting with the Deputy Governor of Kandahar, Mawlawi Hayatullah Mubarak said that the organization will build 8 schools and 3 health centers in the province.

The head of UNHCR Mamoon Abu Artub said that the organization will build 8 schools, 3 health centers and shelters for 300 families in Kandahar and provide diverse assistance to hundreds of other families in that province.

Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ACCI) said that efforts are underway to provide further facilities for the traders to invest inside Afghanistan.

"The investors are out of the country and we are trying to bring the traders into the country so they invest here," said Mohammad Yunous Momand, acting head of the ACCI.

The economists said that the investment inside the country will play an important role in growing the Afghan economy.

"When the investment

took place inside the country, it created job opportunities and with the creation of jobs the livelihood of the people gets better," said Abdul Naseer Rishtia, an economist.

"There trade and investment consortium for the Afghan traders and also big projects should be facilitated," said Asif Nang, an economist.

This comes as the residents of Kabul called on the Islamic Emirate to pave the way for domestic and foreign investment in the country.

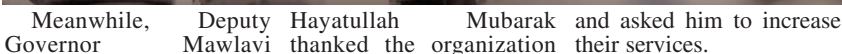
"They (traders) may transfer their investment to Afghanistan and start their activities, so the people can get out of this severe economic trouble and unemployment," said Nematullah, a resident of Kabul.

"If the investment is placed into Afghanistan, the unemployment will be reduced," said Waleed, a resident of Kabul.

Earlier, the Ministry of Commerce and Investment said that it established a consortium formed of traders from Russia, Pakistan and Iran.

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season and prepare to deal with floods across Afghanistan.

The UN agency further stated that currently, two-thirds of Afghanistan's population depends on humanitarian aid, which is a great challenge for the ruling regime to find a solution considering the economic crisis which has hit the country the most.

Meanwhile, Abdul

Rahman Habib, the spokesman of the Ministry of Economy, while confirming the existence of poverty in the country, said that the statistics and reports of international organizations about the human condition in Afghanistan are not approved by the government.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has stressed that the inflow of

humanitarian aid to the country is fundamental, stating that partial aid cannot heal any pain.

"In order to reduce poverty in Afghanistan, the economic infrastructure must be strengthened. Agriculture and rural economy are the basic foundations of the national economy which needs immediate development" says economic experts.

This comes as foreign investment in the country is nearly zero since the Taliban's return to power in August 2021. National and foreign investors and business people fled the country due to security concerns, with no prospect of their return in the near future.

Many infrastructure projects across the country are left incomplete, and the Taliban administration does

not have the financial ability to resume work on those projects, which has further complicated the economic situation of Afghanistan.

"The solution to overcome Afghanistan's economic challenges is to pay attention to the development aid so that infrastructure can be revived," Deputy Minister of Economy, Abdul Latif Nazari said.





ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf in a meeting with delegation of PTI members regarding resignation at Parliament House.

## 3 PTI MNAs move IHC challenging acceptance of their resignations

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Three MNAs of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have approached the Islamabad High Court (IHC) challenging acceptance of their resignation.

The PTI MNAs, including former finance minister Asad Umar, Ali Nawaz Awan and Khurram Shehzad filed the petition in the IHC through the counsels Barrister Ali Zafar and Barrister Gohar Khan. They cited the federal government, Speaker National Assembly and secretary NA and the ECP as respondents in the case and requested the court to suspend the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECPs) and speaker national assembly's notification.

In the petition, the PTI MNAs said that on 11-04-2022, en-masse letters were obtained by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf from 123 members of the National Assembly, including the petitioners, and submitted accordingly. They added that the petitioners acted on the directions of the party and for the political objective only of arriving at an agreement with the opposition parties for holding of fresh elections so that a new government may be formed with the real mandate of the people of Pakistan, and the nation could be relieved of the current impasse.

