

President reconstitutes NEC F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has approved the reconstitution of the National Economic Council, the President House said Wednesday. The reconstitution is being carried out due to the caretaker setup of the provincial governments in Punjab and KP. From Punjab, the caretaker Minister for Energy, Industries, and Investment S.M Tanvir has been made a member of NEC.

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First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

First Ramazan today F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee has announced that the Ramadan moon was sighted and the first of the holy month will fall on Thursday (today). The announcement was made by Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee chairman Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad at a press conference in Peshawar. The Ramadan moon was also not sighted in India and Bangladesh.

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ECP postpones polls in Punjab F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday postponed the Punjab elections, originally scheduled for April 30, till October 8.

In the order, the ECP said that in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by Article 218(3) read with Section 58 and Section 8(c) of the Elections Act, 2017, the commission "hereby withdraws the election programme [...] and fresh schedule will be issued in due course of time with poll date on October 8".

The order said that the ECP approached the interior and defence ministries in February for the deployment of the army and Rangers in view of the "heightened security situation in the province and the recent terrorist wave".

It added that the Punjab chief secretary and police chief were also summoned on February 8 for a briefing on the prevailing law and order situation, adding that the officials reported on the spate of terrorist attacks in the province since January, prevention of over 213 terrorist attacks in the province in the past two months, the "serious live terrorism threats" present, the cleanup operations under way for eradicating terrorists that would take four to five months and shortfall of 386,623 police personnel for election duty.

The order said that the interior ministry also conveyed to the ECP on Feb 8 that the deployment of civil and armed forces would not be possible due to the "spike in incidents of terrorism across the country" and threat alerts from intelligence agencies.

PM: Desert to see economic boom

Shehbaz inaugurates 1,650 MW coal-fired power plants in Thar

F.P. Report

THARPARKER: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday inaugurated two coal-fired power plants in Tharparker with a capacity of 1,650 megawatt of electricity generation, saying that the projects would turn the desert into an economic hub.

The projects including the 1,320 megawatt Shanghai Electric power plant and 330 MW Thal Nova power plant will annually generate 11.24 billion units of low-cost electricity. Through the direct investment of \$3.53 billion into these projects, the production of coal-based electricity in Thar will increase up to 3,300 MW.

Addressing the launch event at the Islamkot area of Thar, the prime minister said it was a moment of celebration for the entire country that the desert of Tharparker was getting a source of basic facilities for life. He dismissed the criticism by a section of people against Thar's coal, terming it a blessing with immense potential for power resources that

needed to be untapped. He expressed confidence that the journey of progress would spread across the country and would strengthen the national economy. The projects, which were abandoned during the last four years, are being made operational on the directive of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

PM Sharif said by April 30, the power turbines would be installed at the projects to generate electricity, which would be supplied to the rest of the country through transmission lines. He expressed gratitude to the government of China for extending support to Pakistan in carrying out development projects under the CPEC.

He vowed that the coalition government would put in all efforts to materialize the CPEC projects, with the agriculture sector as its next phase. He announced a hospital for the people of Tharparker to provide them with medical facilities at their doorsteps. The prime minister said no one was above the law and would not be allowed to support terrorists and use them as shields.

Every good work is criticized by few people, says Bilawal

F.P. Report

ISLAMKOT/KARACHI: Chairman Pakistan People's Party and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that the slogan of "Thar Badle Ga Pakistan" is becoming a reality with 3000 MW electricity generated from Thar coal being added to the national grid benefiting the people. "When the Federation and the provinces work together, the people get the fruits of that hard work".

Addressing the inauguration ceremony of two

energy projects of 1320 MW and 330 MW in Thar Coal Power Project and one project of 7.6 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) of coal mine, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that the local as well as the development at the national level are in front of everyone today.

He said that this progress has been made possible only because the Federal government and the Government of Sindh are working together. He further said that Thar Coal Energy Board (TCEB) is headed by the Chief

Minister of Sindh while the Federal Minister for Energy is the Deputy Head adding that due to the cooperation of the present Federal government, the projects in Sindh are being completed earlier.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari pointed out that due to the Thar Coal project, infrastructure including education and health has improved in Tharparker during the last few years. Employment opportunities have also been created here and now people from all over Pakistan are working on this project.


Funeral prayers of Brig Mustafa offered F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Funeral prayers of Brigadier Mustafa Kamal Barki who embraced martyrdom during an encounter with hardcore terrorists in Angoor Adda, South Waziristan yesterday was performed at Race Course Rawalpindi on Wednesday.

Honourable President Islamic Republic of Pakistan Dr Arif Alvi, Honourable Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS) General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, DG Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) Lieutenant General Nadeem Ahmed Anjum and large number of serving and retired military officers & soldiers, government officials, Parliamentarians and public attended the funeral.

The officer was buried at Army Graveyard with full military honours in acknowledgment of his services to the nation. Throughout his military career, Brigadier Barki remained involved in active counter terrorism operations and successfully dismantled numerous terrorist networks in KPK and Balochistan. He was monumental in neutralizing the terrorist networks involved in APS attack 2016.


The nation recognizes his meritorious services in life and supreme sacrifice offered for Pakistan. Armed Forces of Pakistan & Intelligence Agencies stand resilient against terrorism and reaffirm the resolve to eradicate this menace of terrorism at all costs.




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Sharjeel flays Zalmay remarks

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has warned Imran Khan to stop making statements based on assumptions after watching Hollywood movies.

In his statement, the minister added that it seems that sorcery has affected the mind of Imran Khan as he was babbling in his speech today in deep fear. Mr. Memon said that it is a surprise or a coincidence that the lobbyists of foreign countries who are on pay roll of PTI Chief talking in favor of him on daily basis.

He opined that such statements in favor of Imran Khan by the foreigners is a direct interference in the sovereignty of Pakistan. Sharjeel Memon warned Imran Khan that the government in Pakistan will not come under any pressure of lobbying firms and foreign countries.

Gang involved in looting people outside ATMs arrested

KARACHI (APP): The Special Investigation Unit (SIU) of Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) Karachi Police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested four-member robbers gang involved in snatching cash from people outside banks and ATMs and other street crimes in different areas.

Accused identified as Farhan Khan, Muhammad Nasir, Ali Shan and Muhammad Mukhtiyar were arrested on a tip off from Korangi Causeway, according to SSP SIU.

The gang was involved in snatching cash from citizens outside banks and ATMs on gun point and other street crimes.

Four pistols and two motorcycles were recovered from the possession of arrested. During initial interrogation, the arrested revealed that one of their accomplice Muzaffar used to inform about persons leaving the bank with huge cash to his accomplices outside who would follow the person and rob him.

They confessed committing such robberies in Boat Basin, Defence, Akhtar Colony, Shahrah-e-Faisal, Nursery, Mehmoodabad, Gulshan Iqbal and other areas. They were habitual criminals and had been arrested in several police stations including SIU.

Cases had been registered against the accused under Sindh Arms Act in the SIU police station on recovery of illegal weapons. Police stations were being informed about the arrest and revelations of the accused. Further investigations were underway.

Relief commissioner visits PDMA control room

LAHORE (APP): Senior Member Board of Revenue (SMBR) and Relief Commissioner Punjab Nabeel Javed has said that during the recent earthquake, no report of loss of life or property was received from across the province.

He stated this during a visit to the Pakistan Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) control room, here on Wednesday.

Ashrafi proposes for holding federal, provincial elections simultaneously

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Special Representative for Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Wednesday proposed to hold the federal and provincial elections simultaneously in the country.

Addressing a press conference here, he said free, fair and transparent elections were not possible until and unless all religious and political parties put their heads together and decide a time frame for holding the elections with mutual understanding in the country.

Ashrafi who is also the chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council seconded the idea of civil society organizations to conduct an 'all parties conference' to get the country out of prevailing political instability and ailing economic conditions. He said we must bring change in our attitudes as it was causing polarization in every segment of the society particularly in the young generation.

He said the leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) should hold dialogues in a bid to avert political and economic crisis in the country adding that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had offered for talks on many

times and recently repeated the same on the floor of upper house of parliament.

On the advent of holy month of Ramadan, Ashrafi said all stakeholders as a good will gesture should play their constructive role in order to bridge the gap between the government and disgruntle political party.

He said it would help ease the burgeoning political tension and create an enabling environment to take the country on the road to progress and prosperity. He further condemned former United States Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad's unsolicited advices on the current political situation of Pakistan.

He said Zalmay had no right to poke his nose in the internal affairs of Pakistan proposing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to declare Zalmay as 'persona non grata' on the basis of his indecent statements regarding Pakistan.

He said the present political deadlock was internal matter of Pakistan expressing the hope that the religious and political parties would resolve them amicably. He made it clear that no compromise would be made on the external intervention into the internal affairs of Pakistan at all costs.

LESCO devises plan for uninterrupted power supply in Ramadan

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has devised a plan for uninterrupted supply of electricity during Sehri and Iftar in the holy month of Ramadan. In this connection, LESCO Board of Director (BoD) Chairman Hafiz Mian Muhammad Nauman chaired a meeting of the Board here at LESCO Headquarters on Wednesday, where LESCO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engineer Shahid Haider and other board members were also present.

Later talking to media, Hafiz Mian Muhammad Nauman said that LESCO would ensure uninterrupted power supply during Sehri, Iftar and Taraweeh for the convenience of its consumers.

In this regard, he added, a control room had been established at the LESCO Headquarters where the company's CEO along with his team would monitor the supply and demand of electricity.

The BoD Chairman said that all officers and employees had also been strictly

instructed to resolve customers' complaints immediately during Ramadan and to make their availability to customers possible in every case.

Hafiz Mian Muhammad Nauman said that approval had also been given by the board to start the process for appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer in the LESCO. Following the instructions of the Prime Minister, he mentioned, two percent disabled quota had been approved for employment in LESCO that would definitely enable the disabled persons to serve and work for the society in a dignified manner.

He said that the ban on posting and transfer had been approved in the LESCO, and only disciplinary cases and transfer would be done on administrative grounds. The Board of Directors had approved the laying of underground cables in and around Shalamar Bagh. The Board informed the meeting that two million electricity meters had been released to LESCO stores yesterday.

KMC to fully cooperate for arrangements of Youm-e-Ali procession

KARACHI (APP): Municipal Commissioner KMC Syed Shujaat Hussain on Wednesday said that KMC will provide all possible cooperation with the procession organizers in relation to the arrangements for the procession of Youm-e-Ali. Steps will be taken to repair roads, restore street lights and solve sewage problems, he said while presiding over the meeting in connection with the arrangements for the Youm-e-Ali (R.A) at the KMC head office.

On this occasion, Shabbir Raza, General Secretary of Jafaria Alliance, Shamsul Hasan Shamsi, senior member of the central organization and focal points of various districts focal person were present. While Senior Director of Municipal Services Nauman Arshad, Director General Technical Services Azhar Hussain Shah

and officers of the Fire Brigade, City Wardens, Department of Engineering, Electrical and Mechanical and other departments were also present.

Syed Shabbir Raza informed the procession routes and other details of Youm-e-Ali. He said the condition of the road should be improved on Brito Road, Shahrah Quaideen and M.A. Jinnah Road around Nishat Park, there is a problem with the street lights in the area around Preedy Street and

Radio Pakistan, they should also be fixed.

Arrangements should also be made for cleanliness in the vicinity, and the debris lying on the roads should be picked up so that the mourners can get convenience, he said. The Municipal Commissioner said the KMC will carry out patch-working of roads, repair of street lights and other works on the procession routes of Youm-e-Ali within its limits, while the water board will be contacted to solve the sewage problems.



ISLAMABAD: Air Marshal Mr. Ghulam Abbas Ghumman, SI(M) called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Finance Division in Federal Capital.

Govt committed to reduce the number of OoSC: Rana Tanveer

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain on Wednesday said that the government was committed to reducing the number of Out of School Children in the federal area in order to make it a model for the rest of the country to follow.

During a meeting with a high-level delegation led by the CEO of Education Above All, Qatar, Fahad Hamad Hassan Al-Sulaiti, the federal Minister said that currently there are 53,000 out-of-school children in the federal area and it is a top priority of the government to address this issue. To address this challenge, human resources needed to be developed in addition to the financial support, the minister added.

The minister also expressed his desire to make the capital an ideal example for the entire country.

Rana Tanveer Hussain at the out-

set, lauded the efforts of Education Above All – Qatar and said that it is playing a critical role in uplifting the status of public education in Pakistan.

During the meeting, the delegation was given a detailed presentation by the officials of MoFEPT about the plan to bring the OoSC to zero.

At the outset, the minister was told that the current plans will cost approximately \$9 million to bring the OoSC number to zero. He was apprised that a special 'Digital and Innovation Wing' has been set up to formulate and implement strategies to address the challenge of OoSC. It is informed that the specialized wing will target registering all OoSC in Pakistan into learning process through applying digital and innovative projects accessible by all children in Pakistan.

The Wing will rollout projects along with private sector to comply with the vision of National Digital and Innovation in Education Strategy

(NIDIES). It will develop innovative and alternate education financing solutions to support in school and OoSC for sustainability of initiatives while providing technical assistance to all MoFEPT departments.

Similarly, the initiative of School on Wheels will be expanded to increase its reach and about 15 more buses will be deployed to increase its scope. Rana Tanveer said that above political mileage, "it is our duty to work for the betterment and development of the country". He said that his ambition is to ensure that the students have the required opportunities to build a successful and prosperous future for themselves and eventually contribute towards the growth of Pakistan. Secretary Education Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry and other senior officers of the MoFEPT including CEO of Taleemabad Haroon Yasin and representatives from Qatar Embassy Islamabad also attended the meeting.

'PM 'Youth Development Initiatives' aims to empower youth for socio-economic uplift'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Wednesday said that the incumbent government has launched 15 PM Mega Youth Development Initiatives under the Prime Minister's Youth Development Package worth Rs 150 billion to empower the youth of the country.

While expressing her views during a meeting with beat reporters of the Prime Minister's Youth Program (PMYP), she said that these initiatives included Youth internship program, laptop scheme, 5000 scholarships for students of Balochistan and ex-FATA, 75 national top talent scholarship program and establishment of Seerat Chairs.

These initiatives further includes the establishment of sub-campus of public sector uni-

versities in less developed districts of Pakistan, Youth Skills Training Program, Young Development Fellowship Program, seven Centers of Excellence, Pakistan Innovation Fund, Young Development Leader Award, A special development scheme for the development of 20 poorest districts of Pakistan, Young Peace and Development Core program (YPDC) and establishment of 250 mini sports complexes across Pakistan, she informed.

Besides this, aiming to

empower the youth of the country, loans are being provided for businesses on easy terms and conditions under PMYP through which youth from across over the country are getting loans through online applications.

Through these initiatives of the government, about 64% of the young population will be equipped with all the facilities, she added. She said that the Prime Minister's Internship Program is Pakistan's largest internship pro-

gram which aimed at economically empowering the youth.

Through this program more than 60,000 young graduates being provided paid internship facilities across the country. Providing further details of the PMYP initiatives, Shaza Fatima Khawaja said that Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Program is one of the important initiatives of the government through which 100,000 laptops will be distributed to digitally empower the students of public sector.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT POLYCLINIC(PGMI), ISLAMABAD

RE-TENDER NOTICE No. F.2-5/2022-A

Sealed bids are invited in accordance with **RULE 36(B) "SINGLE STAGE TWO ENVELOPS PROCEDURE"** of PPRA rules 2004 for purchase of following during the financial year 2022-23 from the reputed manufacturers, importers, distributors and firms having vast experience in the relevant fields, registered with Income Tax, Sales Tax Department and who are on Active Taxpayers List of Federal Board of Revenue: -

Sr. No.	Name of Tender	Opening Date and Time
1.	Drug/Medicines for the year 2022-23	10-04-2023 at 11.30 AM
Place of receiving tender documents		Federal Govt. Polyclinic, Islamabad
Tender documents fee		Rs. 2000 (Non-refundable)
Time for submission of tender / bid in Tender Box		Upto 11.00 AM (on dates mentioned against each tender schedule)
Amount of CDR		@ Rs 2% amount of quoted items in shape of demand draft/pay order in favour of Executive Director, FGPC, Islamabad

Note:

- Tender documents can be obtained from Accounts Branch, FGPC on written request on letter pad along with copies of Income Tax & Sales Tax Registration Certificate if applicable and proof of Active Taxpayer list of the FBR during working hours.
- The firms will submit two envelopes one for "Technical Bid" and other for "Financial Bid".
- No tender will be received after due date and time. Incomplete, conditional and without deposit at call bids will not be entertained.
- Please get tender form (Soft copy) in USB on the date of purchasing tender documents and must be submitted in shape of soft copy with tender documents.
- The Executive Director reserves the right to accept or reject any tender / all tenders in accordance with PPRA clause 33(1) Rule.2004
- Tender is also available at PPRA website "www.ppra.org.pk."

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PID (I) 5847/22

نوٹس (مشتری ہوشیار باش)

بڑے نوٹس ہذا مشترکاً جاتا ہے کہ کان نمبر 523 بعد الا خان نمبر 524، سرو نمبر 542/608، واقع شیش ٹریٹ پیٹرنڈ ریڈ جو کہ ٹیکسٹ بورڈ کے ریڈر میں کی باہری والدہ والدہ علی کے نام پر موجود ہے۔ یہ کسی سید راشعلی شاہ ولد سید شاہ علی نے کسی اہلکار خان ولد ولد خان آجانی مولد راز طرف سے کی باہری والدہ والدہ علی کے خلاف کان نمبر 524 اور ایک عدولت ڈگری بنگم سٹریٹ پیٹرنڈ ریڈ نمبر 524/2019ء حاصل کی۔ اب کسی سید راشعلی شاہ ولد سید شاہ علی نے نمبر 524/2019ء پر خط لکھ کر اپنے ایک عدد درخواست بمعدولت ڈگری دفتر پڑھیں لازمی ہے۔ اگر کسی شخص، بینک یا ادارے کو نمبر 524/2019ء کان کی جعلی پر کوئی اعتراض ہو تو اشتیاء ہذا کی اشاعت کے پندرہ (15) دن کے اندر اندر اپنا اعتراض بمعدولت چٹن کریں۔ بعد ازاں جس کی کارروائی مندرجہ بالا درخواست گزار کے نام پر عمل میں لائی جائے گی اور کوئی مداخلت قبول نہ ہوگی۔

المشتر: کب نوٹ نمٹ ا یگزیکٹو آفیسر پشاور

Government of Pakistan
Pakistan Public Works Department
 No CCD/DIK/aAB/896 Date: 20/03/2023

CORRIGENDUM

This has reference to the Tender notice bearing NO/EE/CCD-DIK/AB/Tender/783 Dated 6/3/2023 published in various Newspapers on dated 8-3-2023 and also uploaded on PPRA website vide TS NO.504964E dated 7-3-2023.

- The Tender cost of all Number schemes may be read as Rupees 2000/- for each work.
- Schemes costing upto Rupees 4.00 Million required PAK PWD enlistment in the relevant category and also renewed for the current financial year 2022-23.

Other terms and conditions will remain the same.

Executive Engineer PID(P) 082-A/2023
Central Civil Division, Pak PWD D.I.Khan.

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Demotion of policemen in out-of-turn promotion: High Court grants status quo

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) has granted status quo in shuffling of seniority lists of police officers promoted (out of turn) as Cadets while ordered respondents to submit reply and adjourned further hearing till 4th April, on Wednesday.

Barrister Dr. Adnan Khan appeared before PHC divisional bench comprised of Justice Attique Shah and Justice Shakeel Ahmad on behalf of Khalid Usman, Muhammad Sohail along with 108 petitioners in which two legal points were raised before court.

During hearing from the petition of Sohail and others argued that the petitioners are cadets and added that the cadet is selected from 300 troops while obtaining out of turn promotions because they had obtained distinction and medal at police training center which is

applicable in all police force.

The counsel added that now the cadets are demoting to equity with other personnel which is not fair. He added that PHC larger bench has already directed provincial government to review the laws and constitute committees for redressal of the issue.

However, the petition filed by Khalid Usman stated that in 1980s the then Inspector General of Police has issued Standing Orders that personnel served at Police Training Center Hangu as Instructor should be granted out of turn promotion which is matter of record now.

The counsel further added that the petitioner has obtained benefits after serving at PTC Hangu for three and withdrawal of recomences is not fair because once granted benefit cannot be retained.