They added that the resignation was subject to all the 123 members of the National Assembly belonging to PTI resigning and being de-seated jointly and as a whole. They further said that the then acting Speaker (Deputy Speaker National Assembly, Qasim Suri) accepted the 'en mass' resignations on 13.04.2022 but after the Deputy Speaker's resignation on 16.04.2022, the new Speaker (Respondent No. 1) was elected and he, on 16.04.2022, gave a ruling reversing the acceptance of the resignations by the acting Speaker (Deputy Speaker Mr. Suri) and directed the Secretariat to resubmit the resignations for verification in accordance with the judgments of the Superior Courts.

The PTI leaders further said that the Speaker (Respondent No.1) decided to hold an enquiry and verify each resignation by calling each MNA individually to confirm whether they were willing and ready to resign. Thereafter, it was obvious to the petitioners that for their original resignation to be accepted they will have to go to the Speaker who will call them and

thereafter verify.

They argued that after the aforesaid date i.e. 10.06.2022, the Speaker of the National Assembly in violation of the law and on his own started to accept some of the resignations and first of all, on 28.07.2022, Speaker accepted resignation of Eleven Members (nine elected and two women reserved seats) without following any due enquiry or verification under Article 64. "The resignations were forwarded to ECP on 28.07.2022 in terms of Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly 2007, whereupon ECP, vide notification dated 29.07.2022, de-notified those eleven MINAs. In doing so the Speaker did not follow the requirements of Article 64 as laid down by the Superior Courts of Pakistan, for acceptance of resignations," maintained the petitioners.

They contended that the action of the Speaker was illegal and unlawful and, accordingly, the aforesaid actions and omissions of 28-07-2022 were first assailed in writ petition (WF. No.2892/2022) before this court by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and the PTI prayed that the decision of the acting Speaker notified vide order 13.04.2022 was valid and that the decision of the Speaker reversing the same is wrong and it was further prayed that the Speaker should notify all the 123 resignations of PTI MNAs en bloc without a need for verification/calling them. The legal point involved in the case was whether the process adopted by the Respondent to call each MNA individually and obtain his/her consent to the verification

Therefore, they prayed to the court to hold and declare that the resignations have been accepted in violation of law settled by the Supreme Court as inter alia referred to in the grounds and are thus unlawful, illegal and of no legal effect. They continued that as a consequence of the aforesaid, set aside both Impugned Notifications d1.17-01-2023 as unlawful, illegal and without lawful authority and of no legal effect and thus void on rights of the petitioners as Members of the National Assembly. They also requested the court to direct that the impugned notifications shall remain suspended till final disposal of the titled Petition and/or suspend the remaining process of by-elections on the aforesaid seats.

## Imran's claim of caretakers' partiality buried: Marriyum

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Monday that after the bye-elections in NA-193 Rajanpur, Imran Khan's claim of partiality of Punjab's caretaker government has been buried. "Imran Khan's accusation that the caretaker government cannot conduct transparent and impartial elections was buried", she said using her Twitter handle.

The minister said it was a big success which Imran Khan has also acknowledged. She said in 2018 elections PML-N had not fielded a candidate in NA-193 constituency. The minister said that yesterday, for the first time, 53,000 voters cast their votes for the PML-N in this constituency and thanked party workers' participation.

Terming Imran a Toshakhana thief, she said it was the habit of PTI they celebrate victory when they win but hold sit-ins outside Election Commission of Pakistan's office when they lose. She asked if Imran would still keep on pressurizing the courts.

## 'PTI MNAs resignations accepted as per Constitution'

ISLAMABAD (PPI): National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf on Monday clarified that he had accepted the resignations of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) members of the National Assembly (MNAs) as per the Constitution and on their own request.

Talking to a delegation of PTI leaders, which met him under the leadership of Malik Amir Dogar, he made it clear that he would discuss the matter with his legal team and they would be informed accordingly.

The PTI leaders requested the speaker to withdraw his decision regarding the acceptance of resignations. He asked the delegation whether the PTI MNAs did not resign according to their will.

## Buzdar's interim bail extended

LAHORE (INP): An accountability court (AC) has extended the interim bail of former Punjab CM Usman Buzdar in assets beyond means case. As per details, the court ordered the former chief minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar to become part of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) investigation.

The accountability court scolded the NAB prosecutor for not providing an inquiry copy to Buzdar and said that the accused should know what he is accused for. The NAB prosecutor informed the court that a written answer was sent to the former CM Punjab Buzdar but he did not become part of the investigation.

The court told Usman Buzdar to become part of the investigation today but the PTI leader urged the court to extend his bail for 10 days as he had to attend a wedding in Dera Ghazi Khan. The judge remarked that don't make excuses. At this, Buzdar said that attending a wedding is not an excuse.

The court told the former CM Punjab Usman Buzdar if he did not become part of the NAB investigation then the court will not provide him relief. Furthermore, the accountability court extended Usman Buzdar's interim bail till March 7.

# 'Cyber strength' vital to counter India's nefarious disinformation campaign

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday said India's disinformation campaign against Pakistan was in full swing, which needed to be countered by acquiring 'cyber strength'. India had not learnt a lesson even after the EU Disinfo Lab had exposed its anti-Pakistan nefarious propaganda, however, Pakistan should 'intellectually' counter it by acquiring 'cyber strength', besides using other conventional modes of security, he said speaking here at the 10th convocation ceremony of Air University.

President Alvi highlighted the need for the world's fifth most populous nation to gain knowledge in contemporary fields, particularly artificial intelligence, cyberspace, and data-driven technology. He said though Pakistan had achieved professional prowess in traditional and conventional defence such as nuclear deterrence, gaining a strong foothold in cyberspace was also vital for its survival.

He pointed out that in the last year's global cyber ranking, Pakistan was placed nowhere on the list. The situation, he said, demanded an overhaul in choices of career pathways,

besides a major shift in the retrogressive mindset. He said cyber knowledge was one of the best tools to equip the country's big youth bulge with contemporary skills.

He mentioned that a huge quantum of data based on pattern recognition was available in the world that needed the skill of artificial intelligence to quantify and analyze it. The president called for decision-making on imparting requisite knowledge to the youth about quantum computing and artificial intelligence as the world witnessed an unprecedented transformation in those fields. He emphasized the importance of carrying out thorough research on job markets by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) as it would produce a skilled human resource to match the demands of national and international organizations, thus aptly addressing unemployment in the country.

About the Air University's maiden batch of Cyber Security discipline, Dr Alvi expressed confidence that the graduates would play a vital role in safeguarding Pakistan's cyberspace. The president commended the chairman of Board of Governors of Air University for his continuous support and patronage of the noble

cause of education which had been provided with the support of the Pakistan Air Force. He awarded degrees to the graduating students and appreciated their efforts in various disciplines.

About 1,300 bright graduates from the undergraduate, as well as MS and PhD programmes, received medals and degrees in various disciplines, including Mechanical, Mechatronics, Electrical, Aerospace & Aeronautical Engineering, Business Administration, Accounting & Finance, Aviation Management, Literature & Linguistics, Mathematics, Physics, Strategic Studies, Computer Science and Cyber Security. Earlier, Air University Vice Chancellor Air Marshal (Retd) Javid Ahmed, in his welcome, address thanked President Alvi and HEC Chairman Dr Mukhtar Ahmed for gracing the occasion. He lauded the vision of the Air Chief for modernising and reinstating the tech arena through projects under the National Aerospace and Technology Park (NASTP). He said the Air University would continue to impart quality education, research, innovation, and technology to the students and would make meaningful contributions to the national cause.

## PHC rejects bail of alleged rapist

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) has turned down bail petition of an accused arrested on charges of sexually assaulting a female relative at gun point in Swat around two months ago.