Barrister Adnan Khan argued that in 2013 and

2017 Supreme Court of Pakistan has declared null void Section-8 of Punjab Civil Servant Act and Section 9-A of Sindh Civil Servant Act while added that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has made these judgments as ground for demotion of honorary and 1980s promoted personnel while SCP has also rejected CPLA in this regard.

The counsel argued that in 2022 Inspector General of Police has written to Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in light of Supreme Court's judgement while demotion process initiated on 13th March 2023 of police personnel at different ranks.

PHC divisional bench comprised of Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Shakeel has granted status quo while ordered Inspector General of Police and Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to submit reply while adjourned further hearing till 4th April.

NIC Peshawar graduates 7th & 8th batches F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: National Incubation Center (NIC) Peshawar graduation ceremony for 7th and 8th cohort startups in which Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board Managing Director Ali Mehmood, General Manager Projects Ignite, Bilal Abbasi, Planet N Group Chairman Nadeem Hussain, and prominent members of the local business community were present, on Wednesday.

NIC in Pakistan as the operator of three of the seven National Incubation Centers including Peshawar, NIC Karachi and NIC Hyderabad, LMKT has played a significant role in developing the startup ecosystem in the country.

In the last five years, through this network, LMKT has incubated more than 500 startups across the country. Since its inception, 65 startups have graduated from NIC Peshawar's incubation program, which has grown to over 2,447, has created direct and 10,945 indirect employment opportunities, increased investment by over Rs.1.35 billion, and recorded an increase in income of over Rs.950.5 million.

The 7th and 8th cohort startups have developed disruptive solutions for various industries, their innovation and creativity is admirable and inspiring.



PESHAWAR: Newly posted Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan.

Dissolution of PESCO's board: PHC orders to submit reply

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A divisional comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Qaiser Rashid Khan and Justice Ijaz Anwar has ordered respondents to submit reply on supplementary applications regarding dissolution Board of Directors of Peshawar Electricity Supply Company (PESCO) while adjourned further hearing 4th May, on Wednesday.

Two separate writ petitions were filed by Arbab Khuda Dad and Gul Nabi Syed in this regard while added that the petitioners

were members of Board of Directors but terminated without any reason.

The writ petitions argued that appointment made for three years while current government has dissolved Board of Directors to adjust their loyal political aids in the PESCO. However, the counsel argued that PHC has stopped removal of Gul Nabi Syed from his position serving as CEO PESCO but the petitioner has removed from services despite court's orders.

The counsel argued that removal of CEO is unconstitutional while it is also lying under the jurisdiction of

Contempt of Court proceedings. The counsel for Arif Sadozai Shumail Ahmad Butt and Barrister Waqar appeared before court.

The counsel Shumail Ahmad Butt Advocate argued that the petitioner has filed amended writ petition while he didn't possess court's order in this regard, so, the petition cannot maintainable for hearing.

The divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice PHC Justice Qaiser Rashid and Justice Ijaz Anwar ordered respondents to submit reply on amended writ petition while adjourned further hearing till 4th May.

KP govt notifies office timings for Ramadan

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government on Wednesday notified schedule of office timings to be observed during the holy month of Ramadan.

It said that the working hours for five days a week would be from 8 a.m. to 1400 hours from Monday to Thursday while on Friday it would be 8 a.m. to 1230 hours.

Similarly, the working hours for six-day a week would be 8 a.m. to 1300 hours from Monday to Thursday and on Friday it would be 8 a.m. to 1200 hours.



PESHAWAR: Newly posted Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali.

KPCIP, BoK keen to jointly work for women empowerment in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Management of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Program (KPCIP) and the Bank of Khyber (BoK) are keen to jointly work towards women empowerment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

A press release issued here on Wednesday, said that the management of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Program KPCIP arranged a Women Empowerment Panel Talk on Politics Governance and Entrepreneurship at IQRA University.

Minister for Local Government Advocate Sawal Nazir Khan and Secretary Local Government Mr Syed Zaheer-ul-Islam inaugurated the event.

Chief Executive Officer from the Bank of Khyber Mr Mohammad Gulfaraz Khan was also in attendance where he spoke about women being crucial to the development of the nation.

The Bank of Khyber has taken many gender friendly initiatives like being the first organization in KP to initiate a nursery for working moms in house, taking the largest number of

female interns and also increasing the presence of women in the workforce in leading positions.

BOK in recent years has worked on introducing women-friendly banking products to encourage their contribution in the field of entrepreneurship.

KPCIP and BOK expressed deep interest in working with each other further strengthening the cause of women empowerment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Project Director Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project Syed Zafar Ali Shah in his opening remarks spoke about the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Projects (KPCIP) improving the quality of life of the residents of at least four cities, including Abbottabad, Kohat, Mardan, and Peshawar, directly benefiting about 3.5 million of urban population.

The KPCIP will help selected cities improve their access to quality urban services through two inter-linked outputs: (i) enhanced municipal infrastructure and public urban spaces, and (ii) strengthened institutional capacities and effi-

ciency of provincial, municipal and city governments and urban service companies.

He spoke about KPCIP's commitment towards Women Empowerment and that gender was an important component of the project.

Gender Director Madam Shandana Saad further elaborated on Women Business Development Centres (WBDC's) being initiated in four different cities Peshawar, Mardan, Kohat & Abbottabad.

This output will improve women's access to economic opportunities and increase their participation in urban governance and services. First the WBDC in Kohat will be rehabilitated and upgraded.

The Panel Talk was conducted by Madam Sameen Shah Head of Student Affairs at IQRA University which included Renowned Human Rights Activist Valerie Yousafzai, Barrister Awais Khan, UNFPA KP Focal Person Mahjabeen Kazi, and Renowned Entrepreneur Afshan Khan of Fast Moving Packages.

The Panel talk was initiated in continuation of Women Day celebrations for the month of March.

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has arrested five members of an international drugs baron gang in addition to the recovery of huge quantity of heroin drug from three districts of Mardan, Swat and Peshawar during intelligence-based raids in the last 72 hours. While under the special orders of Secretary Excise and Narcotics Control Adeel Shah and Director General



PESHAWAR: Mansoor Ali Khan alias Toora Baz Khan of Warsak Public School holds a shield after getting 2nd position in Class KG.

Cloudy weather predicted

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Wednesday predicted that partly cloudy to cloudy weather is expected in most districts of the province.

It said that widespread rain-thundershower with gusty winds (with scattered heavy falls/hailstorm) is expected in Tank, DIK, North & South Waziristan, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Kohat, Karak, Hangu, Orakzai, Kurram, Khyber, Mohmand, Bajaur and Upper Dir districts.

Scattered rain-thundershower with gusty winds (with isolated heavy falls/hailstorm) is expected in Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Mardan, Swabi, Haripur and Abbottabad.

No one to be allowed to use land of KP for inciting people

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial President Awami National Party (ANP), Aimal Wali Khan has said that no one would be allowed to use land of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for politicking and to create chaos in the country. In a statement issued on social media here Wednesday, ANP Provincial President said that news are pouring in that Imran Khan is planning to escape from Punjab and land in KP to fulfill his ulterior motives. He said that for the last ten years provincial machinery has been used for the benefit of Niazi and added that we would block any such attempt for the sake of people. Aimal Wali said that PTI is trying to stage Zaman Park drama in KP to incite people and create chaos. He said we are followers of Wali Khan and any such attempt would be foiled.

Excise Zafarul Islam Khattak, successful operations against drug dealers and facilitators are carried out across the province.

Under the guidance of Director Narcotics Control Engr Eid Badshah and Excise and Taxation Officer (Narcotics Control) Zahid Iqbal Khan, all Narcotics Mobile Squads are on constant vigil against narcotics and are engaged in intelligence-based raids. In this regard, SHO Police Station Excise Mardan Region and Additional SHO in the presence of Circle Officer Syed Naveed Jamal continued raids on intelligence basis in different areas of Mardan, Swat and Peshawar with their diligent squads.

In the meantime, five important members of the international drug smuggling gang have been arrested from these three districts during raids. It may be noted that during the raids in the past few days, an accused of the notorious international smuggling group was arrested red-handed, and 45 capsules of 180 grams of heroin were recovered from his stomach. Apart from this, 1200 grams of heroin was also recovered from

the bag of the accused in the guise of a passenger. The accused was being transported from Mardan to Qatar through Islamabad Airport. During the investigation, a private hotel in Mardan was also raided on the identification of the accused, from where important evidences and documents were recovered. So, in the light of this, Excise Police Station Mardan with the help of Excise Police Station Swat conducted a raid in Kokarai area of Swat from where an important member of the

group was arrested along with passports.

After more investigation and further developments in the case, a Hujra in Peshawar was raided under the leadership of Circle Officer Mardan Region from where the ringleader of the group was also arrested. Thus, in the last 72 hours, five members of the group have been arrested from three districts.

Pertinent to mention here that this group has so far sent hundreds of people to foreign countries by injecting heroin capsules

into their stomachs, whose data is being collected for more investigation and development in the case. On the other hand, raids are being conducted against the escaped members of this notorious group.

Meanwhile, Secretary Excise and Narcotics Control KP Adeel Shah, Director General Excise Zafarul Islam Khattak and Director Narcotics Control Engr. Eid Badshah have eulogized the recent remarkable achievement of excise staff and felicitated them accordingly.



PESHAWAR: PPP caretaker provincial president and State Minister Muhammad Ali Shah Badshah addressing a part meeting. — F.P. photo

World water day observed; awareness seminar, walk held

PESHAWAR (APP): Like other parts of the country the world water day was observed here on Wednesday by Department of On-farm Water Management

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Department of Water Resource Management, Faculty of Crop Production Sciences, Agricultural University Peshawar.

An awareness seminar and walk was organized under the auspices of KP Irrigation and Agriculture Improvement Project with the theme "Accelerating Change to Solve the Water and Sanitation Crises".

The purpose of the seminar was to raise awareness about water situation among the people. Minister for

Agriculture, Abdul Halim Kasuria was the chief guest on the occasion.

Apart from them, Secretary Agriculture Dr. Muhammad Israr Khan, Vice Chancellor Agriculture University Peshawar Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht, Director General on Farm Water Management Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Javed Iqbal, Dean Faculty of Crop Production Sciences Meritorious Professor Dr. Fida Muhammad, including faculty members, administrative officers, Students, public and private sector representatives participated.

DG On-Farm Water Management KP Javed Iqbal highlighted the importance of world water day and performance of his department regarding fair and optimal use of water.

Vice Chancellor, University of Agriculture, Peshawar Prof. Dr. Jahan Bakht share details regarding the challenges related to water and said that population growth, shrinking agricultural land and climate change were a few challenges.

He said that water should be used as per requirement and the habit of saving water should be adopted. Secretary Agriculture Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr Muhammad Asrar Khan gave detailed answers to

the challenges asked by the experts in which he referred to several ongoing projects initiated by the Department of Agriculture.

Special guest Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister of Agriculture Abdul Halim Kasuria while addressing the participants appreciated the performance of Agriculture University

Peshawar, Department of Agriculture and on-farm water management, he emphasized on imparting information and training about technology to the landowners.

Former VC University of Swat Professor (retd) Dr. Jamal Khattak and Dr. Naveedullah gave lectures on world water day.



PESHAWAR: Rafhan Khan receiving his shield from Director Warsak Public School Dr. Noor Ul Qadoos as he got 3rd position in Nursery Class.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister for Excise and Taxation Manzoor Afridi presenting a shield to president Handicraft Association Marriyam Iqbal.



In brief

Man held for killing daughter F.P. Report

HANGU: The Thall police in Hangu district have arrested a man for killing his four-year-old daughter after he failed to convince his wife to return home. DPO Hangu, Asif Bahadur told media persons during a press conference that a woman named Saadia Bibi lodged a report with police on 13th March that her daughter was missing from home. She alleged that her second husband, Faraz, was involved in the abduction of her daughter. She said she was living with her mother leaving behind her daughter and jobless husband in Hangu. She further told police that her husband had come to her mother's house to take along her back but she refused as her husband was unable to provide them necessities of life. She said her husband, Faraz most probably picked her daughter and returned back to Hangu, following which the girl was missing. The police in its timely action arrested the man who after confessing to killing the girl, said he had thrown his four-year-old daughter into River Indus near Attock. Regretting his action during investigation, he further told the police that he wanted to avenge the irresponsible attitude of his wife.

People support demanded Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: The civil society member here Wednesday sought the cooperation of local people with anti polio teams in order to protect children from the crippling disease. Abdul Haseeb, a member of the civil society Azakhel Lower in Nowshera district urged his villagers to extend all out cooperation to anti polio teams and help them in their efforts to eradicate polio from the society. Haseeb in a statement here said the anti polio teams were working tirelessly for decades to protect children from permanent disabilities and it was our duty to help them in their endeavors. He lauded the role of vaccinators, especially female and policemen as they are the frontline workers of polio eradication teams. Abdul Haseeb said polio teams have received serious threats in district Nowshera but despite this they were working with dedication to save future generations. Haseeb asked the people of the area to support anti polio teams and administer vaccines to their children in order to save them from lifetime disability.

Lawyer's body takes oath F.P. Report

PABBI: District Session Judge (DSJ) Nowshera Asad Hameed Bangash administered oath from newly elected cabinet of Pabbi Bar Association (PBA) while added that six projects have been approved for trial judiciary in the premises. DSJ Asad Hameed claimed that total nine projects were forwarded to Peshawar High Court for easing dispensation of justice to residents of Nowshera. He claimed that bench and bar are two tiers of judiciary for dispensation of justice. PBA cabinet comprising of Shahzad Gul as president, vice president Ihsan Akbar, general secretary Safi Ullah, Joint Secretary Malak Sareem, Secretary Library Asif Zia, Auditor Sajid Masood and press secretary Younas Shah. During oath taking ceremony Additional Session Judge Syed Adnan Shah, Judicial Magistrate Liaqat Fahad and Senior Civil Judge Shahzad along with Peshawar High Court Bar Association members were also participants in the occasion.

Founders' Day held at PAF college Sargodha

F.P. Report

SARGODHA: The Annual Founders' Day 2023 was held at Pakistan Air Force College, Sargodha. Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, was the Chief Guest at the occasion.

In his address, the Chief Guest said, "PAF College Sargodha has a proud history and rich legacy, since its establishment in the year 1953. The College has been a nursery of hardcore professionals, infused with high values of integrity, sincerity, serving before self, devotion to duty and has produced the most acclaimed air warriors of PAF". He advised the stu-

dents to be mindful of the great responsibility that rests on their shoulders and that they must take pride in the magnificent profession they aspire to join.

The Air Chief further said that the dynamic and volatile traditional environment of national security demands a well-trained future technical force which can withstand this tech-intensive environment and the College has already realigned training spectrum to make it possible. He also congratulated the parents on the success of their wards and commended the faculty members for doing an excellent job.

The Chief Guest gave away prizes to the winning

houses. The Chigwell Shield for sports was won by Iqbal House. General Service Training Cup for co-curricular activities was won by Alam House, while Chief of the Air Staff Academics trophy was won by Munir House. Iqbal House lifted the coveted Quaid-e-Azam Shield for being overall Champion House of the Year.

Earlier, Air Vice Marshal (Retd) Asif Maqsood, Principal PAF College, Sargodha presented annual report of the college. A large number of serving and retired defence personnel, retired teachers, senior bureaucrats and parents of the pre-cadets were present on the occasion.



SARGODHA: Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force awarding Chigwell Shield to Iqbal House during the Founders' Day 2023.

Gujjars to celebrate March 22 as Yaum-e-Gujjar F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Gujjar Qaumi Movement (GQM) chief Haji Zarin Khan Gujjar has termed the inclusion of Gujjari and Gowri (also known as Kalam) languages in the national census as his Movement's achievement and demanded the government to also include them in primary schools' syllabus. Talking to local journalists at Chakdara here on Wednesday the GQM chief Haji Zarin Khan thanked the Peshawar High Court for directing the relevant institutions to include the Gujjari and Gowri languages in the ongoing national census.

He announced the Gujjars across the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would celebrate March 22 as 'Yaum-e-Gujjar' each year. "It is the victory of the GQM as I have been struggling for this since 1970," he said, adding the two-member bench of the Peshawar High Court issued the verdict that was highly appreciated by the Gujjars across the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

He said the GQM thanked Justice Syed Ateeq Shah and Justice Shakil Ahmad on this historical decision. He pointed out that the majority of the Gujjar clan living in parts of Lower Dir, Upper Dir, Swat, Shangla and Kohistan felt a sense of deprivation in the region as other tribes had not been recognizing their rights. He said the GQM was formed some 40 years ago to win rights of the Gujjars and finally one of his demands had been materialized. He also demanded the provincial governments to include the Gujjari language in the primary schools' syllabus.

Speed checking equipment installed F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Speed checking sophisticated equipment were provided to the traffic sergeants, Khyber aimed to curtail traffic mishaps, occurring due to over speeding. District Police Officer (DPO) Khyber Saleem Kulachvi said that keeping in view excessive life loss in routine at Pak-Afghan highway of over-speeding, the initiative was adopted to decrease the road accidents and the speed checking apparatus had been provided to the highway traffic police.

The speed equipment had been properly installed at the Pak-Afghan road to control the vehicles speed, he remarked. The district police chief asked the drivers to strictly follow the traffic rules and avoid over-speeding and use of cell phones while driving as speed cameras had been fixed at various points on the highway.

A violator would be issued chalan therefore the motorists should assist the traffic squad. Khyber Traffic incharge Mazhar Afrid said that the maximum highways had been passed through populated areas and road accidents had become a routine business therefore the traffic hiphup decided to fix speed cameras.

World Forest Day message Forests working as lungs for earth

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT. Pakhtunkhwa Radio Kohat arranges a special program on World Forestry Day. Pakhtunkhwa Radio Kohat arranged a special program on the eve of World Forestry Day which was participated by the Divisional Forest Officer Kohat Tariq Shah as a chief guest while Sub Divisional Officer Yasir Mehmood assist him.

Speaking on the occasion, the Divisional Forest Officer said that forests were an important factor for human survival because forests were the main source of air, water and oxygen production without which life is impossible, hence for the survival of next generation and establishment of a healthy society, plantation of maximum plants is the prime responsibility of everyone. Similarly, forests also play an important role in protecting the wild life and preventing land erosion. He was of the view, if we cannot increase the forests, at least protecting of the existing forests is the basic responsibility of all of us as a nation.

Tariq Shah said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is very close to the international 25% forest target and confident that after the proposed new survey, our target will increase from 21.5% to above 24%. He said that our province has also received the International Achievement Award in the Forestry sector which is very encouraging. Divisional Forest Officer also said that Kohat region is suitable for mango, guava and loquat fruit trees side by side the Shesham, Palosa, olive, cedar, mulberry and Buckyanra trees.

He appealed the people to form organizations for planting saplings in their areas and also take the lead in getting different plants from their nurseries for free.

Similarly, we should make a habit to plant plants in our houses as well, he concluded.

WSSCK organises awareness walk on eve of World Water Day: The Water and Sanitation Services Company Kohat (WSSCK) in collaboration with Department of Environmental Sciences, University of Science and Technology Kohat organized an awareness walk on eve of 'World Water Day'. The walk was aimed to create awareness among masses for avoidance in wastage of water.

Apart from the KUST Vice Chancellor, Prof Sardar Khan, Department of Environmental Sciences KUST chairman Dr Javed Nawab, WSSCK Deputy Manager Tahir Hafif, Manager Media and Communication Ms Asma Ali, Assistant Manager Solid Waste Management Ammad, Chief Sanitary Inspector Muhammad Sohail, KPCIP Social Mobilizer Saima Shah, KUST Faculty members, a large number of students were participated in the walk. Speaking to the participants of the walk, KUST Vice Chancellor Prof Sardar Khan and Chairman Department of Environmental Sciences, Dr Javed Nawab highlighted the importance of water and stressed the need for its conservation.

The speakers said if we don't take steps to stop wastage of clean drinking water that will deprive our coming generation from the blessing of water. Tahir Hafif, Deputy Manager of the WSSCK while addressing the participants of the walk informed various important projects regarding water that were initiated by WSSCK. Keeping in view the prevailing situation of water, the official said it is essential that every citizen should preserve water while using it so that there will be no issue of water scarcity in future.

Tribesmen continues protest on 3rd day

F.P. Report

WANA: The tribesmen belonging to Azam Warsak area of Birmal Tehsil in South Waziristan Lower continued their protest for third day in Rustam Bazar Wana against load shedding and power outage while for the last three days, electricity supply has been suspended from the entire district by putting chains on the main power line.

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) district president Amanullah Wazir, Jammal Ulema Islam (JUI) district Emir Maulana Mirza Jan Wazir, former candidate for National Assembly Mahmood Alam, Pashtunkhwa MAP leader Malik Khayal Mohammad Wazir, NDM leader Zain Ullah, Taj Mohammad Wazir from business community, Ayaz Wazir from ANP, Noor

zaman Wazir And JI District President Nadeem Khan Wazir and GS Asadullah besides a large number of people participated in the protest.

The protestors said that we are given electricity only for 2 hours out of 24 hours, and only one day in three days is given to the Azam Warsak area of Tehsil Birmal. It is only for two hours 18 MW electricity is generated from Gomal zam Dam yet we are not given our right.

The protestors said that Gomalzam Dam electricity is the first right of the people of Waziristan, former Army Chief General Ashfaq Parvez Kayani had promised us in the past, That electricity is to be given to Waziristan before Gomalzam Dam but unfortunately it is not being given to us now. The protestors said that if the government does

not act on our demand, then they will be forced to take strict steps.

It should be remembered that earlier electricity was given for four hours, but now only 2 hours of electricity is given to the people of Lower South Waziristan in 24 hours. The Gomalzam dam is built on the land of Waziristan and the first right over it belongs to the people of Waziristan. But unfortunately, it was taken over by the government and electricity supply is given to the rest of the cities of Pakistan.

The protestors alleged that the electricity of Gomalzam Dam is being used in the upper part of Punjab while the people of Waziristan are deprived of this blessing. Protestors said that the electricity will remain shut in Lower South Waziristan until the duration of electricity is extended.



QUETTA: A bike on the way wearing plastic sheet during rain.

March 23rd day of pledge for motherland

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri, while congratulating the nation on the occasion of Pakistan Day on March 23, said in her congratulatory message that March 23 is the day of renewal of the pledge to establish a separate country for Muslims in the subcontinent. A resolution was passed for the establishment of Pakistan on this day in 1940 and the Muslims of India turned the dream of Allama Muhammad Iqbal into a reality on August 14, 1947 through a peaceful struggle under the able leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Today, the youth of the nation have a huge responsibility to compete in the world, to specialize in modern education and to play their role in the development and prosperity of the country, because in the future, our beloved homeland of Pakistan to take over the reins and We strongly hope that our

youth will work day and night for the country and make the country developed by removing it from the list of developing countries.

She said that today we all have to pledge that we will not allow any kind of fire to come on the motherland Pakistan and all together we will fight the enemies of Pakistan and forget our personal interests and differences and collective interests for the country. Will work for the whole nation have to stand side by side for the security and stability of our country and face all the challenges together. For this, forgetting their differences and showing the best performance in their respective fields even today, Pakistan is facing internal and external enemies who do not want peace and order in Pakistan and development of Pakistan.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said that in these circumstances there is a need for the Pakistani nation to realize the spirit of that revolutionary resolution and move beyond the traditional kind of renewal and work for the ideological and geographical completion of Pakistan according to this resolution. In order to make this God-given kingdom truly the Pakistan of Quaid-e-Azam and Iqbal, we have to show the same continuous and selfless sacrifice at the individual and collective level which was characteristic of the trained soldiers of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

The whole nation is united on the issue of security and the people of Pakistan together with their brave forces are determined to thwart any conspiracy against the motherland. She said that our beloved country Pakistan has seen many ups and downs since independence. Enemies have done many things for the instability of Pakistan but our forces have always thwarted their nefarious intentions and for this purpose our soldiers have sacrificed their lives which can never be forgotten.



HYDERABAD: A loaded truck with onions overturned due to over speeding.

Secretary health inspects trauma center facility

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: Secretary Health Punjab Ali Jan Khan paid a surprise visit of Trauma Centre and District Headquarter Hospital last late night. When the Secretary reached Trauma Centre, mostly equipments including C.T Scan machine was not functional allegedly doctors and premedical staff was also absent from duty while patents were crying for help but all prove in vain.

While talking to journalists after visiting Trauma Centre and District Headquarter Hospital, he said regretfully that my heart is bleeding to witness bad situation of Trauma Centre Hafizabad and Management of the District Headquarter Hospital have left the Trauma Centre alone. He astonished that equipments were not functional due to termination of contract of human resources.

He determined that steps would be taken to improve service delivery in the hospital including Trauma Centre which is part of the

DHQ Hafizabad. Replaying to a question, he said that government would provide all human resources and funds while zero tolerance policy would be adopted against corruption and negligent staff.

Responding to another query, he said that payment of minimum fixed salary would be ensured and biometric attendance would also be introduced for ensuring hundred percent and timely attendance of doctors and other staff in the hospitals. Shifting of clerical staff from hospitals is a part of reforms and it is right of the department to take steps for improving service delivery but no clerk would be terminated from service, he added.

Enrollment campaign launched: On the directions of the School Education Department Punjab, District Education Authority Hafizabad launched 'Parrhu Aur Jagmagao' Enrolment Campaign in the district, on Tuesday. Additional Deputy Commissioner Intiaz Ali Baig and Chief Executive Officer Education Wazir Ahmad Agha inaugurated

the campaign to enroll students at Government Boys High School Madina Colony Hafizabad. Principal of the school Syed Muhammad Zaheer Shah, Ex-Headmaster Fiaz Ahmad Warraich, AEO Ishtiaq Nazir and other educationalists also attended the ceremony.

ADC Intiaz Ali Baig and CEO Education Wazir Ahmad Agha said on the occasion that 'Parrhu Aur Jagmagao' enrolment campaign of the Punjab government is a new ray of hope for bright future of the nation and our children would bring credit name of Pakistan in the ranks of nations to get education and would be proved brilliant future of the country. They said that promotion of education was only solution of all problems and challenges of the nation.

They directed the heads of the government schools to ensure hundred percent enrolment of children and no child be left out of school and work hard to achieve target of the education department of the Punjab.



NATO chief urges members to boost defence spending

BRUSSELS (Reuters): NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg urged member countries to speed up increases in defence spending as new figures showed fewer than a quarter of them meeting the alliance's target. Stoltenberg said Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year showed the world had become more dangerous, and NATO allies had to respond by setting and meeting more ambitious military spending goals.

Seven of the alliance's 30 countries met the current goal of spending 2% of GDP on defence in 2022 - one fewer than in 2021, before Russia's invasion of Ukraine - according to estimates in the NATO secretary-general's annual report, released. Stoltenberg said NATO had expected two more members to hit the target but their economies had grown by more than anticipated so their spending came in

lower as a share of GDP. NATO members have been steadily increasing their defence spending overall since Russian forces annexed Crimea and entered Donbas in eastern Ukraine in 2014. But Stoltenberg said last year's full-scale invasion showed a need to spend more.

"There's no doubt that we need to do more and we need to do it faster," he told reporters at NATO headquarters in Brussels. "The pace now, when it comes to increases in defence spending, is not a high enough," he said. "My message to allies is that we welcome what they've done but they need to speed up, they need to deliver more in a more dangerous world." At a summit in Wales in 2014, NATO leaders agreed to the goal of moving towards spending at least 2% of their GDP on defence within a decade.

Stoltenberg's 2022 report showed Greece, the United

States, Lithuania, Poland, Britain, Estonia and Latvia met that target. Overall defence spending by NATO allies was up 2.2% on the previous year. NATO leaders are expected to agree a new target at a summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, in July and Stoltenberg said 2% of GDP should now be seen as a minimum, with members aiming to move more quickly than they have done to get to higher levels. "I will advocate for a more ambitious pledge than the one we made in 2014," he said. "If there was a need to increase defence spending back in 2014, this is even more obvious now."

The figures in Stoltenberg's report showed Croatia and France were the closest to meeting the 2% target, with each spending about 1.9% of GDP on defence. Bringing up the rear were Belgium, Spain and Luxembourg, whose defence spending was under 1.2% of GDP.

Greece to have polls in May, prime minister says

ATHENS (Reuters): Greece will hold general elections in May, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said in a television interview. The conservative government's four-year term expires in July, and Mitsotakis was widely expected to call an election in early April. Opinion polls show his New Democracy party's lead over the leftist opposition Syriza party shrinking following Greece's worst rail disaster on Feb. 28.

The accident, during which a passenger train and a freight train collided head on, killed 57 people and stirred anger and mass protests over railway safety standards. "I can tell you with certainty that the elections will be held in May," Mitsotakis said in interview with Alpha TV, his first since the disaster. Tens of thousands of people have rallied across Greece over the crash, in the largest street protests the government has faced since being elected in 2019. Protesters accuse the current government as well as previous governments of the past decade of turning a blind eye to repeated calls by unions over safety shortcomings in the railway, a legacy of Greece's decade long financial crisis which ended in 2018.

The government has mainly blamed human error. Four railway workers, including the duty station master, were detained. Mitsotakis has apologised for a delayed plan to install safety systems across Greece's 2,500-km (1,550-mile) rail network. Mitsotakis said visiting the crash scene was "tough" but that he did not consider resigning. "I aim to win elections again and I believe that we will eventually succeed," he said.

Russia flies strategic bomber planes near Japan

MOSCOW (Reuters): Two Russian strategic bomber planes flew over the Sea of Japan for more than seven hours, the Russian defence ministry said in a statement released as Japan's prime minister was beginning a visit to Ukraine. The Tupolev Tu-95MS planes are capable of carrying nuclear weapons and Moscow regularly flies them over international waters in the Arctic, North Atlantic and Pacific as a show of strength.

The timing of the latest flight appeared more pointed than usual, as Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida was due in Kyiv later on a visit to show solidarity with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the war against Russia. Japanese national broadcaster NHK showed Kishida boarding a train at the Polish town of Przemysl near the Ukraine border. Russia said the strategic bombers made a "planned flight", escorted by fighter planes. It was carried out in strict compliance with international law and was made over neutral waters, the defence ministry said.

In February, North American air defence forces were sent to intercept several Russian strategic bombers and fighter jets as they flew over international airspace near Alaska. Japan, which has its own territorial dispute with Moscow over islands in the north Pacific that dates back to the end of World War Two, is a key Asian ally of the United States and a member of the Group of Seven rich democracies, and has joined Western sanctions against Russia.

US speeds up Abrams tank delivery to Ukraine war zone

WASHINGTON (AP): The Pentagon is speeding up its delivery of Abrams tanks to Ukraine, opting to send a refurbished older model that can be ready faster, with the aim of getting the 70-ton battle powerhouses to the war zone by the fall, the Pentagon said. The original plan was to send Ukraine 31 of the newer M1A2 Abrams, which could have taken a year or two to build and ship. But officials said the decision was made to send the older M1A1 version, which can be taken from Army stocks. Officials said the M1A1 also will be easier for Ukrainian forces to learn to use and maintain as they fight the invading Russian forces.

"This is about getting this important combat capability into the hands of the Ukrainians sooner rather than later," said Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder, the Pentagon press secretary. The Biden administration announced in January that it would send the tanks to Ukraine - after insisting for months that they were too complicated and too hard to maintain and repair. The decision was part of a broader political maneuver that opened the door for Germany to announce it would send its Leopard 2 tanks to Ukraine and allow Poland and other allies to do the same.

Speaking at a Pentagon press conference, Ryder said the tanks will be refurbished and refitted to make them combat ready for Ukraine. He declined to say where that work will be done. It's unclear how soon the US would begin training Ukrainian forces on how to use, maintain and repair the tanks. The intention would be to have the training of the troops coincide with the refurbishment of the tanks, so that both would be ready for battle at the same time later this year, said US officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss details not publicly provided. The Pentagon will also have to ensure that



Ukrainian forces have an adequate supply chain for all the parts needed to keep the tanks running.

The Russian and Ukrainian forces have been largely in a stalemate, trading small slices of land over the winter. The fiercest battles have been in the eastern Donetsk region, where Russia is struggling to encircle the city of Bakhmut in the face of dogged Ukrainian defense. But both sides are expected to launch more intensive offensives in the spring. Asked about the timing of the tanks' arrival, Ryder said the Abrams are part of the medium- and longer-term military support the US is providing to Ukraine. He said that as Ukrainian forces take or retake territory, they will also need to sustain those gains and deter Russia from regaining any footholds.

During a visit to a tank plant in Lima, Ohio, in February, Army Secretary Christine Wormuth met with officials there at length to determine the best options for getting the tanks to Ukraine. "Part of it is figuring out - among the different options - what's the best one that can allow us to get the Ukrainians tanks in as timely a fashion as we can," without dis-

rupting foreign military sales, Wormuth said at the time.

Officials at the plant, which is owned by the Army and operated by Reston, Virginia-based General Dynamics, said production totals can vary, based on contract demands. And while they are currently building 15-20 armored vehicles per month, including tanks, they can easily boost that to 33 a month and could add another shift of workers and build even more if needed. Development of tanks for Ukraine would have to be squeezed in between the current contracts for foreign sales, which include 250 of the newest versions for Poland and about 75 for Australia. During Wormuth's tour of the plant, workers were preparing to build an updated version of the vehicle for Poland. Ukrainian leaders have persistently pressed for the Abrams, which first deployed to war in 1991 and has thick armor, a 120 mm main gun, armor-piercing capabilities and advanced targeting systems. It runs on thick tracked wheels and has a 1,500-horsepower turbine engine with a top speed of about 42 miles per hour (68 kilometers per hour).

Ghost lake set to reappear as California hit by rain

CALIFORNIA (AFP): A lake that dried up 80 years ago looked set to reappear, as monster rainfall accumulated over California's wet winter season overwhelms the state's rivers.

Even as spring appeared in the northern hemisphere, there was no let-up for America's most populous state, with forecasters predicting another 4 inches (10 centimeters) of rain and up to 4 feet (120 centimeters) of snow over the mountains.

"Another significant event... on top of everything that has come before is going to cause some major problems," meteorologist Daniel Swain said on Twitter. In California's Central Valley, authorities issued evacuation orders for residents of communities in Tulare County, where a lake that dried up around World War II was set to reappear. "Increasingly serious high water prospects in what is shaping up to possibly be a record Kings River runoff season have led the US

Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Sacramento District to announce plans to begin a rare flood release into old Tulare Lakebed," said a statement from the King's River Conservation District (KRCD).

"Releases growing to 1,500 cubic feet per second... will begin taking the flood flows to the former lakebed in Kings County. "They are anticipated to continue indefinitely, USACE officials said, possibly lasting until sometime in the summer." Tulare Lake was once the largest freshwater lake in the western United States, fed chiefly by snowmelt from the Sierra Nevada range.

But as the area was developed for agriculture and rivers were diverted for irrigation, the lake shrank, and by the middle of the 20th century, it had become farmland. It has flooded periodically since, including in 1983 when record snowfall covered the mountains, with 2023 shaping up to rival those totals. Calling it "the winter that just does-

n't want to end," the National Weather Service (NWS) in Reno, on the eastern side of the Sierra, said this year is the second snowiest season in 77 years. The western United States has been pummeled by a train of atmospheric rivers -- moisture-laden ribbons that ferry water from the Pacific over land. The region has been suffering from a decades-long drought, but so much rain and snow has fallen this winter that the once-parched soil is now saturated. Each successive rain event brings the threat of flooding, with the ground unable to soak up any more water.

The NWS issued flood warnings to parts of San Francisco and areas south of there, and urged people to be exceedingly careful when travelling. "Water levels are extremely high on area rivers, creeks, and streams. Heavy rainfall below 4,000 feet could cause flooding or worsen ongoing flooding," the NWS in Hanford tweeted.

Chinese Covid data from Wuhan uploaded

LONDON (Reuters): Data from the early days of the COVID pandemic, briefly uploaded to a database by Chinese scientists, gives information on its origins, including suggesting a role for raccoon dogs in the coronavirus reaching humans, international researchers said. The virus was first identified in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019, with many suspecting a live animal market to be involved, before spreading round the world and killing nearly 7 million people to date.

International researchers published a pre-print report based on their interpretation of the data, after leaks of their findings in the media last week and a meeting with the World Health Organization involving both the Chinese and international scientists. The WHO has urged China to release more information. The data comprised new sequences of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and additional genomic data based on samples taken

from the Huanan market in Wuhan in 2020, according to the international researchers who accessed it. The sequences showed that raccoon dogs and other animals susceptible to the coronavirus were present in the market and may have been infected, providing a new clue in the chain of transmission that eventually reached humans, they said.

"This adds to the body of evidence identifying the Huanan market as the spillover location of SARS-CoV-2 and the epicentre of the COVID-19 pandemic," said the report. The data from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) had been uploaded to GISAID, the global pathogen database, ready for it to be included in a scientific paper set to be published in a major journal. As of March 11, it was no longer accessible on the database, where it was found by the international scientists, their report said. GISAID said in a statement it was

"temporarily invisible" while it was being updated ahead of the paper's publication, in line with normal practice.

The report was written by authors including the University of Arizona's Michael Worobey, Kristian Andersen of Scripps Research in La Jolla, California, and Florence Debarre at the Sorbonne University in Paris, France, who accessed the data. They say they have broken no rules in accessing the data. It was not immediately clear whether the release of their report would have any immediate impact on the data becoming accessible again, or the publication of the paper by the Chinese scientists.

The team also called for more information to be shared. "Other raw sequencing data from environmental samples from the Huanan market exist and could contain further clues," Debarre told Reuters. The Chinese CDC was not immediately available for comment.

Nigeria's Obi, Atiku challenge presidential election results

ABUJA (Reuters): Nigeria's two main opposition leaders filed petitions seeking to cancel results from last month's disputed presidential election, court papers showed, to begin what could be a legal battle lasting several months. There have been numerous legal challenges to the outcome of previous Nigerian presidential elections but none has succeeded.

Atiku Abubakar from the biggest opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Labour Party's Peter Obi asked the Appeals Court to invalidate the election won by Bola Tinubu of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) party. The opposition leaders said in separate affidavits the election was fraught with irregularities and accused the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of

breaching the law by failing to use electronic machines to upload polling station results, among other criticisms. Atiku and Obi asked for an order "cancelling the presidential election" and for the INEC to conduct a fresh vote.

Tinubu has defended the election as credible. Obi campaigned as an outsider, galvanizing young and first-time voters and had appeared to throw the contest wide open, raising some voters' hopes for change after years of hardship and violence under outgoing President Muhammadu Buhari, 80, a former army general. But Obi came third behind Tinubu and Atiku, both of whom had powerful political machines and decades of networking behind them. The APC and PDP have, between them, governed Nigeria since

the end of military rule in 1999.

Election observers from the European Union, the Commonwealth and other groups reported a range of problems, among them failures in systems designed to prevent vote manipulation. The observers criticised the INEC for poor planning and voting delays, but they did not allege fraud. The commission itself apologised for the technical problems during the count. The Appeals Court has 180 days to hear and make a ruling on Obi's challenge. If a candidate is not satisfied with the outcome of the tribunal, they can approach the Supreme Court, which will deliberate on an appeal within 60 days.

Nigeria's next president will be sworn in on May 29. Violence and voter intimidation marred last month's

presidential vote as well as last weekend's governorship polls. Turnout was low despite the highest number of registered voters, at 93 million. Meanwhile, the Nigeria's two biggest parties won the majority of states in weekend governorship polls, official figures showed, maintaining their political dominance following elections in which European Union observers said 21 people died from violence. Barry Andrews, European Union Observer Mission Nigeria chief observer, told a news conference that commercial hub Lagos was among several states disrupted by multiple incidences of thuggery, ballot snatching and intimidation of voters, polling officials, observers and journalists. Voters were choosing governors in 28 of the country's 36 states to bring to an

end this year's election cycle that began with disputed presidential and legislative elections last month.

Ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) party's Bola Tinubu was declared president-elect but his victory is being challenged by Atiku Abubakar of the main opposition People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Labour Party's Peter Obi. Obi was supported by young voters and was seen having the best chance to end the dominance of APC and PDP, which have between them, ruled Africa's most populous nation since the return to democratic rule in 1999. But Obi came third in the presidential race behind Tinubu and Atiku and his Labour Party was yet to win a governorship race. Official figures showed that APC won 15 states, including the

closely watched Lagos race, compared to seven for PDP, which led in another state as counting continued. A northern regional party won one state and led in another.

Labour Party, which rejected the Lagos result, led in one state. Two races were declared inconclusive because they were too close to call between APC and PDP. One was northeastern Adamawa state where the APC candidate was tipped to become the first female elected governor. Andrews said violence and intimidation may have led to a low turnout. While there is no nationwide turnout figure, because the voting is administered state by state, authorities put it at 16% in Lagos - Nigeria's most populous with more than 20 million people.

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US-China rift and the region

THE former US Navy Officer and Coordinator for Strategic Communication at the US National Security Council (NSC), John Francis Kirby has termed the growing Sino-Russia association a marriage of convenience, as Russian Strongman Vladimir Putin sees President Xi Jinping as his backer and both countries are getting, even more, closer every passing day. According to US Spokesman, President Xi should also speak to the Ukrainian President and stress Russia to stop bombing schools and hospitals in Ukraine. John Kirby noted that China was not impartial with regard to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and President Xi perceives it’s some western war on Russia. On the same go, American diplomat accused China of continuous violations and attempts to change a rule-based order in the South China Sea.

The competition between the US-led western bloc and Russo-China coalition has ramped up during these days as the global geopolitical landscapes are changing rapidly and warring nations are continuously taking strategic diplomatic and military maneuvers to expand their influence in other parts of the world. The recent Chinese brokered Saudi-Iran rapprochement and President Xi's peace and cooperation diplomacy in Eastern Europe have prompted an outcry and serious concerns in western capitals because those pivotal Chinese diplomatic moves not only dented the United States' diplomacy at the global level but also seriously undermined western interest in the Middle East region along with having far-reaching effects over the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Apparently, the US-China tussle is likely to intensify in multiple spheres including global trade, international economy, and diplomacy, the Taiwan issue, and the situation in the South China Sea, where western Naval vessels' regular presence and patrol in regional waters continuously irk competing powers. At the same time, Chinese diplomatic outreach in the Middle East, Africa, and other regions is likely to kick off a new wave of global rivalry, regional proxies, and interstate conspiracies that would ultimately affect peace and stability in multiple regions across the globe. US Envoy has termed Chinese economic and diplomatic outreach as a debt trap and tool for Chinese expansionism and hinted at US's Counter China policy in contesting regions including Africa, the Middle East, South, and East Asia. Interestingly, the Middle East and North Africa which yet not completely got out of the destructionist effects of the decade-long wave of Arab Spring will likely face another shake of foreign-inflicted chaos and instability in the future.

The current global and regional geopolitics is continuously evolving and each nation is adjusting itself to the changed geopolitical environment to ensure its sovereignty and survival in the contemporary world. In the current global and regional geostrategic landscapes, an economically fragile nuclear Pakistan is of high importance for both contesting blocs, while China and the US are using Pakistan's weakness to influence its foreign and security policies in their favor. Pakistani leadership needs to use its cards tactfully to protect its core interests without sliding into bloc politics. Rationally, being first-door neighbors, Pakistan, and China have converging interests, and their economic and security cooperation satisfactorily satisfy their interests. As the CPEC has not yet begun yielding its full potential, therefore Chinese business giants must increase their investment in the CPEC's Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to maximize the financial dividends of this Sino-Pak joint economic and regional connectivity ventures. On the other hand, Islamabad has deep economic and security relations with the United States and European Union that needs enhancement and further expansion that benefits both sides. In fact, Pakistan needs a thoughtful stratagem and a fully sovereign and competent leadership to steer through this challenging time as better we would be prepared and tackle the situation as safe, smooth, and secure would be our future.

Russia’s Supreme (Court) loss

ON Wednesday, the British Supreme Court ruled in Ukraine's favour in one of the longest-running legal disputes between Moscow and Kyiv, ordering a full London trial on Ukraine's claim that it should not have to repay a decade-old \$3bn loan it says the pro-Russian administration of then-President Viktor Yanukovich took out under pressure from Russia. In the context of Russia's war in Ukraine and all the horrors resulting from it, a legal victory far away in Britain may appear minor. After all, the funds in dispute are not even a fraction of the hundreds of billions in damages Russia has caused in Ukraine in the past year.

Nonetheless, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hailed the ruling as a "decisive victory", and many Ukrainians celebrated it as much as their country's successes on the battlefield. This ruling is indeed decisive and important not only for Ukraine but for the West as well. It is important because the loan in question was Russia's first attempt to challenge the Western-led economic order through its actions towards Ukraine.

The disputed loan was agreed in December 2013. Back then, protests were raging in Kyiv against corruption and Yanukovich's decision to abandon plans for closer ties with the European Union. In the months prior, Moscow had put the Ukrainian economy under substantial duress to persuade Yanukovich to move away from signing an association agreement with

Brussels and instead join the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union. According to the current Ukrainian government, Russian pressure on Ukraine at the time was not solely economic. Kyiv alleges that in addition to a trade blockade, Moscow threatened the Yanukovich administration with military action if it did not comply. On December 17 that year as protests continued in Ukraine, Yanukovich flew to Moscow for a meeting with President Vladimir Putin. Details of the discussions between the two presidents were never publicly disclosed, but after the meeting, Yanukovich announced that Ukraine would seek observer status in the Eurasian Economic Union and receive \$15bn in loans from Russia.

The announcement did nothing to assuage the protests in Kyiv, but the Yanukovich government moved forward with the agreed plan anyway. The first \$3bn tranche of the \$15bn loan was issued just three days after Yanukovich's Moscow visit. At the end of February 2014, deadly clashes between protesters and state forces in Kyiv culminated in the Maidan Revolution. Yanukovich absconded to Russia, and the remaining \$12bn Putin had offered to loan Ukraine was never delivered. But as Russian forces began to seize control of Crimea, and Ukraine hurtled towards defaulting on its debts, sovereign debt experts started looking into Ukraine's books and noticed some anomalies in Moscow's initial \$3bn payment to the Yanukovich administra-

Maximilian Hess

tion.

First and foremost, the loan was structured in a rather unusual way - in the form of a eurobond. Such debentures are a common way for sovereign governments to borrow, but they are used for borrowing from private creditors, not from other states. When governments borrow from each other or from international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the terms are typically concessional - such loans are known as "official debt". Private debts, such as eurobonds, may be traded on open markets. Official loans may not. When governments face debt duress, their private and official debts are also restructured in separate, if typically concurrent, processes. So Russia's use of a private market instrument for its loan to the Yanukovich administration was highly unusual. As experts picked through the language of the bond's offering, they discovered unique terms that gave the eurobond's holder substantial leverage over the Ukrainian economy by effectively allowing it to force Ukraine into default. Russia's National Wealth Fund owned the eurobond, which meant that the Kremlin could blackmail the Ukrainian government. That the loan was structured as a private market debt despite being issued by an official creditor also meant that Russia could potentially frustrate Ukraine's ability to restructure its private debts and to receive support from other official creditors in the event of duress.

Putin has been com-

plaining about the dollar's dominance over the global economy for a long time. He first declared his intent to create a "sphere of influence" for the Russian rouble during his annual address to the Federal Assembly in 2006. The pro-Putin youth group Nashi, the brainchild of Putin aide Vladislav Surkov, subsequently embarked on an extensive public campaign to end the dollar's role in the Russian economy. But at the time of Yanukovich's ousting, Russia had made no meaningful progress on its de-dollarisation agenda. Even Putin's "blackmail bond" was denominated in the US currency. The eurobond issued to the Yanukovich administration, however, was still an attack on the dollar-dominated economic order. It was Putin's attempt to try and break the Western-led system from within. The fact that the eurobond blurred the lines between Ukraine's private and official creditors meant that Russia could, in theory, frustrate Ukraine's ability to restructure its private and public debts.

The formal restructuring process is arcane and technical. In simple terms, the size and conditions of the Russian-held eurobond meant Russia could have potentially prevented Ukraine from securing relief from its private creditors if it defaulted on this particular loan. However, Ukraine continued to pay interest rather than default on the eurobond, and holders of its other eurobonds also balked at participating in Russia's debt warfare - arguably because the

largest share of Ukraine's remaining eurobonds were held by the US-based investment firm, Franklin Templeton, which led the negotiations. The IMF also ruled in March 2015 that the eurobond should not be treated as a private debt but as an official one. Ukraine's private creditors subsequently agreed to restructure Ukraine's private debts in August of that year, four months before the Russian-held eurobond was due. Nevertheless, because the eurobond was also an intergovernmental loan, the eurobond still theoretically gave Russia leverage over Ukraine's ability to secure relief and support from official creditors. Since its establishment, the IMF had maintained a policy that meant it could not loan to countries in arrears to other official creditors. This meant that Ukraine faced a potential crisis when it was due to repay the Russian-held eurobond on December 20, 2015. However, 10 days earlier, the IMF announced that it was changing its rules saying it would now allow loans to countries in arrears to official creditors. Although it denied that the move was political or in any way connected to the Russian-held eurobond, the announcement was published in only two languages, English and Russian.

The Kremlin was outraged. Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said the IMF's move would "open Pandora's box, cause huge damage to world finances and generally undermine confidence in international financial institutions". The eurobond plot had proved

too clever by half. Russia had sought to use the instruments and institutions of the international economic order to its advantage but failed to inflict any real damage. Russia subsequently sued for repayment. Because the eurobond was issued under English law, the matter was heard by the English High Court. The first round went in its favour as Judge William Blair, brother of former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, ruled in March 2017 that Ukraine has failed to offer a "justicia-ble" or court-ready defence for not paying back the loan and refused to send the case to a full trial. Kyiv, however, won the next round when the English Court of Appeal ruled in September 2018 that a full trial should be held to hear Ukraine's arguments. The Supreme Court's ruling effectively upheld that judgement.

Kyiv will now have its day in court to argue that the debt is invalid because the eurobond was sold under duress from martial threats. The fact that Russia invaded and annexed Ukraine's Crimea region shortly after Yanukovich was ousted and subsequently fomented the conflict in eastern Ukraine certainly makes the arguments credible. If Ukraine's argument is upheld at trial, it could invalidate the loan. Russia's loss at the UK Supreme Court may not move the needle on Putin's war in Ukraine, but it is yet another step towards defanging his threats to the international order - and as the eurobond's genesis demonstrates, for Putin, the two are one and the same.

My plagiarised work was used to justify the war on Iraq

Ibrahim Al-Marashi

IMAGINE it is February 5, 2003. The US secretary of state is speaking in front of the United Nations, holding your work in his hands, as he calls for a war on another sovereign nation. How would you feel? Well, it happened to me, and I felt shocked. That night I was visiting my parents' home in Monterey, California, watching Colin Powell present the UN with a montage of satellite photographs supposedly showing weapons of mass destruction, the intercepted calls of an Iraqi officer who was allegedly hiding them and claims that Iraq could weaponise anthrax to carry out a terrorist attack.

Finally, Powell said, "I would call my colleagues' attention to the fine paper that the United Kingdom distributed yesterday, which describes in exquisite detail Iraqi deception activities." I almost jumped off the velour sectional in my parents' living room. "Mom, that's my work he is holding in his hands!" I shouted.

"Uh huh," she said, fixated on the TV, perhaps not hearing what I had just said. A day earlier, I had been

informed by a Cambridge University scholar that an article based on a chapter of my PhD dissertation I had published online had been plagiarised in an "intelligence dossier". The British government was brandishing this document in an effort to rally public support at home for an attack on Iraq. It was also apparently passed on to the Americans.

I went to sleep that evening wondering how, if my mom was not even convinced, would the world ever know about my plagiarised research. I was woken up at dawn the following day by a phone call from a CNN journalist in London asking, "How does it feel to know that the British government plagiarised your research?"

To a young, struggling Iraqi-American PhD student at Oxford University, it felt surreal. The news had broken in London while I was asleep in California in my childhood bed, lying at a diagonal so that my legs wouldn't dangle off the edge. I stared at the model airplanes I built as a teenager, hanging from the ceiling. The real-life versions of those planes would in a few weeks bomb Iraq, and I was unwillingly made part

of it.

The article the British government had plagiarised focused on Iraq's security sector - the complicated, confusing and convoluted network of secret police, spy agencies and military units that propped up Saddam Hussein's rule and his "public of fear". My research, which focused on Iraq's occupation of Kuwait leading up to the 1990 Gulf War, illustrated the brutality of Saddam's regime. Perhaps that's why it was plagiarised by the Brits. But it in no way argued for the invasion of the country by foreign powers.

The authors of the "intelligence dossier" had changed key words from my article to suggest that Iraq had supported al-Qaeda and then padded the plagiarised material with their own pages that argued for military action. This act of plagiarism by the British government would propel me on a trajectory of fame and infamy. British media would use my work to point to the flawed intelligence the US and the UK had presented ahead of the invasion. And months later, I would testify before a parliamentary inquiry into the

actions of Prime Minister Tony Blair's government.

I would be interchangeably presented by the media as a champion of truth, helping expose US and UK government lies, and as a person who supposedly encouraged the invasion. Some went as far as branding me the "man who started the war", as a result of which I experienced a fair share of hostility in my personal and public life. Indeed, I opposed Saddam's regime and its brutality but did not wish for war.

Today, reflecting back on what happened 20 years ago, I feel bitter and traumatised. Studying Saddam's Iraq was not easy, but neither was researching the outcome of his removal. It has been deeply distressing documenting what happened to Iraqis over the past 20 years. In that regard, I also regret that I did not use the media attention I enjoyed in 2003 to offer a stark warning about the chaos the invasion was bound to unleash.

The security services I studied projected fear into the lives of most Iraqis. They were also a huge job provider for those loyal to

Saddam. It was clear to me after the 2003 invasion that if the hundreds of thousands of men employed by those security services were not rehabilitated and reintegrated into Iraqi society, they would employ violence to undermine the new state. Of course, the Coalition Provisional Authority did not have that foresight. It dissolved the security services as well as the entire Iraqi army, which was already estranged from the security sector guarding Saddam.

That decision freed up thousands of Iraqi men, proficient in the use of arms, to join the various insurgencies and armed groups, which wreaked havoc in the country over the following two decades. Today, the Iraqi state remains weak and does not have a monopoly on the use of force. Despite extensive training and financial support from the US, security forces in Iraq are not as effective as their predecessors in maintaining order, preventing criminal violence against civilians or stopping terrorist attacks. Worse still, they have joined myriad other actors - gangs, armed groups, militias, tribes, etc - in inflicting brutal violence on

Iraqis. In October 2019, mass protests broke out in Baghdad and other major Iraqi cities. They reflected the society-wide drive and desire for a change of the status quo established by the US after 2003. They demanded not just security, proper services, a dignified life and an end to corruption, but also an Iraqi state that serves Iraqis, not foreign powers.

The protests were brutally suppressed by paramilitary forces, which for months on end continued to threaten, kidnap and kill people associated with this movement for change. Indeed, Iraq remains a republic of anarchy.

In research articles I published after the invasion, I argued that security sector reform and a truth and reconciliation process would have been a more sustainable way of achieving disarmament and reintegration of the members of the Saddam-era agencies, but neither was ever pursued in Iraq. I would have been happy if those papers were plagiarised, given a wide audience at the UN and ultimately implemented. Alas, they weren't.

Aljazeera

Why are Ireland’s anti-refugee protests erupting now? Look across the Irish Sea

Colin Gannon

AFTER years of bucking the European trend, an organised anti-refugee backlash has finally hit Ireland. Recent protests involved threats to burn down a hotel housing refugees and, in a separate incident, there was a vigilante attack on a homeless migrant camp. These ugly scenes followed months of protests led by the far right and simmering community tensions over the provision of local accommodation to refugees.

But where has this come from? Not previously high on the agenda of voters more concerned with a crumbling, two-tier healthcare system and a chronic housing crisis, a recent poll found that a small majority (56%) of Irish respondents believe the country has accepted too many refugees over the past year.

Ireland is currently housing about 74,000 asylum applicants, 49,227 of whom are Ukrainians. A year ago, the total number was 7,500. Hotels, emer-

gency shelters and improvised accommodation centres across the country are practically full. And what is sometimes forgotten is that the number of non-Ukrainian applicants is also the highest in decades, mirroring a Europe-wide trend of rising asylum claims. As seen during the water charges revolt and through the popularity of the policies of Sinn Féin, mass anger has, in recent memory, largely been directed at the ruling parties, which bailed out the banks and the bondholders on the backs of the Irish working and middle classes before unleashing austerity under the guise of a post-crash recovery. Now anti-refugee sentiment has exploded amid a devastating housing crisis, made worse by the destabilising effects of public sector cuts and stagnant wages.

With the asylum system at breaking point and fury building at these national malaises, anti-refugee protests and the febrile discourses that swirl around are potentially signalling the birth of a new political

energy that could impose itself on future elections in Ireland. On closer inspection, they also demonstrate the importation of anti-refugee arguments from across the Irish Sea. These protests have drawn from the same rhetorical, tactical, and ideological energy as the recent anti-refugee riot in Knowsley, England. The most commonplace and persistent anti-refugee narrative concerns "unvetted" or "military age" young male refugees, who are depicted, because of their age and gender, as inherently unsafe to the public, especially women. As a recent poll indicated, women in working-class communities are more strongly against integrating refugees than men.

Preying on these fears, Irish far-right activists are disseminating false information about criminal activities. Proliferating through social media on any given day are rumours of sexual assault or the harassment of women by migrants, or grainy, unver-

ifiable video clips of the same. A security source recently told the Irish Times that this is "a mirror image of what has been happening in the UK". At the level of street agitators and online provocateurs, the links are clear. Tommy Robinson was welcomed to Ireland in February by some far-right activists. Online, some of the Irish far-right's leading lights have appeared on the Off-Grid Ireland YouTube channel with activists from Patriotic Alternative (PA), one of the most active fascist movements in the UK. PA founder and Adolf Hitler admirer Mark Collett and another key figure Sam Melia recently went on the same channel to express their hope that PA tactics and ideas could be reproduced in Ireland.

Then there are the suit-clad personalities who are more interested in electoral successes than street politics. First coming to the fore in the 1990s as one of the faces of the anti-abortion campaign group Youth

Defence, Justin Barrett founded the Irish National party in 2018, which advocates for the reversal of migration policies. Meanwhile, Hermann Kelly, the president of the anti-EU Irish Freedom party, supports taking back control of Ireland's borders and migration policy. And he also is the director of communications for Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy, of which Nigel Farage was co-president. Many branches of the Irish right nurture the same obsessions as their English and broader European counterparts. Adherents are, as a recent micro-party's foundation indicates, "Ireland First" in orientation. They are in favour of housing the "ethnically Irish" first, they are disdainful of globalist elites, leftwing politicians and NGOs. In certain dark corners, there are explicit calls to violence and ethno-nationalist tropes about the "great replacement theory".

Yet while the culture war playbook is remarkably consistent across

national borders, there's a specific irony to its expression in Ireland. Irish nationalist arguments, bound up in a history of independence struggles, have never been held from the fringe but have been centre stage in Irish politics. And whether for opportunistic reasons or for ideological affinity, Irish nationalists often forged alliances with fellow small nations and anti-imperial struggles around the world, not groups of fanatics who dream of racial purity or the reincarnation of the British empire. In reality, the far-right menace remains small. But the spread of the contagion could provide a challenge from the right as Sinn Féin feathers itself for power for the first time in the Irish republic. Growing anti-migrant sentiment could benefit the more hardline immigration policies of parties such as Fine Gael. Only time will tell, however, if the anti-immigration consensus seen in large parts of Britain can be replicated in Ireland.

Judicial coup is jeopardizing Israel's 'people's army'

Yossi Mekelberg

IF there is any institution in Israel that is revered and regarded as beyond criticism, it is the Israel Defense Forces. Over the years, the ethos of the IDF as the people's army, in which serving is not just a duty but a privilege, has never been seriously challenged. With that came the almost complete rejection of the idea of refusing military service, especially conscientious objection or refusing to execute specific missions. However, Benjamin Netanyahu and his bunch of democracy destroyers have managed to change this.

Those who refuse, either as self-confessed pacifists or as an objection to the occupation of Palestinian land and the harsh treatment of its people, have usually served a number of consecutive terms in military jail before being discharged from the army. This attitude to serving in the military has been shared almost equally between conscripts and reservists. Hence, last week's warning to the present government by many hundreds of reservists - including senior fighter pilots, former high-ranking commanders, members of elite units and even military doctors - that they would refuse to serve if the planned judicial coup, which would make the country less democratic and way more dictatorial, should be carried out has sent tremors through Israeli society. This development is bound to have a long-term impact on relations between society and the security forces' new attitude of less-than-unquestioning obedience. As a product of Zionism, Israel's raison d'être is to be a safe haven for Jews from across the world and, to that end, developing its military power has always been regarded as paramount. Although Israel's geopolitical position has changed dramatically over the last

few decades - following the signing of peace and normalization agreements with some of its neighbors, while other potential adversaries such as Syria or Iraq are not in a position to pose any significant threat - to its strategists, the central importance of being a regional military super-power remains.

From its inception, the IDF was not just a military force but an essential component of building a cohesive Israeli society, as Jews from different parts of the world flocked to the newly established country. The military became a melting pot and a social equalizer, as 18-year-old women and men from different socioeconomic backgrounds all took part in military service, although this has been somewhat of an idealistic perception of the IDF. Furthermore, a citizen's military service does not end with being discharged from conscript service, but continues for decades with service as an active reservist. An Israeli chief of staff, Gen. Yigael Yadin, once remarked that, in Israel, "the civilian is a soldier on 11 months' annual leave." Militarily speaking, the regular army, of both conscripts and career soldiers, is regarded as too small to adequately confront the range of security challenges Israel faces, some close to home and others as distant as Iran and beyond. Hence, reserve forces, which are considerably bigger than the regular army, have become a crucial component of the country's security configuration and deterrence mechanisms.

Despite the extreme diversity of political opinions, instances of refusal to serve on political grounds have been almost negligible, even when it came to a controversial war such as the 1982 invasion of Lebanon or to being

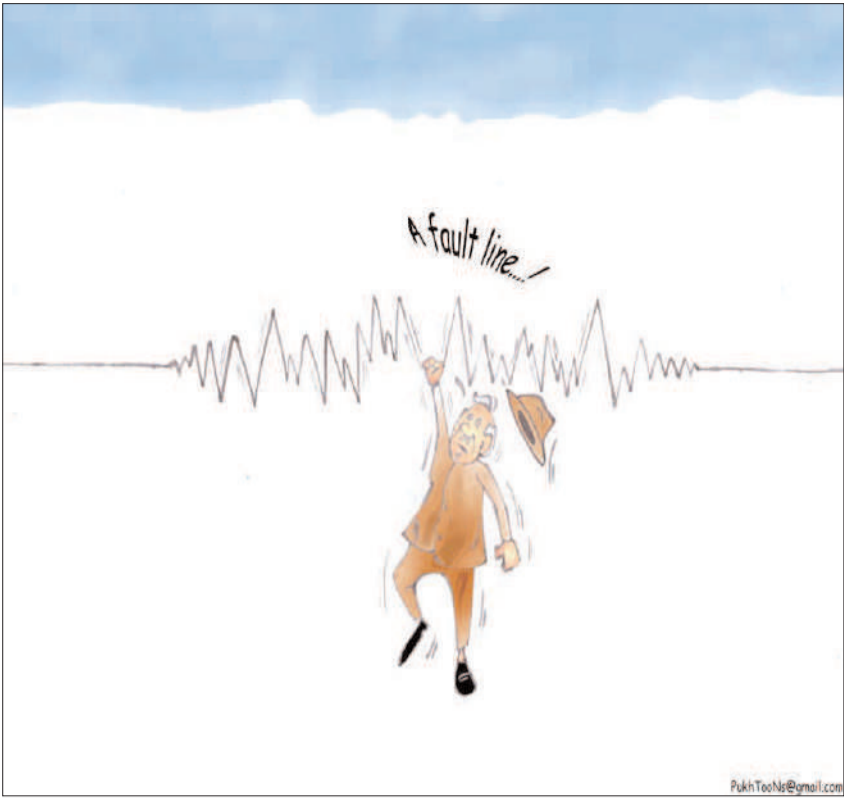
sent on oppressive missions in the West Bank and Gaza, such as during the first and second intifadas. It has always been wishful thinking to argue that politics should stop at the gates of the military base, as Israel's military is a most significant executive arm of government. However, most soldiers, including reservists, have managed to somehow fulfill their military duties even if these have contradicted their political beliefs or, worse, clashed with their conscience. It is the judicial vandalism being committed by the current coalition government that has irked enough reservists to prompt them to declare publicly that they will not serve if they see the country continue to slide toward a dictatorship. In one case, almost an entire squadron of reservist pilots of the most sophisticated fighter planes that might one day be needed to confront Iran's nuclear threat has threatened to not show up for training.

This open revolt by the backbone of the Israeli military force is invigorated by retired senior IDF, Mossad and Shin Bet commanders, who are expressing their utter disgust at the transformation of a liberal democracy - as complex and problematic as it is - into a nominal democracy, in which the judiciary becomes a mere tool in the hands of politicians. If the ethos of serving in the military to defend Israel has been sacrosanct, it has been accompanied by a very strong complementary motivation to defend its democratic character. If soldiers are asked to be prepared to sacrifice their lives, and in the process inflict great pain on other people, they would like to at least believe it is for something they regard as a just and worthy cause.

There has been a malaise for years that has now been triggered by corruption at the heart of gov-

ernment, from the fact that "the people's army" is a misnomer, since the burden of military service is falling on the shoulders of a dwindling proportion of the population, as is ensuring the prosperity of the country. However, the destruction of the democratic character of Israel's governing institutions by an administration led, for the first time in the country's history, by a prime minister who is a defendant in a corruption trial, while several of his ministers have previous convictions for corruption and even terrorism - let alone that many of them have never served in the military yet - are shamelessly ready to send others into battle - has proved to be the last straw. Some of those currently serving in the military are also concerned that such an ultra-nationalist and religious-messianic government will eventually land them before the International Criminal Court in The Hague on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

However, as much as one should applaud these citizens' courage and willingness to break a taboo for what is undoubtedly a worthy cause - a cause that, one hopes will, along with protests and pressure from other quarters of society, stop the unconstitutional usurpation that is taking place - there is also the danger of further politicizing the military, which could lead, for example, to right-wing soldiers refusing to evacuate settlements or ensure that settlers abide by the law, even though the issue at hand is completely different. On the other hand, it might also have the benefit of telling the current Israeli government, as any future one, that soldiers, especially reservists, are ready to serve their country and even die for it only if the government is committed to maintaining the democratic system and adhering to good governance that serves the entire nation, not simply its own vested interests.



ICC's Putin arrest warrant reeks of politicization, prejudice

Osama Al-Sharif

THIS month marks the 20th anniversary of the US and UK-led invasion of Iraq, on falsified evidence, that set in motion a series of cataclysmic events from which neither Iraq nor the region has been able to recover. Conservative figures put the number of Iraqis who perished under occupation or in the ensuing civil war at no less than half a million. Many more were maimed or displaced. Few would dare deny that this illegal invasion of a sovereign country remains the most egregious and blatant aggression of the 21st century.

None of the rosy promises peddled by the US and UK in the wake of the invasion and the toppling of the Saddam Hussein regime have been fulfilled. Iraq is a stone's throw from being classified as a failed country; it is mired in sectarian fricas, official corruption, foreign meddling, terrorism and a near-total collapse of public services. The turmoil in Iraq has afflicted the entire region. Many more lives have been lost as a result. Generations of Iraqis live in despair and anger as they lose sight of hope and recovery.

And yet no one has been held accountable for the invasion of Iraq or for the war crimes that were committed by the invading armies. The culprits remain at large. Meanwhile, last month saw the first anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine - a war that was supposed to last just weeks or even days but is still raging on, with massive loss of life and property. The similarities between the invasions of Iraq and Ukraine are shocking, to say the least: Unauthorized wars, attempts at regime change, gross human rights violations, potential war

crimes and the illegal occupation of land.

Some may find excuses for Moscow's intervention in Ukraine, which has unique historical and cultural links to Russia. NATO's expansion eastward was in breach of 1990s understandings between the US and Russia. There is a case to be made for Russia's existential concerns and genuine distrust of the West. Be that as it may, Russia's invasion is in violation of the UN Charter and international conventions. But it remains a polarizing crisis when it comes to issues such as the state of the world under a unipolar system, the gross failure of the UN as an instrument of conflict resolution and Western double standards in implementing international law. So, it was ironic that the International Criminal Court last week issued an arrest warrant against President Vladimir Putin for an alleged war crime in Ukraine; the first of many, say the Ukrainians. While praised by Russia's Western foes, the ICC move reeks of politicization and prejudice. That is not to say that Russia is innocent of the alleged violations in Ukraine. That remains to be investigated, after the guns go silent and a political settlement is found. But the speed with which the ICC has moved is itself a sign of selective justice and abuse of power.

Iraq is a case in point, where evidence of war crimes committed by and under the watch of the invading armies is fully documented. And yet no former leader or official of either the US or UK has been charged with war crimes by the ICC or any other body. The same can be said of Afghanistan,

which lingered under a 20-year US military occupation.

More incongruous to the people of the region is how the ICC and other international bodies continue to look the other way when a UN member state, Israel, violates scores of UN Security Council resolutions through its ongoing occupation, including annexing land, building illegal settlements, displacing and transferring Palestinians, detaining and killing children and journalists, and bombing residential areas, all of which should have appeared on an ICC indictment list many years ago.

The sad reality is that, under America's watch, the world's post-1990 legal structure finds itself in a state of entropy and is beyond repair. The ICC's warrant against Putin only adds insult to injury when it comes to the supposed integrity of the court itself. And if Putin deserves to have his day in court, then Tony Blair and George W. Bush should appear there first. Further, in an equitable world, the Israeli leaders and generals who oversaw the systematic colonization of Palestinian lands and the killing of thousands of Palestinians in questionable circumstances should also be on the world's wanted list. Traditionally, it has been said that justice is blind, in reference to its impartiality and acceptance of all victims. But in the cases of Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan and many others, Western justice is not only blind but mute and deaf as well. In many weird ways, the West opts for vengeance over justice and, by applying double standards, it only undermines the value and integrity of existing legal bodies.

Arab News

Decision time: did habitual liar Boris tell some lies? It's going to be tense

Marina Hyde

ONE last heave - in all senses of the word - for Boris Johnson, Britain's worst ex, who tomorrow flops himself out in front of the privileges committee and asks it to consider an auto-satirical question: did the foremost British liar of the age tell a lie? If you want a sense of our self-respect as a nation, an entire parliamentary investigation has spent 10 months gathering evidence on that question, while £220,000 and rising has been spent by the taxpayer on Johnson's legal defence. It is, let's face it, a long way to go to reach the conclusion, "Lol of course he told a lie - it's BORIS JOHNSON?!!!!!!!"

Strip away the incidental details of this latest adventure in a career of turbo-fibbing and you are faced with a reality as old as bullshit itself. Johnson, who last told the truth during the Reagan administration - and then only accidentally - has somehow got the government to fund state-of-the-art lawyers to prove he wasn't aware of parties happening in his own house, attended by his own self, against his own rules, and in at least one case against his own laws, having gone on telly every single night to tell people that compliance to the letter of said rules and laws was a matter of life and death. Please bear this in mind if you tune in to his appearance tomorrow afternoon, along with the question: does our country have a path to dignity? Because this ain't it.

Wednesday's spectacle in the bollockssum promises to be yet another poignantly belated cautionary tale. Most sightings of Johnson since he was dragged out of office have served as a sobering reminder that - having been politically roofed by him - this really was the man we let be prime minister for three years. Despite raking in millions in the past few months, Johnson still dresses like he buys his outfits in 10kg sacks printed with the words ASSORTED CLOTHES. Far from being winsome, the famous hair increasingly tends toward the "specialist" end of the unkempt spectrum. As he runs down his sixth decade, Johnson is one pair of Reactolite glasses short of looking like something off the beast wing at HMP Full Sutton. Having submitted his supposedly "explosive" defence dossier yesterday, 48 hours before his scheduled appearance, the ex PM and his team were outraged that it wasn't rushed immediately into publication by the privileges committee - the sort of affront that gives off huge Norma Desmond energy. Our star has simply failed to grasp that he isn't in the priority lane any more, and that people will get around to him when they get around to him, and not before.

That hotly defensive defence dossier has now been published, and the overwhelming feeling is ... stop whining and wanging on and weaselling out. You were the actu-

al prime minister - man up. Johnson has lied so much and for so long and in such varied arenas that he presumably doesn't even know he's doing it any more. In many ways, the true disappointment is that his lawyer, David Pannick, has not advised him to go with a plea of diminished responsibility. Admittedly, Johnson's delusions are shared, albeit by fewer and fewer people. There remains a rump Westminster fandom that still believes there's a superior version of his prime ministership back there, if only the suits would release it - a sort of Snyder cut of governing. There isn't. We all lived through the reality. Though significantly dwindled in number, these fans are no less toxic than they were. You might have noted one of them pre-emptively referring to Wednesday's hearing as an "organised lynching" - a way of putting it that suggests we can look forward to Nadine Dorries storming the committee room while singing Strange Fruit.

Naturally, anyone can see why Johnson's sense that his political career is not yet over remains so incredibly powerful - it is, quite simply, the only thing in which he has ever truly believed. You know this hearing really matters to him because he isn't even on holiday for it. Do recall that last October's fall of Liz Truss was the only time in his entire political career that Johnson returned home from holi-

day for a crisis - and how telling that it was a crisis in someone else's leadership, and consequently an opportunity for him. As London mayor, he carried on with his American road trip while his city rioted. As prime minister, he skipped multiple Cobra meetings at the start of Covid to focus on his Shakespeare book/divorce/lack of focus. Later, he couldn't be arsed returning from some Scottish yurt-based break to deal with the exams crisis. So tomorrow's date-with-destiny exposes the tragically serious reality that the clown act seeks to keep hidden - he is still in pursuit of the only job in which he has ever made sense to himself. And yet, this pursuit feels decidedly doomed these days, vibes-wise. Whereas last October a comeback seemed at least a possibility (however lunatic), Johnson now feels inescapably yesterday's man. You can't quite put your finger on exactly why, but the air has gone out of it all. Of course, he'll have his closeup tomorrow, and his memoirs will give him a few more when they're published. But the phrase that was always used to give him licence - "that's just Boris" - now sounds bored and dismissive. Oh, that's just Boris. That's just Boris, just another clapped-out warlord living in Knightsbridge, trying to make his father a consul or give a horse a peerage or something. You know what he's like - and the caravan has moved on.

The Guardian

Republican divide on the war in Ukraine grows

Kerry Boyd Anderson

THERE is a growing divide among Republicans on how the US should respond to the war in Ukraine. The divide has been widening in the last few months, but the start of the race for the Republican presidential nomination is driving a new wedge between those who want to actively support Ukraine and those less dedicated to the fight. In general, foreign policy is not likely to be a top issue for most Republican candidates. Exceptions might be former ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley and former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. So far on the campaign trail, former President Donald Trump has raised foreign policy mostly in terms of his past record as president. Most candidates will focus more on US domestic issues.

Republicans broadly agree that China poses the biggest foreign threat to US security and interests. Increasingly, Republicans are talking about the southern US border as a foreign policy problem. Countering Iran and supporting Israel are other areas of agreement. When it comes to another top foreign policy issue, the war in Ukraine, there is an intensifying debate within the Republican Party. While Republican leaders largely agree that the US should not send soldiers to fight in Ukraine or allow Kyiv a "blank check," there is significant disagreement beyond those points.

The pro-Ukraine hawks view Russia as a major threat to US security and global interests. They share the view that the US and its

allies play an important role in defending freedom around the world and that Russia seeks to undermine those efforts. The hawks believe in global "law and order," and Russia's invasion of a sovereign state violates international laws and norms. They also argue that freedom and stability in Europe is particularly important to US security and economic interests; if Russia succeeds in Ukraine, they warn that it could invade and otherwise threaten other European countries. Furthermore, the hawks argue that China is watching how Washington responds to Russian aggression in Ukraine; they argue that, if the US is irresolute in its support for Ukraine, China will assume that Washington's support for Taiwan or other friends in the Pacific could waver.

Haley is the one foreign policy hawk, so far, who has announced that she is running for the presidency. She said that Russia threatens US allies, the war is a fight for freedom and that a Russian victory in Ukraine would encourage China and Iran to "become more aggressive." She supports sending "conventional weapons" to Ukraine. Some other potential candidates have also expressed support for Ukraine and backed providing aid to Kyiv, including Pompeo, former Vice President Mike Pence, Sen. Tim Scott and Gov. Chris Sununu. However, the top two contenders for the Republican nomination have downplayed the threat from Russia and questioned US support for Ukraine. Trump, who has

repeatedly praised Russian President Vladimir Putin over the years, recently said that opposing Russia is not a vital US national security interest. He also recently said that, if he were president, he would be willing to support Russia taking over some Ukrainian territory as part of negotiations.

Florida governor and likely candidate Ron DeSantis has significantly changed his rhetoric on Ukraine. When he previously served in the US Congress, he criticized the Obama administration for not doing more in response to Russia's invasion of Crimea and other parts of Ukraine; he also called for sending defensive and offensive weapons to Ukraine. Today, however, he is taking a very different position. He recently stated that "becoming further entangled in a territorial dispute between Ukraine and Russia" is not a vital national interest for the US. He said that Washington should focus on securing its border. In addition to differing views of the war in Ukraine among potential presidential candidates, there is disagreement within the broader Republican Party.

Several influential figures have declared strong support for Ukraine, including Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell and Sen. Marco Rubio. Sen. Lindsey Graham criticized DeSantis' position on Ukraine, even referring to it as "the Neville Chamberlain approach" - referencing the British prime minister whose efforts to appease Adolf

Hitler failed to prevent the Second World War. However, some other Republican leaders are reluctant to provide strong, ongoing support for Ukraine. House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy has expressed reluctance to continue spending large sums of money on the war, and a few Republicans in Congress have called for ending aid. Multiple polls show that Republican voters are increasingly wavering on the issue, though a slight majority still supports sending US weapons to Ukraine.

Republicans who are uncertain about or opposed to support for Ukraine draw on several arguments. Many Republicans want to focus more resources on US domestic needs. Also, many ask why the US can offer significant support to Ukraine but cannot secure its own southern border. In general, many of these Republicans downplay the threat that Russia poses to US interests. A smaller segment expresses sympathy and admiration for Russia and Putin. President Joe Biden strongly supports Ukraine and has sufficient backing in Congress to maintain large amounts of military and economic aid.

If Biden runs and wins reelection in 2024, or if a Republican hawk becomes president, then US support for Ukraine would likely continue. However, if Trump or DeSantis becomes the Republican nominee and wins the White House, then Ukraine could not rely on US assistance. Moscow is certainly hoping to see a change in US policy, while Kyiv will be watching with concern.

DURING a year of Russian aggression, we have witnessed countless cases of cruelty and atrocities. They have become a part of our everyday news feed, part of our lives. Despite everything, Ukrainians have been bravely undergoing this long and challenging period of time. Unfortunately, the consequences of Russia's irresponsible behavior directly and negatively impact our children, both physically and psychologically. Broken destinies, lost parents, dead brothers and sisters. It leaves a huge scar and unbearable pain in our hearts.

And we would not be wrong if we said that today Russia is carrying out the world's largest child abduction operation in contemporary history. According to data from official sources, the Russian forces may have forcibly relocated about 16,000 Ukrainian children from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to Russia. Unofficial data informs us of more than 700,000 illegally transferred kids. Some children, whose parents died as a result of Russia's armed aggression,

Anatolii Petrenko

have been fostered by new families and even adopted. The Russian authorities do everything they can to separate children, to place them in completely different and distant regions, leaving them only one option - to accept their fate and adapt. This is a part of the Russia-initiated process of assimilating young Ukrainians, aimed at making them forget their mother tongue, nationality, identity and even beloved motherland.

The Russian campaign of illegal child relocation and their subsequent adoption is in blatant violation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989. According to Article 8, states are required "to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference." Moreover, the forcible transfer of children falls within the definition of genocide enshrined in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948, thus making the crimes of Russians even

more violent.

What we see now is nothing less than Russia striving to steal the future of Ukraine, depriving it of the possibility to raise new generations of Ukrainians who will continue building our country with all standards of prosperity and success. The deportation, reeducation and forcible adoption of children are key elements of the Kremlin's tireless efforts to reject the idea of the existence of Ukrainian identity, history and culture. The international community must pay full attention to this aspect of Russia's illegal actions that target the most vulnerable social group. We have to provide Ukrainian children with all the protections needed and they must be returned home as soon as possible. Russia's crimes must be subject to prosecution by international law, and all those complicit must be brought to justice.

We cannot spare any effort when it comes to children because, if we do not put an end to this, it could possibly threaten any other child in any other country. Let us unite our efforts in shaping a safe future for generations to come.

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.



PSX loses 501.88 points, closing at 40,376.10

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) declined by 501.88 points on Wednesday, showing a negative change of 1.23 per cent, closing at 40,376.10 points against 40,877.98 points the previous day.

A total of 148,452,001 shares were traded during the day as compared to 142,804,015 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs3.917 billion against Rs4.177 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 337 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 75 of them recorded gains and 234 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 28 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Fauji Cement with 17,487,500

shares at Rs11.81 per share; WorldCall Telecom with 11,071,860 shares at Rs1.21 per share and Thatta Cement with 9,211,500 shares at Rs11.01 per share. Sapphire Fiber witnessed a maximum increase of Rs66.61 per share price, closing at Rs954.79, whereas the runner-up was Pak Tobacco with an Rs50.05 rise in its per share price to Rs717.60.

Unilever Foods witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs331.00 per share closing at Rs17925.00; followed by Nestle Pakistan with Rs180.85 decline to close at Rs5000.15.

Rupee sheds 73 paise against dollar

Pakistan rupee witnessed a 73-paise devaluation against the dollar in the interbank trading on Wednesday and closed at Rs283.19 against the previ-

ous day's closing of Rs283.92.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs283.2 and Rs286 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 32 paise and closed at Rs305.19 against the last day's closing of Rs304.87, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen decreased by 01 paise to close at Rs2.13, whereas a decline of 09 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs347.65 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs347.74.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham went down by 19 paise to close at Rs77.11 and Saudi Riyal dipped by 18 paise to close

at Rs75.38.

Gold prices decrease by Rs2300 to Rs201,900 per tola

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs2300 and was sold at Rs201,900 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs204,200 the previous day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs1971 to Rs173,097 from Rs175,068, whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs158,672 from Rs160,480. The price of per tola silver and ten-gram silver remained unchanged to close at Rs2200 and Rs1886.14 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market dipped by US\$29 to \$1939 against its sale at \$1968, the association reported.



KARACHI: People buying dates at Khajoor Market in Lyari Town.

SBP announces banking hours F.P. Report

KARACHI: During the ensuing holy month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak 1444 AH, the following office hours will be observed in the State Bank of Pakistan, which will also be followed by all banks, development finance institutions and microfinance banks:-

Monday to Thursday from 09:00 am to 03:30 pm with prayer break from 2:00 pm to 2:30 pm whereas on Fridays office hours will be from 08:30 am to 1:00 pm without break.

However, it is further advised to observe the following business (banking) hours for public dealing:

Monday to Thursday from 09:00 am to 02:00 pm without break whereas on Fridays business (banking) hours for public dealing will be from 08:30 am to 1:00 pm without break. After the holy month of Ramadan, the above timings will automatically be reverted to pre Ramadan timings.

Shipping activity at PQ

KARACHI (APP): Three ships, Lisa, MSC Maria Elena and ES Valor carrying Containers and Palm oil, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal and Liquid Cargo Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile three more ships, Melody Fair, Nordic Josephine and Broog carrying Coal, Mogas and LNG also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during last 24 hours. A total of 04 ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a containers vessel Lisaleft the Port on Wednesday morning, while three more ships 'MSC Maria Elena, STI Gramercy and ES Valor are expected to sail on today.

Cargo throughput during last 24 hours stood at 82,577 tones, comprising 46,401 tones imports cargo.

Oil falls as bearish demand sentiment weighs on market

ANKARA (APP): Oil prices slid on Wednesday over bearish demand indicators driven by expected rise in US crude oil stockpiles, coupled with lingering effects of US bank collapses and upcoming US Fed decision on interest rate.

International benchmark Brent crude traded at \$74.91

per barrel at 10.09 a.m. local time (0709GMT), a 0.54% decrease from the closing price of \$75.32 a barrel in the previous trading session.

At the same time, American benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) traded at \$69.28 per barrel, a 0.55% fall after the previous session closed at

\$69.67 a barrel.

Prices came under demand pressure after the American Petroleum Institute (API) announced late Tuesday its estimate of a rise of over 3.26 million barrels in US crude oil inventories, relative to the market expectation of a 1.4-barrel fall.

ICCI confers Excellence Awards to women high achievers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Wednesday organized a Women's Excellence Awards ceremony to confer awards to high achievers from various fields of life in order to recognize their contribution to the economic development of the country.

Deputy Chairman Senate Mirza Muhammad Afridi, was the chief guest while Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Romina Khurshid Alam was the guest of honor, said a press release issued here.

On the occasion, Mirza Muhammad Afridi said that women have a key role in the economic development of the country and lauded the ICCI for conferring awards on high achiever women to motivate others.

He said that women of tribal areas needed skills development so that they could play a more effective role in national development.

President, ICCI, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, said that our women are second to none in terms of talent and ability.

He said that many women have excelled in various fields of life and we feel proud over them.

He said that Benazir Bhutto had become the first

Prime Minister of Pakistan in Muslim World, which was a source of pride for women. He said that Malala Yousafzai, Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy, Dr. Ayesha Jalal, Prof. Dr. Nargis and many other women have earned great laurels for Pakistan.

"The role Fatima Jinnah is a torchbearer for other women. He said that Hazrat Khadija and Hazrat Fatima

are role models for Muslim women and by following their footsteps, Pakistan can be made a model society in the world. He added.

Ahsan Zafar said that women should be provided more opportunities to excel in life and stressed that the government should make more conducive policies for women for their economic empowerment.

یوم عہد تجدید!

ہمارے اسلاف کی قربانیوں کی بدولت ہمیں آزادی نصیب ہوئی آج ایک پرست اور تاریخ ساز دن ہے، اور اس تاریخ ساز دن کے موقع پر یہ عہد کریں کہ ہم اپنے پیارے ملک پاکستان کی ترقی و سلامتی اور خوشحالی کے لئے متحد ہو کر اس ملک کے خلاف سازشوں کو ناکام بنا کر اپنا قومی فریضہ ادا کریں، برصغیر کی طبعی کی تمام سہولیات کی فراہمی کو یقینی بنایا گیا ہے، ڈسٹنٹی وائرس کے بچاؤ کیلئے ہرے ہم جاری ہے۔

منجانب

ڈاکٹر مجتبیٰ علی

ایم ایس ڈسٹرکٹ جینرل اور سرسپتال نوشہرہ

PSQCA team seizes sub-standards, illegal and non-license products

F.P. Report

KARACHI: As per directives of Director General, PSQCA, Conformity Assessment (South), PSQCA team cracked down against illegal and sub-standards and non-license products were seized and despatched at the spot. The crackdown launched by Conformity Assessment, PSQCA Karachi Zone against illegal production at Imtiaz Super Market, Near

Gulshan Chowangi, Karachi. Inspectors of the Authority collected samples of banaspati, cooking oil/edible oils and other mandatory products of different brands. The samples were tested on the spot and cooking oil/banaspati was found conforming against relevant PSS. During the surveillance activity PSQCA team found illegal non-license products i.e. Hyderabad Pickle Brands, Shampoo of Pure Amla

Brand, Fairness cream of Hus-e-Yousuf Brand, beauty cream of Sandal Brand, Detergent Powder of Imtiaz Brand, Skimmed Milk of Dairy King Brand, Iodized & Refined Iodized Salt of Falak Brand, Honey of Hiba Life Brand, Beauty Care cream of 5 ways, Shampoo of Medora Brand, Turmeric Powder of Naseem Brand, Beauty cream of Herbs & Roots Brand, Whitening cream of Cool & Cool Whitening Brand,

Shampoo of Neem & Mint Refresh Brand, Shampoo of Silkona Anti Dandruff Brand, Shampoo of Silkona Egg Protein Brand, Skin Cream of Forhan's Lemon Cream 7 Day Beauty Plan Brand, Skin cream of Forhan's Vanishing Cream for Skin Fairness Brand, Skin cream of Skin White 3 Day Glow Brand and Mayonnaise of Kinast Thonand Island Dressing Brand were removed from shelves and seized.

23 مارچ 2023

الہیان یونیر کو یوم پاکستان مبارک

ہم ساری خدمات تعلیم صحت اور وقت صاف و صحت مند ماحول تعمیر و ترقی اور خوشحالی اور دیرپا امن کے لئے کوشاں ہیں۔ درحقیقت عوام مستحکم پاکستان کے ضامن ہیں۔ اب اس سے اپنا مثبت کردار کرنے کی اپیل کرتے ہیں۔

ڈپٹی کمشنر نوشہرہ قومی ہری جملہ انتظامی افسران و علمین و ضلعی بونیر

23 مارچ 2023

الہیان یونیر کو یوم پاکستان مبارک

حکومت سرکاری سکولوں میں بہترین سہولیات کے ساتھ قابل اساتذہ کرام کی نگرانی میں اچھی تعلیم و تربیت دیتے ہیں۔ والدین اپنی بچیوں اور بچوں کو قومی سرکاری سکولوں میں داخل کرنا نہیں شکر یہ۔ ہم آپ کے اعتماد پر پورا اتریں گے۔ انشاء اللہ

منجانب: رخصانہ رحم ڈسٹرکٹ ایجوکیشن افسر جملہ انتظامی افسران و علمین و ضلعی بونیر

23 مارچ 2023

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منجانب: افتخار الحق ڈسٹرکٹ ایجوکیشن افسر جملہ انتظامی افسران و علمین و ضلعی بونیر

23 مارچ 2023

الہیان یونیر کو یوم پاکستان مبارک

ہم اپنے علاقے کے عوام کو بنیادی ضروریات صاف پانی صاف مٹی کو بچے صاف ماحول و سہول خدمات کے لئے کوشاں ہیں۔ عوام سے اپیل ہے کہ علاقے کی تعمیر و ترقی و خوشحالی میں عملدیکھنا تعاون کریں۔

منجانب: حاجی سارا خان باہر مردمان تحصیل بونیر ضلع بونیر خلیفہ الرحمن فی ایم ایم و جملہ انتظامی افسران و علمین و ضلعی بونیر

23 مارچ 2023

تجدید عہد

آج سے ملکر 23 مارچ کے اس عہد ساز دن کے موقع پر یہ عہد کریں کہ پاکستان کی بنیاد ساز ترقی و خوشحالی کے لیے اپنی تمام تر صلاحیتوں کو بروئے کار لائیں، ضلع نوشہرہ کے عوام ضلع بھر میں ماحولیات الودی پر قابو پانے اور شہری خوبصورتی کے لیے شجرکاری ہم میں حصہ لیں اور شجرکاری ہم کو کامیاب بنانے میں اپنا مذہبی و قومی فریضہ ادا کریں۔

منجانب: محمد کبیر ذفری ڈپٹی کمشنر ضلع نوشہرہ

23 مارچ 2023

تجدید عہد

تحصیل موہیل ایڈمنسٹریشن جہانگیرہ کی انتظامیہ تحصیل جہانگیرہ کے عوام سے اپیل کرتی ہے کہ وہ اپنے ذمے واجب الادا انکسیر بروقت ادا کریں تاکہ ان کی ایم اے نوشہرہ کے تمام علاقوں کے باسیوں کو تمام سہولیات فراہم کئے جاسکے شہری خوبصورتی کے عوام جاری شجرکاری ہم کو حصہ لیں اور شجرکاری ہم کو کامیاب بنانے میں اپنا قومی و مذہبی فریضہ ادا کریں تاکہ ایم اے کی خدمت میں کوشاں

منجانب: کامران رائق ملک تحصیل بونیر تحصیل جہانگیرہ / عادل حسین تحصیل موہیل ایڈمنسٹریشن ایم اے جہانگیرہ

23 مارچ 2023

تجدید عہد

تحصیل موہیل ایڈمنسٹریشن نوشہرہ کی انتظامیہ تحصیل نوشہرہ کے عوام سے اپیل کرتی ہے کہ وہ اپنے ذمے واجب الادا انکسیر بروقت ادا کریں تاکہ ان کی ایم اے نوشہرہ کے تمام علاقوں کے باسیوں کو تمام سہولیات فراہم کئے جاسکے شہری خوبصورتی کے عوام جاری شجرکاری ہم کو حصہ لیں اور شجرکاری ہم کو کامیاب بنانے میں اپنا قومی و مذہبی فریضہ ادا کریں تاکہ ایم اے کی خدمت میں کوشاں

منجانب: اسحاق خان ملک تحصیل بونیر تحصیل نوشہرہ / عادل حسین تحصیل موہیل ایڈمنسٹریشن ایم اے نوشہرہ

23 مارچ 2023

تجدید عہد

تحصیل موہیل ایڈمنسٹریشن سی کی انتظامیہ تحصیل سی کے عوام سے اپیل کرتی ہے کہ وہ اپنے ذمے واجب الادا انکسیر بروقت ادا کریں تاکہ ان کی ایم اے سی کے تمام علاقوں کے باسیوں کو تمام سہولیات فراہم کئے جاسکے شہری خوبصورتی کے عوام جاری شجرکاری ہم کو حصہ لیں اور شجرکاری ہم کو کامیاب بنانے میں اپنا قومی و مذہبی فریضہ ادا کریں تاکہ ایم اے سی کی خدمت میں کوشاں

منجانب: فیروز علی ملک تحصیل بونیر تحصیل سی / اعجاز حسین تحصیل موہیل ایڈمنسٹریشن ایم اے سی



In brief

FIH stand by Shahida's family

ISLAMABAD (APP): President of International Hockey Federation (FIH) Tayyab Ikram has been in contact with the family of Shahida Raza, a hockey player from Pakistan's women's team, who tragically died last month when the boat she was on sank off the coast of Italy, the FIH said in a media release on Wednesday. She had been trying to reach a European country to get medical treatment for her three-year-old son. The FIH President said: "It's our duty to support and protect our athletes' and their families' welfare. We are currently looking at how we can best help to support Shahida Raza's family, in particular for the provision of medical treatment to her son. In such tragic circumstances, we have to stand next to our athletes." Tayyab Ikram also held talks with Asian Hockey Federation (AHF) President Fumio Ogura in order to involve AHF as well. He thanked the numerous people from the global hockey community who had expressed their profound sadness about this tragedy.

'Carlos fuels prospect of Djokovic duel'

NEW YORK (BBC): If anybody outside the tennis world had forgotten about Carlos Alcaraz after an injury-hit few months, the Spanish teenager has quickly reminded them of his precocious talent. The 19-year-old US Open champion is back on court, back to his best and back as the world number one. But if Alcaraz does not defend his Miami title this fortnight, and the 1,000 ranking points which come with victory, he will be overtaken again at the top of the world rankings by Novak Djokovic - even though the 35-year-old Serb is not playing in Florida. Their duel for the ATP top spot - which is calculated by points accrued over the previous 52 weeks - is set to continue over the coming months. And the dominant manner in which Alcaraz swept to the prestigious Indian Wells title last week fuelled thoughts about a tantalising battle with Djokovic for the sport's biggest prizes in 2023. "Novak is one of the best players in the world. That's obvious. If you want to be the best, you have to beat the best," said Alcaraz. "I wish to play against him many more times." For now, Alcaraz - and the rest of us - must wait a little longer...

Frank says fight could still be saved

NEW YORK (BBC): Promoter Frank Warren is planning further talks with Oleksandr Usyk's camp to try to salvage the undisputed heavyweight fight against Tyson Fury. The bout was pencilled in for 29 April at Wembley Stadium and Usyk had agreed a 70/30 purse split in Fury's favour. But the terms for an immediate rematch have proved a sticking point, with Team Usyk set to walk away. Warren said he was hoping to rescue the fight during further talks with Usyk's promoter on Wednesday afternoon. Representatives for unified champion Usyk say they have done everything within their power to make the bout happen. "I've sent [Usyk's promoter Alexander Krasskyuk] a message and I've had one back. We're going to speak in a couple of hours' time," Fury's co-promoter Warren said. "I want the fight to happen. It's a very important fight for boxing, it's an important fight for Usyk whose dream is to unify the titles and it's an important fight for Tyson to go and do what he set out to do."

Williamson, Starc in the top three in ICC rankings

LONDON (Agenices) Kane Williamson's 215 in the second Test against Sri Lanka has pushed him up four spots to No. 2, behind Manus Labuschagne, in the ICC rankings for Test battlers. Josh Hazlewood, meanwhile, is now the top-ranked ODI bowler despite not having played competitively since January, following Mohammed Siraj's 0 for 37 from three overs in the second ODI against Australia. Siraj, who picked up three wickets in the first ODI of the series, has moved down to third place, with Trent Boult, who last played an ODI in September 2022, at No. 2. Williamson's rise is on the back of a dramatic last-ball win over Sri Lanka in the first Test, where he finished with 121 not out. New Zealand put up 580 for 4 declared in the second

Test, which they won by an innings and 58 runs. A former world No. 1, Williamson moved up four slots as a result of that innings in Wellington. His partner for the best part of that innings was Henry Nicholls, who scored 200 not out himself and gained in the rankings, too, moving up 20 spots to No. 27. New Zealand captain Tim Southee, who picked up four wickets at the Basin Reserve, moved up one place to No. 11 among Test bowlers while his counterpart Dimuth Karunaratne, who made 89 and 51, went past Tom Blundell and Rohit Sharma to No. 10 among Test battlers. A number of bowlers moved up following matches in series between Bangladesh and Ireland, South Africa and West

Indies and Zimbabwe and Netherlands, apart from India and Australia. Siraj slipped to third place, where he is now joint with Mitchell Starc, who has returns of 3 for 49 and 5 for 53 from the two ODIs. Alzarri Joseph has gone up eight places to 11th, Mohammed Shami is up five places to No. 28, and Fred Klaassen is up 22 places to 52nd. Among batters, Shai Hope and Mushfiquur Rahim progressed after scoring centuries in the past week. Hope scored 128 not out in West Indies' win over South Africa in East London and moved up two places to No. 12, while Mushfiquur, who hit the quickest ODI century by a Bangladeshi batter in the rain-ruined second ODI in Sylhet, has gone up four places to No. 18.

3000 players participate in Balochistan Games

QUETTA (PPI): Chief Secretary Balochistan, Abdul Aziz Uqaili, has said that the arrangement of 34th national games in Balochistan would indeed be a good achievement for the government of Balochistan. These views were expressed by him while addressing the closing ceremony of "First Balochistan Games, 2023" at Ayub Stadium, Quetta here on Tuesday. Felicitating Minister Sports and Youth Affairs Balochistan, Abdul Khaliq Hazara, Secretary, Sports and Youth Affairs, Government of Balochistan, Muhammad Ishaque Jamali and other concerned authorities for arranging "First Balochistan Games, 2023" in a befitting manner, he said that providing sporting events to the players of the province would polish the inner talent of players. He

said that the arrangement of 34th National Games, 2023, to be held in Quetta during the month of May, 2023, would indeed be a big achievement for the government of Balochistan. It is pertinent to mention that about 3000 players of different discipline of sports, including football, men cricket, tennis, badminton, female Futsal, Judo, Japan Karate, Taekwando, Mix Martial Arts, Archery, Darts, male-female volleyball, loos ball, female netball, Bashit Ball, squash, swimming, gymnastic, Handball, long tennis, Kick boxing, Muaythai, fencing, weightlifting, Sholian Shan (male, female), Jitsa, participated in the second and last phase of first Balochistan games, 2023. On the occasion, Minister for Sport, Culture and Youth Affairs, Abdul

Khaliq Hazara, Secretary, Sports and Youth Affairs Department, Muhammad Ishaque Jamali, Assistant Director Sports (Activities), Muhammad Asif Langove, Assistant Director Youth Affairs, Muhammad Mustafa Khan Achakzai, Organizer, First Balochistan Games, 2023, Mansoor Khan Durrani, President, Balochistan MMA Mix Martial Arts Association, Rehmatullah Khan Nurzai, President, Balochistan Table Tennis Association, Lala Ayub Khan Khilji, President, Balochistan Darts Association, Haji Muhammad Ibrahim Khan Nurzai, General Secretary, Balochistan Archery Association, Abdul Rehman Nurzai, Prince Bari Khan, President, Balochistan Free Fighting Association and large number of spectators were also present.

Pakistan Day Sports Festival continues in full swing

PESHAWAR (APP): Pakistan Day Sports Festival organized by District Administration Charsadda and Frontier Corps continued in full swing at four different venues with scores of talented youth taking part in football, volleyball, badminton and cricket. The Cricket and Volleyball events continued in Parang, Sports Complex Charsadda Tehsil wherein hundreds of spectators turned up. A total of 16 teams are taking part in Cricket while another 16 teams are taking part in Volleyball. Major Faiz-ur-Rehman visited the venues with

Captain Naveed and Officials of the District Administration and District Sports Officer. Talking to APP, Major Faiz-ur-Rehman said that they want to involve the maximum number of youth in healthy sports activities. He said the Badminton and Football events continued in Abdul Wali Khan Sports Complex wherein a total of 32 teams turned up for Badminton and 16 teams are taking part in Football events. The youth are very jubilant and great enthusiasm witnessed during the ongoing events, Major Faiz ur Rehman said. He said more

than 500 youth are part of the event which clearly indicated the success of the Pakistan Day Sports Festival continuing in all three Tehsils of District Charsadda including Tehsil Tangi, Shabqadar and Charsadda. The aim and objective of the festival is to celebrate Pakistan Day in a grand manner. Major Faiz-ur-Rehman said that the purpose of the Pakistan Day Sports Festival is to provide awareness to the youth regarding the importance of 23rd March 1940 where a Resolution was passed unanimously about the creation of Pakistan.

Ineos owner Sir Jim Ratcliffe and Qatar's Sheikh Jassim to submit improved bids

LONDON (BBC): Ineos owner Sir Jim Ratcliffe and Qatari banker Sheikh Jassim will submit improved bids to buy Manchester United before Wednesday's 21:00 GMT deadline. The two parties, the only publicly-declared bidders, met with United officials this month. Both are understood to have held positive meetings while visiting Old Trafford and United's training ground. Ineos want to buy the combined Glazer shareholding of around 69%, but the Qataris are targeting 100% of the club. BBC Sport has learned that United officials met eight different potential investors over a 10-day period of high-level meetings recently, including Ratcliffe and representatives of Sheikh Jassim. The amount of their initial bids have not been disclosed (with reports both are in the region of £4.5bn), but they are clearly far below the £5-6bn valuation that the club's American owners - the Glazers - have estab-



lished. Whether they - or any other prospective bidders - are able to submit an offer that persuades the Glazers to sell is the next key question. If not, and with United's fortunes improving significantly in recent months under manager Erik ten Hag, the Americans may well yet decide to retain the club and perhaps instead look to sell a minority stake to the likes of US hedge fund Elliott Investment Management. The Glazer family said in November they were considering selling United. Announcing its initial bid Sheikh Jassim's Qatari consortium said the offer "plans to return the club to

its former glories". Described as a life-long Manchester United fan, Sheikh Jassim is chairman of Qatari bank QIB and the son of a former prime minister of Qatar. The Ineos group, owned by 70-year-old British billionaire Ratcliffe, has a history of investment in sport and owns French Ligue 1 club Nice and Swiss club Lausanne. Its sporting portfolio also includes high-profile sailing team Ineos Britannia - led by Sir Ben Ainslie - a five-year partnership with Formula 1 team Mercedes, and took over the British-based Team Sky in cycling in 2019.

Zampa and Co stifle India to take series 2-1

CHENNAI (Agencies): Australia snatched the No. 1 ODI ranking and snapped India's four-year unbeaten series streak at home with a thrilling win in the defence of 269 in Chennai. Australia went all in from the moment they won the toss and gambled against the dew by choosing to bat on a dry and soft surface. They attacked the new ball in the powerplay, but kept attacking, which resulted in quite a few starts but no fifty. The bowlers then hung in despite a quick start from India, their two spinners Adam Zampa and Ashton Agar took six wickets between them to drag India back from 65 for 0 and 146 for 2. The defence was all the more remarkable because Cameron Green's illness left Australia with Marcus Stoinis as the fifth bowler. Stoinis was a revelation, though, bowling 9.1 overs for just 43 runs and a wicket.

Both the innings progressed similarly: a quick start to maximise the powerplay and the new ball followed by the pitch playing tricks, and some aggressive options taken by batters resulting in soft-looking dismissals. The most uncharacteristic perhaps was Virat Kohli holing out to long-off in Ashton Agar's last over after scoring the only half-



century of the match, with Hardik Pandya scoring quickly at the other end, and the requirement under a run a ball. Kohli's dismissal, followed by a third straight golden duck for Suryakumar Yadav, left India needing 85 off 88 with four wickets in hand. It seemed Pandya, who had earlier dragged Australia back from a rapid start with figures of 8-0-44-3, would see India through, but he,

too, chose the big shot over taking the game deep. His slog off Zampa with 52 required off 39 brought in the tail. Needing to do all the scoring himself, even Ravindra Jadeja slogged at a Zampa wrong'un, leaving the tail an improbable 45 to get off 29. These risks were uncharacteristic largely of India, in that they came from both ends and at times when India had got the asking rate under control.

Advisor to CM Punjab on Sports Wahab assumes charge of his office



LAHORE (APP): Veteran Test fast bowler Wahab Riaz has assumed the charge of Advisor to Chief Minister Punjab on Sports and Youth Affairs here at the National Hockey Stadium on Wednesday.

After taking charge, Wahab held a meeting with Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Shahid Zaman and Director General Sports Board Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi, who briefed him in detail about the ongoing sports development projects in the province.

Director Youth Affairs Punjab Syed Umair Hassan, Assistant Director Zahoore Ahmed and other officials were also present.

The Advisor to CM Punjab said that every possible measure would be taken for the growth of sports culture in the province. "We will take all essential steps for promotion of healthy activities among the younger generation".

Wahab Riaz said that development of sports culture was top priority of the Punjab government. "We will take all stakeholders on board for growth of games in the province. Our youth should take part in healthy sports activities to the maximum," he added.

Pakistan batting coach Mohammad Yousuf opts out of Afghanistan T20I series

LAHORE (Agencies): Mohammad Yousuf, who had been appointed the interim batting coach of the Pakistan men's team, has withdrawn from the upcoming T20I series against Afghanistan in Sharjah citing personal reasons. As a result, Abdur Rehman, the interim head coach, has taken over the batting coach's responsibilities too. Yousuf had been announced as the interim head coach on March 13, but that changed within a day when Najam Sethi, the PCB chairperson, tweeted a list of support staff that were different from the earlier lot. The PCB clarified that the announcement about Yousuf was erroneous and that he would continue as the batting coach. But hours before the team's departure for the UAE on Wednesday afternoon - the series starts on Friday - Yousuf pulled out. Pakistan haven't had a formal head coach since Saqlain Mushtaq's contract ended. The PCB made

interim arrangements by picking coaches from the domestic set-up, and elevated Rehman to the main role. Umar Gul came in as bowling coach, while Yousuf and Abdul Majeed continued as the batting and fielding coaches, respectively. Pakistan name touring party before finalising coaching staff. As for the squad for the series, it was named on March 13, a day before the staff was announced. The squad was named by the Haroon Rasheed-led selections committee and had wholesale changes: Imad Wasim and Faheem Ashraf have been recalled, while Shadab Khan has been named captain, and big PSL 2023 performers Saim Ayub and Ihsanullah have received call-ups for the first time. The core of the squad, meanwhile, has been rested - Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan, Haris Rauf, Fakhar Zaman and Shaheen Afridi don't figure in the list. "I understand the coach-

ing staff was named after the squad because it's a temporary job," Rehman said on Tuesday. "Had there been a permanent staff, this question should have been more relevant, but since I have been given an interim job, my role is just to try and win the series." Rehman was also asked about heading a team with many senior coaches, and he said, "I am doing this job for the last 15 years. It's not like I will be dictating terms to them. In fact, having them with me gives me confidence. It's a privilege to work with them; we have to work together and I have to take advantage of their experience. "Umar Gul is a big name in T20 cricket, Mohammad Yousuf is a big name, who has done big service for the country, and it's a blessing that you have such people with you in the dressing room. It's a team job and we will be working together. Every decision regarding the team will be taken after discussion within the team."

Bangladesh call up uncapped duo for Ireland T20s

DHAKA (AFP/APP): Uncapped Bangladeshi cricketers Rishad Hossain and Jaker Ali Anik were named to the Bangladesh squad Wednesday for next week's three-match Twenty20 international series against Ireland. Leg-spinner Rishad, 20, has shown promise in domestic matches, while 25-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman Anik was a crucial member of the Comilla Victorians' title-winning team this year. Batsman Afif Hossain,

left-arm spinner Tanvir Islam and wicketkeeper-batsman Nurul Hasan, all part of the squad that thrashed world champions England earlier this month, have been excluded. All three T20 matches against Ireland will be played in the port city of Chittagong on March 27, 29 and 31. Bangladesh are currently playing a three-match one-day international series against Ireland. They won the first by 183 runs and notched a

record 349 runs in the second before rain saw the match called off. The third and final ODI will be held in Sylhet on Thursday, and the series will end with a Dhaka Test from April 4-8. T20 squad: Shakib Al Hasan (capt), Liton Das, Rony Talukdar, Najmul Hossain, Towhid Hridoy, Shamim Hossain, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Nasum Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Hasan Mahmud, Taskin Ahmed, Shoriful Islam, Rishad Hossain, Jaker Ali Anik.

MotoGP champion Bagnaia ready to start fast as healthy Marquez frets

PARIS (AFP/APP): Even before the MotoGP season opens in Portugal on Sunday, defending world champion Francesco Bagnaia appears to hold pole position. Six-time champion Marc Marquez might be back to full fitness, as his Honda team insist, but pre-season testing suggested Bagnaia is again the fastest rider on the fastest bike and is poised to continue the domination he established late last season. Bagnaia was fastest in the last pre-season tests in Portimao in March on the track where the season starts. "I'm very happy," Bagnaia said after smashing the track record. "We are ready at 100 percent for first race." The Italian failed to finish five races last season and at the halfway point, after crashing on lap three in Germany, trailed the 2021 champion Fabio Quartararo by 91 points. Bagnaia accelerated through the field on his Ducati, winning the next four races. He crashed again in Japan, but also collected another win and three podium finishes in the last six races. Quartararo's Yamaha could not keep up. Former team-mate Jack Miller, now at KTM, was impressed by the impact of the first title on

Bagnaia. "This year he seems more of a changed man, a confident man, and he's riding pretty impressive," said the Australian. In the final testing, only Quartararo, who found some pace on the last day and was third quickest, broke Ducati's domination of the top eight. Bagnaia acknowledged teams did not show all their cards in testing but said: "It looks like we have more advantage than last year." Ducati's edge suggests Bagnaia's main rival may come from across his own garage. Fellow Italian Enea Bastianini, who finished third last season for Ducati's satellite team Gresini, has moved up to the factory team. The pair traded barbs last season, but this winter gave a jokey joint interview to the MotoGP website. "Like he said last year, he's a bastard!" Bagnaia said. "Because he pushes like a bastard. "The battle between us will be intense, but we have to be intelligent and respectful to have a good relationship." Bastianini said he would not back down. "The big difference is Pecco is MotoGP world champion and me, no!," he said.

"He's the fastest rider in the world. It is a pleasure to battle, to fight with him this year, and to try to win." The dynamic will also be interesting at Honda. Marquez, who has suffered three seasons ruined by injury and surgery, is "now back to full fitness", according to Honda. As he tries to recapture the form that brought him six titles, Honda have signed another former world champion, fellow Spaniard Joan Mir. Mir edged Marquez on the final day of testing, but the two Hondas were only 13th and 14th. "Unfortunately, some of the things that Honda expected would work on track was not working like we expected," Marquez said. "If tomorrow was the race with the conditions we had on track we can fight for fifth to 10th, I believe." Marquez was also unhappy with continued innovations. In Portimao, Aprilia unveiled bikes with wings on the front fork among a series of aerodynamic additions. Yamaha then introduced a wing sticking up from the bike's tail, looking as if it had been borrowed from a Formula One car.



In brief

World Water Day observed

ISLAMABAD (PPI): World Water Day was observed across the globe on Wednesday. The day is aimed at accelerating change to solve the water and sanitation crisis across the world. To enforce its Water Action Agenda, the United Nations is organizing a three-day Water Conference with collaboration of Tajikistan and the Netherlands in New York. More than sixty five hundred delegations including a hundred ministers and a dozen heads of state and government representatives are participating in the Water Conference. The conference is designed to deliver rapid progress on internationally-agreed water and sanitation targets, which are parts of the UN Sustainable Development Goal 6.

IRSA releases 72,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 72,900 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 64,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1423.94 feet and was 25.94 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 21,500 cusecs while outflow was 28,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1094.90 feet, which was 44.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded at 21,100 cusecs and 23,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded at 38,900, 34,200, 26,500 and 6,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 11,800 cusecs of water were released at Nowshera and 3,000 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

Police foil drug smuggling attempt

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Highways and Motorway Police have foiled an attempt to smuggle a huge quantity of drugs on Motorway M1. The smugglers were attempting to transport drugs including 8 kg of opium and 49 kg of hashish from Peshawar, said a press release issued on Wednesday. The incident occurred near Kernal Sher Khan Interchange, where the Motorway Police signaled a suspicious vehicle to stop. However, the accused tried to evade the police and attempted to escape from the spot. The police immediately chased the vehicle, but the driver abandoned the car on the edge of the road and fled from the scene. The police conducted a thorough search of the car and recovered the drugs. The beat commander and his team were present at the scene to investigate the matter. After completing the preliminary investigation, the police handed over the seized drugs to the Misri Banda District Nowshera.

Police hand over cheques

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad police on Wednesday handed over cheques amounting Rs. 12.8 million to the families of those personnel who died during the service. Following the directions of Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah Khan, IGP Islamabad Akbar Nasir Khan distributed cheques under Prime Minister Relief Initiative. The IGP said that Islamabad Capital Police will always remember its martyrs and the families of officers who died during their service.

Message of PM Shehbaz Sharif on Pakistan Day

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The 23rd of March is an epoch-making day in our national history that reminds us of our past, invites us to ponder over our present state of affairs and inspires us to build a prosperous future.

This day is also the day to renew our pledge. It takes us back to 1940 when Muslims of the sub-continent approved a resolution for the establishment of a separate homeland they could call their own under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal's dream of freedom manifested itself in the form of a resolution representing Muslims' demands, and aspirations for a separate homeland. The consequential seven years witnessed history in the mak-

ing as the Quaid-i-Azam led a relentless struggle to translate the dream of Iqbal into reality. The establishment of Pakistan is certainly a miracle of the 20th century. The last seventy five years of our journey have seen us fight many crises from wars to natural disasters. There have been many occasions when we overcame the odds and achieved many milestones. As a member of the international community, Pakistan has played the role of a responsible nation in the resolution of problems facing humanity and the establishment of global peace.

As we celebrate Pakistan Day today and pay tribute to the sacrifices of our founding-fathers, we should not lose sight of the challenges staring us in the face. The challenges are topped by a combination of economic instability and

the inability to settle the rules of the game. An environment of political chaos explains why we have failed to develop our economy on a sustainable basis.

Pakistan came into being as a result of political and constitutional struggle and its future lies in adhering to the constitution in its letter and spirit.

I have no doubt that Pakistan is destined to achieve great heights. However, for this to become a reality, we have to forge unity in our ranks, equip ourselves with national purpose and vow to wage a struggle in line with the legacy of our forefathers. Let us use this day to introspect and hold ourselves to account. Only those nations that are capable of analysing their past, learning from their mistakes and making amends can achieve true glory.

Zardari's message on Pakistan Day

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Pakistan and President Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians on his message on Pakistan Day falling on 23 March has vowed to steer the country out of troubles.

President Zardari in his message said that Pakistan is passing through very tough times at the moment but we must not give up. We will take the country out of this situation with firm resolve. The country which is based on the philosophy and ideology of the founder of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah is suffering because we deviated repeatedly from that philosophy and ideology. Quaid-e-Azam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto gave us a unanimous constitution of 1973 and that constitution is still the bonding force of the four units of the federation.

Message of Presidnet Arif Alvi on Pakistan Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has expressed confidence that Pakistan has the ability to overcome the challenges it faced today and said that working with unity, faith, and discipline would make the country strong and prosperous. In his message to the nation on Pakistan Day, he mentioned that the country established state institutions, made its defence impregnable, achieved nuclear deterrence, curbed terrorism, overcame the COVID-19 pandemic, and displayed the spirit of sacrifice and cooperation in the face of natural calamities.

However, he said, "We still have a long way to go to ensure the rule of law, strengthen democracy, reduce inequalities in our society, empower women, provide the rights of persons with disabilities,

eradicate terrorism and extremism, ensure the political and economic stability of the country, and protect the human rights of our citizens." He felicitated the entire Pakistani nation on the occasion of Pakistan Day and said it was on this day in 1940 that Muslims of the sub-continent passed the Pakistan Resolution and made the demand for a separate homeland where they could freely lead their lives in accordance with Islamic ideals. "Today, we pay tribute to the founding fathers of our nation whose struggles and sacrifices led to the creation of Pakistan," he said.

The president said the persecution of minorities, especially the Muslims in India, the rising wave of Hindutva and violence against Muslims, violation of human rights, and brutal-

ities being committed by the Indian security forces in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) proved that the Muslim leadership of that time made a prudent decision. He said the also serves as a reminder to take stock of our successes and failures as a nation.

He recalled that at the time of independence, the country faced many challenges such as the settlement and rehabilitation of refugees, constitutional and administrative problems of the nascent state, security threats, laying solid social, economic, and industrial foundations, and the conflict in Jammu and Kashmir.

Despite these challenges, he said, the country made tremendous achievements in every field through continuous hard work and ability.



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and Chairman Ulama Council Pakistan Maulana Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi addressing a press conference at his office.

Pakistan needs to take sustainable water management measures for secure future: Sherry Rehman

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman said on Wednesday said in order to secure the future of the country it was necessary to take sustainable water management measures.

In her message on World Water Day on Twitter, the federal minister said World Water Day was being cele-

brated all over the world including Pakistan. Senator Rehman said, "Water is the basic right of every citizen, survival of life depends on water. Being an agrarian country, we are highly dependent on water resources."

However, she said due to the effects of climate change, Pakistan was facing a severe water crisis.

"Pakistan is one of the most water-scarce countries in the world. According to the United Nations, if timely measures are not taken, Pakistan will suffer from drought by 2025. On the other hand, Pakistan is among the countries with the highest per capita water consumption," Sherry Rehman added.

Kundi urges all political parties to sit-together for electoral reforms

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Faisal Karim Kundi Wednesday said that all political parties should sit together to remove the loopholes in electoral reforms and ensure transparency in the elections system.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leadership will have to sit for dialogue to take Pakistan forward.

He said that the People's Party is ready

for the elections in the country, but the decisions in this regard will not be based on the dictation of a single person but according to the constitution.

Replying to a question, he said that he wanted PTI to be a part of the electoral reform process and to restore the credibility of the electoral process.

Kundi said that political consultation is necessary to introduce EVMs that would yield fair results instead of unacceptable election results.

Pakistan post to hold online open court on March 27

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Post would conduct an online Khuli Katchery (open court) in all postal circles on March 27 to listen and address the complaints of its customers. According to official sources, the initiative would be taken on the special directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Ministry of Communications and Postal Services for addressing the complaints of the users and improving the services of the department.

During the online interaction, scheduled to be held from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., the Director General of Pakistan Post would listen to the complaints of the postal clients through online zoom meetings.

The Director General will issue orders to authorities concerned for resolving the grievances and providing all possible facilities to them. People can join through the meeting ID: 786 148 1947 Passcode: 111 111 117 and Zoom meeting link: <https://bit.ly/PakPostZoomMeeting>. The open court duration would be two hours.

Minister chairs meeting, reviews development projects

RAWALPINDI (APP): Provincial Minister for Local Government, Ibrahim Hasan Murad here on Wednesday presided over a high-level meeting and reviewed development projects. Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chhatta, Director Local Government, Ayesha Ghazanfar, Deputy Commissioner, Rawalpindi Dr Hassan Waqar Cheema,

Managing Director, Waste Management Company, Chief Officer, Municipal Corporation Amdad Chaudhry and others officers concerned attended the meeting.

The minister said that teamwork and good intentions could improve governance, adding, the government wanted to take measures in a short time that

would have a long-lasting effect. "Our vision is to benefit the public by improving service delivery," he said adding, 80 percent problems of the people could be resolved by just improving governance.

The Minister said that there were 73 schemes of local government and community development in Rawalpindi with a progress of 80 per cent.

Pakistan Day calls for upholding rich cultural heritage as unifying force

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Day is celebrated each year on March 23, marking the anniversary of the Lahore Resolution of 1940 when the All-India Muslim League demanded a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent.

As Pakistan celebrates its 77th Pakistan Day this year, the focus of analysts is on upholding the rich cultural heritage dating back thousands of years as a unifying force for national development. The Day is an occasion that makes us reflect upon the challenges being faced by the country.

Experts believe that reconnecting with cultural roots can provide valuable insights into addressing modern-day challenges. Cultural heritage can bring about a sense of pride, belonging, and identity among Pakistanis, which can be crucial for building a cohesive and resilient society.

Talking to APP, Creative Founder of Lok Virsa and Folklorist Uxi Mufti highlighted the significance of Pakistan's cultural heritage in the country's identity and development. He said that the demand for Pakistan was made on the ideology of Islam. "This future pathway includes preserving languages, traditions, habitats, poems, and songs, all of which contribute to the diverse tapestry of Pakistani culture," Mufti stated.

He, however, said that Pakistan's cultural heritage has not been adequately preserved, as over the years, the 70 regional languages of Pakistan have been shrinking to 50. He cited the local tale of Sindh, 'Dodo Chanesar', as an example of a cultural artefact that was not documented and he made efforts to document such tales to preserve Pakistan's diverse cultural heritage for future generations.

Pakistan's linguistic diversity is a testament to the country's cultural richness, with each language representing a unique history, tradition, and way of life. Pakistan's linguistic heritage is a source of pride and identity for the country, representing a rich and diverse cultural heritage. The government has put its efforts to address the issue of preserving the languages, with organizations working to document and promote the use of regional languages. For instance, the

Punjab Institute of Language, Art, and Culture (PILAC) has established language centers throughout the province to promote the use and preservation of Punjabi, whereas the Sindhi Language Authority is working to develop resources and education programs to promote the use of Sindhi.

Meanwhile, folklore is an important part of the cultural heritage of any society which consists of the traditional stories, beliefs, customs, and practices that have been passed down from generation to generation through oral and written traditions.

Through folklore, people can learn about the traditions and customs of their ancestors and understand how these traditions have shaped their present.

Folklore also helps to create a shared cultural identity among members of a community, providing a sense of belonging and unity. Today, the rich folklore and cultural traditions of Pakistan continue to play an important role in shaping the country's identity and inspiring its people.

Cultural expert and writer Dr Adel Saeed Khan while talking to APP said that Pakistan's true cultural richness lies in the diverse array of regional folklore, languages and traditions that make up the fabric of the country.

"All of these regional cultures come together to form a beautiful bouquet that represents the unique identity of the Pakistani nation", adding that all of Pakistan's cultures and traditions may appear to belong to the country as a whole when viewed from the outside - they are actually distinct regional cultures and languages when examined more closely. This diversity is something to be celebrated and not feared, as it represents the rich tapestry of Pakistan's cultural heritage. The significance of Pakistan Day lies in its reminder of the struggles and sacrifices made by the people of Pakistan in their quest for independence. It is a time for the people to come together to celebrate their shared history and identity as Pakistanis and renew their commitment to building a better future for themselves and future generations.



ISLAMABAD: Fedral Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin-ul-Haque planting a tree sapling during CDA tree plantation drive 2023 at F-9 Fatima Jinnah Park in Federal Capital.

Baradar visits Kamal Dam

NIMROZ (Agencies): Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, visited Kamal Khan Dam in southern Nimroz province and emphasized the need to increase water storage capacity and cleaning up of the surrounding canals. Baradar discussed solutions to the water issues faced by the people of Nimroz province, including the timely water supply to agricultural lands, his office said in a statement.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Thursday, March 23, 2023

Children to get treatment

KABUL (Agencies): The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) in cooperation with Germany's Peace Village plans to take 80 Afghan children to Germany for medical treatment on Thursday. These children are suffering from bone diseases and severe burns, according to ARCS. Eighty children will be sent to Germany, fifty-five of them for bone disease treatment and the remaining 25 have severe burns, said Irfanullah Sharafzoi, a spokesperson for ARCS.

At least 3 killed, 44 injured in earthquake

KABUL (Khaama Press): According to the Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan, at least three people died, and 44 others were injured after 6.5 magnitudes jolted Afghanistan on Tuesday night.

Around three people were reported to be killed, and more than 44 others were injured "there could be more casualties as the quake was so powerful in most parts of the country," including Badakhshan, Takhar, and Laghman provinces, Sharafat Zaman, a spokesperson for the public health ministry said to Khaama Press.

Moreover, Shafiullah

Rahimi, a spokesperson for the disaster mitigation ministry, said that two people were killed in Laghman province due to the earthquake.

It also reported that most people were killed and injured when the roofs of their respective homes collapsed in various parts of the country.

According to Zabihullah Mujahid, a spokesman for the Taliban-led government in Afghanistan, the Ministry of Public Health had ordered all medical facilities to be prepared.

According to the US Geological Survey, the 6.5-magnitude earthquake's

epicenter was 40 kilometers to the south-southeast of Jurm district in Badakhshan province in Afghanistan's Hindu Kush mountain range, which borders Tajikistan.

Due to the proximity of the Chaman fault, the region is vulnerable to devastating earthquakes. Several have occurred in Afghanistan and Pakistan, causing property damage and fatalities.

According to the current government in Kabul, a powerful earthquake that struck Paktika, Khost, in southeast Afghanistan on June 22, 2022, resulted in more than 1,052 fatalities and thousands of injuries.

Foreign tourists visit historical sites of Ghor

GHOR (Agencies): Several foreign tourists traveled to western Afghanistan to visit the historical sites of Ghor province.

Tourists from China and Canada want to visit the ancient sites, historical monuments, and attractions of this province, including Manarjam, during their stay in Ghor.

The provincial head of information and culture of Ghor, Mawlawi Abdul Hai Zaim, said that tourists can visit historical sites in this province without any security concerns.

"Key facilities provided in the tourism sector in Ghor and all tourists your for sightseeing in this province," he said.

After the Islamic Emirate sovereignty in the country, the number of tourists visiting Ghor has increased unprecedentedly, he added.

UN renews calls for IEA to reopen girls schools

KABUL (Agencies): The United Nations has renewed its call for Afghanistan's Taliban to immediately reopen schools to teenage girls, saying the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has no justification for denying the right to education on any grounds, including religion or tradition.

"The ongoing unlawful denial of girls and young women's right to education in Afghanistan marks a global nadir in education, impacting an entire gender, a generation, and the future of the country," a UN panel of experts said this week.

There is no indication the Taliban intend to lift the ban on female education as secondary schools across the South Asian nation reopen later this week after winter break, the statement read.

"Instead, it appears that for the second successive school year, teenage girls will be banned from resuming their studies," the UN panel said, adding that Afghanistan is the only country in the world where girls and young women are barred from receiving an education.

Separately, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, while launching the 2022 Human Rights Report on Monday, renewed Washington's denunciation of curbs on Afghan women's access to education and work, VOA reported.

Blinken said the IEA leadership "relentlessly discriminates and represses" Afghan women. He noted the authorities have so far issued 80 decrees that restrict women's freedom of movement and the right to education and work.

"I'll say very simply that we deplore the edicts," Blinken told reporters.

He said the order banning Afghan female employees of nongovernmental organizations from workplaces "imperils" millions of Afghans who depend on humanitarian assistance for survival.

Security forces destroyed ISIS hideout in Kabul

KABUL (Khaama Press): The security forces of the Afghan interim government destroyed an important ISIS hideout in the capital city of Kabul Tuesday night, according to Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban senior spokesperson.

According to Mujahid, three important Islamic State (ISIS) members were killed late on Tuesday night after Taliban security forces attacked an important hideout during a special operation in Kabul's provincial district 12.

He also said that several weapons, grenades, explosives, many remotes, and much mine-making equipment were seized during the operation.

The statement added that ISIS used the hideout to plan and carry out an attack on holy places and civilians of Kabul in the month of Ramadan, which was discovered and destroyed in advance, Mujahid said.

The ISIS militants have claimed responsibility for many terror attacks in Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, and



other parts of the country.

In a recent attack, the group claimed two separate attacks in Balkh province; the first one occurred in the governor's office, killed the governor of the province, and the second occurred in an Afghan journalist's gathering in Tebyan cultural centers killing many jour-

lists and injuring several others.

The Islamic State Khorasan terrorists have also carried out several terror strikes that have left dozens of people dead or injured, including at the Russian Embassy and a Chinese-run hotel.

Daesh is considered to be the main enemy of the

Taliban administration, targeting their forces, Afghan citizens, and foreign nationals.

The rise and momentum of the Islamic State-Khorasan militant group in Afghanistan are said to be the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021, creating security challenges for the Taliban government.

57 ancient coins handed over to national museum

KABUL (TOLONews): Local officials in Baghlan province handed over 57 ancient coins to the National Museum of Afghanistan. Asadullah Mustafa Hashemi, the director of Baghlan's department of information and culture, said the residents from the Jelga Aram area found these relics while constructing a road.

"They have a history dating back more than two thousand years, and this investigation is not final, there will be more investigations. They have been handed over to the Department of Information and Culture," Hashemi noted.

The acting director of the National Museum, Mohammad Zubair Ebadi, said that he is committed to the protection of historical monuments and that 50 cases of smuggling have been prevented in the last month.

"The National Museum

has been able to stop a significant number of relics from being smuggled through the customs and airport," Ebadi said.

However, some visitors to the national museum urged the Islamic Emirate to prevent the smuggling of historical items.

"We have numerous relics in the provinces of our nation, they should bring them to the show and set up the display so that everyone can visit and see,"

said Mohammad Omar, a resident of Kabul.

"The smuggling of the relics from our country should be stopped so that they are not sold under the name of other countries," said Salahuddin Zafarkhil, a resident of Kabul.

Over 100,000 ancient relics from the National Museum were stolen and smuggled during the decades of war in the country, and only 20% of them have been returned.

Defense Minister meets Uzbekistan Special Envoy

KABUL (Agencies): The Acting National Defense Minister, Mawlawi Muhammad Yaqoob Mujahid on Wednesday met with the Special Envoy of Uzbekistan for Afghanistan, Abdul Aziz Kamlov and his accompanying delegation on Wednesday.

The two sides discussed the border, security and several other mutual interested issues between the two countries, according to statement.

The country's national Defense Minister, stressed on the bilateral cooperation between the two countries, according to the Ministry of Defense's



statement.

For his part, Kamlov,

vowed to further develop relations with Afghanistan

in security, economic and political sectors.

Qatar organization signs deal

QATAR (Agencies): Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) on Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's ministry of education to support an education project in the country for

30,000 students.

The MoU was signed during a meeting between the Director-General of Qatar Fund for Development Khalifa bin Jassim Al Kuwari and the IEA's Minister of Education Habibullah Agha Haqqani.

Qatar's The Peninsula reported that the project aims to enroll 30,000 students, of whom 50 percent are girls, to complete their primary education in several Afghan provinces.

The joint project, which extends for three years, will

enable most of the children who are not enrolled in schools and those in need, including girls and students with disabilities.

The work and coordination will be done with community education schools to build and renovate classrooms and improve sanitation facilities, The Peninsula reported.

It will also provide training for community teachers and adding more teachers, and engaging key stakeholders to enroll students.

Khalifa bin Jassim Al

Kuwari said: "We believe that education is one of the most important pillars for the prosperity of least developed countries.

"Unfortunately, there are 3.7 million out of school children in Afghanistan today, 60 percent of whom are girls."

He added: "Through this agreement, we will target 30,000 male and female students, 50 percent of whom will be girls, and this is part of our vision to support fair access to education for all."

Uzbek Enovy stressed strengthen ties with Kabul

KABUL (Agencies): A top delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, during the meeting.

He termed Afghanistan as a bridge between South and Central Asian countries, Mr. Baradar said that "Our country could play an important role in trade and transit between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan."

He added saying that our countries could become two effective economic partners in the region, by taking available opportunities.

For his part, Kamlov

said its country has supported Afghanistan in international forums and meetings and has strived to protect Afghanistan's interests in any condition.

Mr. Kamlov said that Uzbekistan is ready to cooperate with the Islamic Emirate to get the maximum advantage from the Qosh tepa canal.

For his part, Deputy PM Baradar assured the Uzbek side that Qosh tepa Canal will strengthen bilateral relations between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan and bring these two neighboring countries closer.

Hidayat appointed as Governor Central Bank



KABUL (Khaama Press): The former acting finance minister, Mullah Hidayatullah Badri, has been appointed as the governor of the Afghanistan Central Bank, the spokesperson of the finance ministry said on Wednesday.

Finance Ministry spokesman Ahmad Wali Haqmal told Reuters that Mr. Badri has already occupied his new role as the Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) governor.

Prior to this, Badri served as the finance minister of the Taliban-run administration since the group's return to power in August 2021.

His predecessor as the

central bank governor was Haji Mohammad Idris, and the reason for Bari's appointment and who would replace him at the finance ministry is not clear as of now.

Earlier, unconfirmed reports emerged about Badri's resignation from the finance ministry is believed to be due to disputes over informal cash requests from senior Taliban leaders affiliated with the group's supreme leader Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada.

The new appointments at Afghanistan's central bank is closely watched by Washington, which froze billions of the DAB's

reserves held in the US, and later transferred half of the money to a trust fund in Switzerland overseen by US, Swiss, and Afghan trustees.

One of the conditions to release the frozen reserves of Afghanistan's central bank is the appointment of experienced professionals at the government institutions, which is yet to be seen by the ruling regime.

Since the takeover of Kabul, the Taliban has continuously dismissed former government employees and replaced them with their own members, most of whom have studied at religious schools and madrasas.

Exhibition of domestic products held in Kabul

KABUL (TOLONews): A spring exhibition was held on the first day of the 1402 'solar' year at the Darul Aman Palace in Kabul.

The organizer of the exhibition said that more than 250 traders participated in the exhibition and the purpose of this exhibition is to support domestic products.

Officials of the government who participated in the exhibition said that the government will provide more facilities to traders for their investment.

"Domestic consumption and domestic production

are at the top of the government's agenda, and it's a positive step for progress in Afghanistan," said Abdul Latif Nazari, Deputy Minister of Economy.

"In the country's zones, we will create export centers and we will display every zone's export," said Quadrat Ullah Jamal, deputy of the Industry and Commerce Ministry.

"Afghanistan's products are the pride of Afghans," said Mohammad Khalid, Kabul's governor.

Some participants said that holding such exhibi-

tions are beneficial in marketing domestic products.

"We hope that holding such a national and international exhibition for men and women will bring progress in our work and allow us to meet big companies and sign contracts," said Benifsha Zafari, a trader.

In the past month, several domestic products exhibitions were held inside and outside Afghanistan, and the purpose of these exhibitions is to support domestic producers and the marketing of domestic products.

Power line project to be completed next winter, says officials



KABUL (TOLONews): The power transmission line project from Sheberghan to Arghandi in Kabul will be

completed by the winter of next year, said officials.

The office of the Deputy Prime Minister of the

Economy handed over financial responsibility of the project to the Finance Ministry and related organizations.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Finance said that is ready to finance this project after taking technical steps.

"The Finance Ministry is ready to implement the orders, every time we get an order, and assess it... we submit a report to the economic commission," said Ahmad Wali Haqmal, spokesman for the Finance Ministry.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Energy and Water said that the Asian Development Bank had funded 80 percent of the project, and with the evaluation of new costs, the rest of the work will be completed.

"80% of the project has been completed, this is an important project for our country," said Farhad Mahmoudi, head of the energy project in the Ministry of Energy and Water.

"This project from Pul e

Khumre to Kabul cost 400 and 500 million dollars and now this project needs 60 or 70 million dollars to be completed," said

Amanullah Ghalib, head of Da Breshna Sherkat.

"With the connection of this line to Kabul, most of the challenges will be solved especially in the industrial section, and after solving a lack of power, we will have big economic investment," Abdul Nasir Reshtya, economist.

Afghanistan imports most of its needed energy from Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan.

According to the Ministry of Energy and Water, with the completion of the Turkmenistan 500 KV transmission line project, Kabul and neighboring provinces will not face electricity shortages

Have polls not been delayed beyond 90 days before: Sanaullah

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Wednesday asked whether elections had not been delayed in the past beyond the 90-day limit under the Constitution. He made the remarks during a joint session of parliament in which the minister argued against holding general and provincial elections separately. However, he also asserted that the notion the coalition government was “avoiding” polls was “principally wrong” and that it merely wanted them to be held in a transparent manner.

Commenting on the topic of polls, Sanaullah said there were differing opinions on conducting elections, and parliament needed guidance from the government and other institutions in this regard. “Regarding the 90-day limit in the Constitution, I mentioned that April 30 is beyond that timeframe but have elections not been held after 90

or 60 days in the past?” Sanaullah asked. The minister said that in the 2008 elections, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly was dissolved earlier compared to the rest of the provincial legislatures and the National Assembly. “But the KP Assembly election did not take place 30 or 40 days prior.” He said that polls were postponed after former prime minister Benazir Bhutto’s assassination and took place after almost five months. The interior minister said the 1988 elections were delayed by five to six months due to flooding in the country. He called for taking decisions with “wisdom and foresight” as the country was facing a “fitna” (mischief) — an apparent reference to PTI chief Imran Khan — that desired chaos. He said free and fair elections were necessary to stop this ‘fitna’, adding that political and economic stability could not be achieved with-

out doing so. “The current situation is such that after dissolving the assemblies, it is a constitutional obligation to hold elections within 90 days. Although April 30 is beyond that mandate and the constitutional condition is not met if elections are held on April 30,” the minister remarked. Sanaullah went on to say that the Constitution also stipulated holding “free and fair” elections, adding that it was the electoral watchdog’s responsibility to do so.

Sanaullah said the notion that the government was “avoiding elections” was “principally wrong”, adding that the government only wanted polls to be held in accordance with the Constitution under a caretaker setup for political and economic stability instead of “creating a new crisis”. The interior minister argued that if any political party came into power in Punjab, it would “reduce the level playing

field” for other parties in the general elections. “Will Punjab not dictate the federal government then? Will that government or party — whether us or someone else — not gain an edge, and won’t the basic constitutional requirement of a free and fair caretaker setup not be violated?” He said that going ahead with polls in Punjab and KP would set a precedent for provincial elections being held six months before general elections, reducing the latter to a “mere spectacle”. The interior minister said that elections held at the same time under caretaker setups would provide a “level playing field” to everyone. Sanaullah also spoke about Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial’s comments from earlier today wherein he said the top court would intervene if there was any ill intention in holding “transparent elections”.

Pakistan Day today

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Nation will celebrate Pakistan Day today (Thursday) with a renewed pledge to transform the country into a true Islamic and welfare state in line with the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and to ensure progress, prosperity and a strong defence of the country.

The day is observed to commemorate the passage of historic Lahore Resolution on 23rd March in 1940, under which Muslims of the Sub-continent set the agenda of a separate homeland for themselves. National flag will be hoisted atop all major government buildings. The day will dawn with thirty-one-gun salute in the federal capital and twenty-one-gun salute in provincial capitals.

Putin sees Xi as his backer: Kirby

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: John Kirby, Coordinator for Strategic Communications at the National Security Council while commenting on Chinese President Xi visit to Russia said that “Putin sees Xi as his backer.” Kirby hoped that President Xi would also speak to President Zelensky of Ukraine and would encourage Russia to stop bombing schools and hospitals in Ukraine.

John Kirby also termed China as not being impartial in anyway with regard to Russian declared war on Ukraine. “Xi thinks it’s some western war on Russia” Kirby added. Kirby did acknowledge the fact that China has not provided any lethal

weapons to Russia but he did mention that some Chinese companies are involved in providing some parts related to the making of weapons.

Kirby also termed the relations between China and Russia as “marriage of convenience” and regretted the fact that China and Russia are “continuously getting closer.” John Kirby also highlighted that China wants to change the “rule based order” and that it is continuously doing violations in South China Sea. While answering a question about Chinese investments in Africa, John Kirby said that Africa has become aware that China gives them loan on high interest rates and when those countries who can not pay back those loans, China tries to take over their “this and that.”



"Organise the people economically, socially, educationally, and politically, and I am sure that you will be a power that will be accepted by everybody."

Quaid e Azam, 23rd March, 1940

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Information Department, Government of Sindh

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