A single-member bench comprising of Justice Mohammad Ijaz Khan observed that petitioner, Mohammad Imran, had directly been charged by the complainant. PHC observed that the complainant happened to be aunt (his paternal uncle's wife) and thus the possibility of false implication in such like cases was a remote possibility, especially when the accused and the complainant were close relatives.

Section 376 (rape) of the Pakistan Penal Code, under which the accused was charged carried a maximum punishment of death or life imprisonment, therefore, the same fell within the prohibitory clause of section 497 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and thus he was not entitled to the concession of bail. PHC

ordered that as challan (charge sheet) had been put in court, therefore, the trial court should conclude the trial within a period of four months.

The FIR was registered at Matta Police Station on Dec 23, 2022, under different provisions of the PPC and Arms Act. The complainant had stated that she was married to the uncle of the accused on July 10, 2021, and her husband had gone to Qatar after two months of the marriage for labor work. She claimed that on the night of Oct 24, 2022, the accused knocked at her residence and when she opened the door the accused aimed a pistol at her and sexually assaulted her. She said that she had informed her mother-in-law and a sister-in-law about the incident but as they had no male family members at home, they remained silent.

However, she alleged that a few days later the accused threatened her that she would be again subjected sexual assault, after which she informed her husband on phone. The complainant stated that she had remained silent

because of her honour, but now as the accused had been threatening her, she had approached the police. She claimed that her life had become miserable and she was even thinking of committing suicide.

The petitioner's counsel stated that his client was falsely implicated in the case and there was no eye-witness of the occurrence. He contended that the FIR was registered after around two months, which made the prosecution case doubtful. Assistant advocate general, Sohail Sultan, and complainant's counsel Hamza Nawab contended that delay in reporting such offences was natural and woman normally could not tell the situation forthwith due to honour and respect and even due to fear.

Earlier, the bail petition of the accused was also rejected by an additional district and sessions judge in Swat on Feb 9. The judge had ruled that the allegations being extremely brutal, degrading and inhuman in nature, tending to tear apart the very fabric of society, required more cautious dispensation.



ISLAMABAD: Police officials escorting Lt Gen (retd) Amjad Shoaib to present him before court.

## FO directed to ascertain facts about Italy boat tragedy

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed his deep concern over the drowning of over two dozen Pakistanis in a boat tragedy in Italy and took notice of the incident, directing Foreign Office to ascertain the facts as soon as possible.

As the death toll rose to 60 including 28 Pakistan, the prime minister in a tweet uploaded on Monday, said he has directed the Foreign Office to ascertain the facts as early as possible and take the nation into confidence.

As many as 60 migrants, including 28 Pakistanis, died after their overloaded boat sank early Sunday in stormy seas off Italy's southern Calabria region, officials said. According to the Pakistani embassy in Rome — the capital of Italy — besides others, 40 Pakistanis were on board the ill-fated boat. The mission also said that the bodies of 28 Pakistanis have been fished out of the sea by the rescue officials.

However, 12 more citizens are still missing.

The Pakistani officials further said that they are in contact with the Italian authorities, volunteers and maritime agencies in this regard. The embassy added that it is also in touch with the Pakistani community in the Calabria region and providing them with the latest information about the sad incident.

Meanwhile, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said, "We are closely following the reports about possible presence of Pakistanis in the vessel that has capsized off the coast of Italy." Taking to Twitter, she said that the Pakistani embassy in Rome is in the process of ascertaining facts from the Italian authorities.

Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and several other countries, and crashed in stormy weather near Steccato di Cutro, a seaside resort on the eastern coast of Calabria.

Meanwhile, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and UN agencies serving refugees and migrants urgently called for safer travel routes and strengthened rescue operations following a deadly shipwreck that left at least 45 dead, including Pakistani migrants, off the coast of Crotona, Italy, on Sunday.

"Every person searching for a better life deserves safety and dignity," UN Secretary-General António Guterres said in a statement. "We need safe, legal routes for migrants and refugees. The UN refugee agency (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in a joint statement, expressed condolences for the victims and called on countries to increase resources and capabilities to effectively meet their responsibilities.

## PTI shortlists candidates from Lahore for polls

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) shortlisted its candidate from Lahore for the upcoming general elections on Monday. The PTI had compiled the recommendations of the shortlisted candidates for Lahore for the upcoming general polls.

A non-final list had been prepared for 13 national and 25 provincial constituencies in the Lahore district. The PTI had recommended the re-issuance of tickets to most of the former lawmakers. The leader of Narowal on one seat of the National Assembly from Lahore will also likely be awarded a ticket. Two current members of the Senate were also in the race for the National Assembly tickets from Lahore.

Wajid Azeem and Abrarul Haq were candidates from NA 123. Ghulam Mohiuddin Dewan and Muhammad Khan Madani were candidates from NA 124. Dr Yasmin was a candidate from NA 125. Former Federal Minister Hammad Azhar was a candidate from NA 126. Jamshed Iqbal Cheema, Hamid Miraj, and Mian Ibad Farooq were candidates from NA 127. Usman Hamza Awan from NA 128. Mian Akram Usman, Humayun Akhtar Khan and Senator Waleed Iqbal were also candidates from NA 129.

Shafiqat Mehmood from NA 130, Humayun Akhtar Khan and Ali Imtiaz Waraich from NA 131, Chaudhary Mansha Sindhu from NA 132, Senator Ejaz Chaudhary, Jamshed Iqbal Cheema, and Atif Chaudhary from NA 133, Zaheer Abbas Khokhar from NA 134.

From PP 145 – Mahmood-ur-Rashid, Farooq Khan, and Abrar Khan. From PP 148 – Hafiz Zeeshan Rashid. From PP 151 – Mian Aslam Iqbal. From PP 159 – Dr Murad Raas. From PP 160 – Mahmood-ur-Rashid.

## One killed in new Turkey quake

ISTANBUL (Agencies): An earthquake shook southeast Turkey on Monday, killing one person, injuring 69 and causing some buildings to collapse, Turkish authorities said. It hit three weeks after a massive quake that killed more than 50,000 people in Turkey and Syria. Yunus Sezer, head of Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) told a news conference that search and rescue teams had been deployed to five buildings.

The quake, which struck the southeastern province of Malatya, was measured by the European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre at a magnitude of 5.2. AFAD put it at 5.6. It struck at a depth of 5 km (3 miles), said EMSC. Media reports said two people were believed to be trapped in the rubble of one building. Turkey has arrested 184 people suspected of complicity in the collapse of buildings in this month's earthquakes and investigations are widening, a minister said on Saturday.

## Senate body summons IGP, CS

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Senate Standing Committee for Interior discussed murders in Barkhan district of Balochistan on Monday. The members of the Senate body expressed their resentment over the absence of the Home Secretary and the I.G. Balochistan. The committee members decided to summon the Chief Secretary and the I.G. Police Balochistan to get briefing from them over cold-blooded murders in Barkhan.

Senator Mushtaq Ahmed said that several private jails

exist in Balochistan with innocent people illegally imprisoned and detained. The chairman house committee summoned briefing from the chief secretary and the police chief in the next session of the senate body. Senator Kamil Ali Agha demanded registration of cases against those trying to save the culprits.

The alliance of Marri tribe including the family members of the victims had ended the sit-in, which was staged in the Red Zone of Quetta following the terrifying

Barkhan murders. The chairman of Marri alliance Mehrdin Marri said that the provincial government did not cooperate with them and backed provincial minister Abdul Rehman Khetran.

He thanked the IG Balochistan for helping in recovery of the abducted members of the family. The levies personnel recovered abducted woman, Giran Naz, her four sons, and a daughter that were allegedly kept in the custody of Balochistan Minister Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran.