

Woman’s legs cut off by train

ATTOCK (INP): A speedy train cut off both legs of an elderly woman while cross railway track here on Wednesday. An 80-year-old spouse of Amanat Ali was run over by Multan bound Thal Express coming from Rawalpindi while crossing railway track near Jand railway station. The train split both legs of the lady and she was rushed to Tehsil Headquarter Hospital Jand by rescue teams.

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Bizenjo seeks justice

QUETTA (PPI): Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo, Chief Minister Balochistan, while expressing heartfelt grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of one police officer and three police personnel during exchange of fire with dacoits in Jagir area of Jaccabad, has said that police Inspector and three personnel had embraced martyrdom while performing their duties, said a statement issued by the Chief Minister’s Secretariat here on Wednesday.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting of the Federal Cabinet.

## Provision of Rs 21 billion to ECP Cabinet okays referring of summary to parliament

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday approved referring of the Finance Ministry’s summary to the Parliament for provision of Rs 21 billion to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for holding of general elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces.

The cabinet also approved financing facility for electric bikes and rickshaws for increasing their common use. A loan of Rs 500,000 would be available under the Prime Minister’s Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme at zero mark-up, which would help in saving significantly the country’s spending made on the import of costly fuel.

The meeting expressed its deep grief and sorrow over loss of precious lives in a blast in the Counter Terrorism Department

Police Station, Kabal, Swat, and offered Fateha for the martyrs and prayed for the early recovery of the injured, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister directed the Ministry of Interior for inclusion of a Federal Government representative in the investigation process of the CTD Swat blast. He also directed for grant of similar Shuhada package to the deceased in the blast as had been given to those of the Peshawar Police Lines. The cabinet gave a nod to the legislation over Invest Pakistan initiative on the recommendation of the Board of Investment.

Under the legislation, an ‘Investment Pakistan’ office would be established under the BOI that would function under public-private partnership. The proposed legislation would help ensure provision of investment-friendly service

es, it was added.

The meeting also sanctioned appointment of Syedain Raza Zaidi, a Grade 21 officer of Inland Revenue, on deputation as Karachi Port Trust chairman on the recommendation of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs. The cabinet approved guidelines for carrying out amendments under its earlier decision of 08-11-2017. Under the decision, it was made mandatory for all the ministries and divisions to carry out amendments in their relevant acts and rules by replacing the words ‘Federal Government’ with ‘appropriate authorities’ for usage.

The meeting ratified the decisions of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) on April 13. These decisions included declaration of Angor Adda Custom Station in South Waziristan as ‘Export Land Route’ for Afghanistan and the Central Asian States.

## PTI MNAS barred from entering Parliament

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) MNAs have staged a protest outside Parliament House as Islamabad police barred them from entering the building.

The PTI MNAs, including Faheem Khan, Aftab Hussain Siddiqui, Saifur Rehman, Aftab Jahangir and Alamgir Khan, have staged a protest at Parliament gate after police barred the leaders from entering the building.

The MNAs were chanting slogans against the federal government. Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif and Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah. They questioned the police’s move to lock up the gates of Parliament, demanding National Assembly (NA) Speaker to show the order of the day.

They said they have brought the court orders, reinstating them as members of National Assembly (MNAs). In a statement, NA Speaker Raja Pervaz Ashraf has declared that members of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) would not be allowed to participate in National Assembly proceedings, following consultation with constitutional experts.

## Two soldiers embrace martyrdom

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: At least two soldiers embraced martyrdom during an exchange of fire with terrorists in the general area Tirah of Khyber District, said Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Wednesday.

According to the military’s media wing, “own troops fought bravely and effectively engaged the terrorists’ location.” Resultantly, two terrorists were killed and four others were injured, it added.

However, during intense exchange of fire, Sepoy Waqas Ali Shah (age 26 years, resident of District Charsadda) and Sepoy Basit Ali (age 24 years, resident of District Peshawar) having fought gallantly and embraced martyrdom. Sanitization of the area is being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area, the ISPR added.

Security forces are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve, the ISPR added.

# The Frontier Post

## Parliament to take a decision on election funding: PM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said the Parliament would take a decision regarding the funding for elections as the forum had already taken legal and constitutional steps to address the pervading challenges.

The prime minister, addressing a meeting with the heads of the coalition parties, said in the recent past, the meetings were held to discuss the challenges and the remedial measures, and the National Assembly and a joint session of the parliament also took legal and constitutional steps in that regard.

He said as the apex court had sought a reply on the funding for elections, the government would again put the matter before the parliament. It was the government’s political and moral obligation to respect the Parliament’s decision, he added.

As far as the talks for evolving consensus on a single election date were concerned, he said there was an “overwhelming” opinion among the coalition parties that the doors to dialogue should remain open. And there was also an opinion that a parliamentary committee might play a role in that regard as the government desired to evolve a consensus on the election date and did not want to impede the process just to satisfy its ego, he added.

PM Shehbaz said despite the Parliament’s decision not to accept the three-member bench, the Supreme Court wanted to move forward with the same bench.

## Speaker to write letter to CJP Bandial as MPs affirm parliament’s supremacy

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaz Ashraf said Wednesday that he would write a letter to Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial regarding the “sentiments and thoughts” of the house after the legislators stressed the parliament’s supremacy.

The lawmakers unanimously said that the authority of parliament should not be undermined by any individual or entity and stressed that the legislative should exercise its power of enacting crucial legislation. The development comes as the government and the Supreme Court remain at loggerheads over the elections to the Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assemblies.

Ashraf announced the decision after taking “sense of the House” — expressed by members by thumping of desks — and on the call of several lawmakers, particularly the PML-N’s Muhammad Barjees Tahir, who asserted parliament’s supremacy. The NA speaker’s decision also followed the federal cabinet’s decision to again refer to parliament the finance ministry’s summary for the release of funds to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for polls in Punjab and KP.

However, the coalition parties were unanimous that they would accept the 4-3 verdict of the apex court bench and not 2-3. The Supreme Court, he said, should not be given the right to arbitrate as it was there to only give verdicts as per law and the Constitution.

He said the coalition parties were unanimous that the elections would be held in October or November after the incumbent government completed its term on August 13. “The parliament completes its term on August 13 and if 90 days are added to that then the date should be in November or October,” he said.

The prime minister said instead of suggesting solutions, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leadership

tried to exploit the country’s challenging situation and also asked its provincial finance ministers to turn down the International Monetary Fund’s conditions to impede the agreement.

Moreover, the party also tried to create chaos and division within the society, he added. Even the armed forces and their leadership were not spared as some PTI agents from abroad were playing a negative role in that regard.

He said alleging a US conspiracy behind his ouster, the PTI leadership undermined Pakistan’s foreign relations. But he later took a U-turn saying that the plot was not finalized in the US, but rather designed in Pakistan, the prime minister added.

## US State Dept contradicts story by US funded radio

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: The US State Department Deputy Spokesperson, Vedant Patel contradicted the story filed by US fund Radio Free Europe which had earlier claimed that the weapons left behind by the United States in Afghanistan have landed in the hands of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

When asked by *The Frontier Post* whether the story filed by Radio Free Europe is correct or the statement by White House National Security Spokesperson, John Kirby is correct with regard to

the over six billion dollars worth of weapons left by the United States when it was withdrawing from Afghanistan. John Kirby had stated a few days ago that most of the weapons left behind in Afghanistan were either destroyed or disabled. Mr Patel confirmed that statement by Mr Kirby was accurate whereas the story filed by Radio Free Europe was inaccurate.

A senior analyst in Washington DC when asked to comment about this contradiction replied by saying that the US government is funding radio station which is

harming US state policy.

In reply to another question by *The Frontier Post* with regard to Pakistan purchasing its first shipment of oil from Russia, Mr Patel stated that Pakistan is a sovereign country and can make its decision.

When asked by *The Frontier Post* that why the US does not adopt a peace strategy with regard to the Russia Ukraine war, Mr Patel stated that it is Russia who has attacked a sovereign country and the US will continue to support Ukraine with regard to its defence, humanitarian and energy needs.

## Marriyum rejects Imran’s ‘narrative’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday rejected Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan’s narrative of “helplessness” while being in the government for more than three years.

She also lashed out at him for blaming the former army chief for every blunder he made during his government tenure which was marred by corruption, loot, plunder and inefficiency. “Bajwa made his (Imran) government in 2018 and it was again Bajwa who implemented conspiracy against the (PTI) government,” the minister said in a series of tweets while expressing surprise over his (Imran Khan) changing statements.

She asked Imran Khan whether he also stole expensive watches from Toshakhana at the behest of Bajwa. Marriyum said Imran Khan should explain whether his wife received lands and diamonds from a businessman on the advice of Bajwa. She asked the PTI chief whether he halted the work on China Pakistan Economic Corridor, destroyed the economy and violated an agreement with the International Monetary Fund at the behest of Bajwa.

The minister said Imran Khan should inform the nation whether he offered two times extensions to the former army chief on the advice of Bajwa.

## Funds for Punjab polls can’t be released sans Parliament’s nod: FM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Pakistan and Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing the National Assembly on Wednesday said that the 90-day and in some cases, 60-day clause in the Constitution regarding the elections was not abrogated by us but by someone else. It began with members of the National Assembly having tendered their resignations, as the same 60-day deadline applies to those seats. Local government elections too are held as per the law and Constitution. During PTI’s tenure, local government elections were not held despite court orders.

Even in the minority decision of the court, the 90-day limit is not being applied to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This limit has been extended for the KP elections. I

would like to clarify that the Pakistan Peoples Party would never transgress from the Constitution. However, it cannot be so that orders are given to undermine the Parliament. If our honourable judiciary encounters difficulties while interpreting the Constitution, then the PPP as the political party that not only drafted but restored the 1973 Constitution is ready to step in. We drafted the Constitution so that each and every institution, including the Parliament as the mother of all institutions and Constitution would be respected. The Parliament is currently being ridiculed and undermined.

Our law minister and the attorney general today were explaining the honourable judiciary’s decision and I was shocked and horrified to learn how an institution that is responsible for protecting the Constitution is indi-

cating that the Parliament should be ignored when it comes the money bill and other matters. We did not abrogate the Constitution in the past, nor will we do it in the future. It is against the basic principles of not only our democracy and Constitution, but that of the entire world. The Parliament is the custodian of the national purse. We will decide how and where the money of the people will be spent. It is only this institution’s prerogative to decide where to spend money and we are not liable to follow anyone else’s directions. The PPP was standing with the Parliament yesterday, and it will continue to do so in the future. The executive is bound to follow the orders of the National Assembly.

If the judiciary is ridiculing and undermining this House [National Assembly], if it is insinuating that we take an unconstitutional step, then in the

eyes of the PPP, it is a contempt of the Parliament. It is a breach of privilege. How can an institution take it upon itself to order us to abrogate the Constitution and not listen to the Parliament? The privilege of the House is being breached. This offensive order of the judiciary should be taken up in the Privilege Committee. The very concept of democracy is that the Prime Minister is answerable to us, the elected representatives of the people of Pakistan.

When the PM is undermined or ridiculed, the House is too. We have tolerated this since long. How many prime ministers would be sent to the gallows or would have to face contempt charges? It is up to us to not let any Prime Minister be undermined in the future. We respect judges, and should receive the same treatment. It is absolutely unacceptable that a judge plays with the future of the country as

per the dictations received through secret calls. When we passed the resolution in the National Assembly, we were reiterating our trust in the Prime Minister. Be it us expressing our confidence on the Prime Minister or the money bill, we stand with the majority 4-3 decision. If there is any lack of confidence, then it is so on three judges.

If this current situation is pondered upon, keeping in mind Article 63, then it becomes apparent that there is something else going on. We can see that this confusion only threatens our people, democracy and federation. Is it the case that attempts are being made to impose the One Unit policy again from back door? It is not only my personal opinion that the insistence with which attempts are being made to hold elections in one province only will endanger our federation. It is the stance of all political parties minus one

that the elections are held in their due time on the same day nationwide.

If people are adamant on holding political dialogue in the ‘panchayat’ of the judiciary, then the probability of it being a successful process is low even if we are able to convince our allies. The heads of all institutions should ponder on whether they want to be remembered as members of the Tiger Force in the future or as unbiased individuals. If they choose the latter, then it would be more appropriate for them to hold a dialogue among themselves and build consensus. If any specific judge or even our President insists on playing a partisan political role then we would find it difficult to emerge from the current political crisis and history will remember them the same way it remembers their predecessors, Chairman Bilawal said.





## U.S. Consulate sounds alarm on Climate Change

KARACHI (APP): U.S. Consulate Karachi released the song and music video "Sound the Alarm" to focus on the need to combat climate change and to mark Earth Day on April 22.

The song "Sound the Alarm" is sponsored by the U.S. State Department and is a collaboration between U.S. singer Aaron English and Pakistani singer Ali Gul Pir. The song serves as a reminder that all people, organizations, and nations need to do their part to mitigate climate change and help avert natural disasters like the devastating floods that hit Pakistan in 2022.

Tackling the climate crisis is a focal point of U.S. foreign policy and we work together with Pakistan to conserve and protect the earth. Let's heed the important messages in this song. Climate change is not a problem that one country can solve alone but requires collective efforts from a strong coalition of partners.

The United States and Pakistan have a long history of working together to advance economic growth and build a brighter future for Pakistan. The U.S.-Pakistan "Green Alliance" framework works to advance cooperation in agriculture, clean energy, and water. The United States is committed to support Pakistan as it strengthens climate resilience, pursues energy transformation, and fosters inclusive economic growth.

## Series of online activities launched

ISLAMABAD (INP): In order to give tea a greater role to play in enhancing friendly dialogue and mutual learning between civilizations, the worldwide event "Tea for Harmony: Yaji Cultural Salon" will be held on and around May 21, the International Tea Day. It will be organised by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, in cooperation with international organizations and Chinese embassies, consulates and missions abroad, and by means of overseas China Cultural Centers and China National Tourist Offices.

## COURT NOTICE

IN THE COURT OF SHADAB C.J-IX LKOHAT

Suit no.545/1 Date of hearing 15-05-2023

Titled:- Ghulam Sabir Vs Hussain Khan

Notice against:- (15)Muhammad Saeed Son of

Mustafa Kamal(16)Naeem(22)Abd ul Qadir(23)Nadeem Khan

Sons of Abdul Rauf R/o Kalu Chana BandaTehsil and District Kohat present-

ly R/o(Now in Abroad) (Defendants) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted

a civil suit against you Defendants in which date of hearing 15-05-2023

is fixed for your appearance Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode

therefore you Defendants is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by

pleader on date fixed 15-05-2023 otherwise court shall be proceeded in

accordance with law.order Issued on.26-04-2023

(Court of CJ-IX Kohat)

# Overseas Pakistanis valuable capital, pride of nation: Governor

LAHORE (INP): Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman has said that overseas Pakistanis are the valuable capital of the country and the pride of the nation. He stated this while talking to a delegation of overseas Pakistani led by Vice President of Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) UAE and former counselor Tariq Mughal who called him at Governor House Lahore on Wednesday. Prevailing situation of the country and issues of mutual interest came under discussion during the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Balighur Rahman said that overseas Pakistanis are playing an important role in the country's economy by sending remittances. He said that there is a need to promote love and positive attitudes by abandoning hatred. He said that the development of the coun-

try and the nation is possible only with the supremacy of the constitution and law and the government ensuring all possible measures to provide basic facilities to the people.

The Governor Punjab further said that the situation is difficult but hope should not be abandoned. He said that the country's economy is improving and the confidence of foreign investors is also being restored. He said that only political and economic stability in the country will bring development and prosperity in the country. Talking to the Governor Punjab, members of delegation said that on Eid-ul-Fitr and also normal days, it is very good incentive to keep the doors of Governor House opened for common man and party workers. The delegation included Shariq Mughal, M. Islam and Muzamil Ishaq Bhatti.

## KMC finalizes arrangements to cope with rains

KARACHI (APP): Administrator Karachi Dr. Syed Saif-ur-Rahman has said that in view of the forecast of expected rain in Karachi, all available pumps and machinery should be installed for drainage at all important places, check the choke points of rain drains and ready machinery for drainage of rainwater from underpasses so that the citizens can be protected from difficulties in case of heavy rains. He gave these instructions while addressing a high-level meeting held in his office on Wednesday after the forecast of the Meteorological Department regarding rains, said a spokesperson of KMC.

Senior Director Municipal Services Nauman Arshad, Director Fire Brigade Tariq Siddiqui, USSR Humayun Khan, Director Machine Pool Anwar Baloch, Chief Fire Officer Ishtiaq Ahmed and other officers were also present on this occasion.

Dr. Syed Saif said that according to reports, the rain system had entered the country and rain was predicted on Friday. In view of this, the holidays of the officers and staff of the concerned department have been cancelled, he added.

All the personnel engaged in rainwater drainage should be seen on the roads with specific uniforms and water should be drained immediately from the places where water collects during rains, he said and that that Fire Brigade department, city wardens, Rescue unit and the

Department of Municipal Services should work in coordination and wherever there was any obstruction, it should be removed immediately.

The Administrator Karachi said that citizens can register their complaints for rainwater drainage at 1339, where relevant staff would be present 24 hours to register their complaints, adding that KMC Life guards on the beach would also perform their duties during rains. All the concerned officers and staff should be vigilant regarding rain water drainage and should immediately resolve the complaints received from the citizens in this regard.

The Administrator said that the officers and subordinate staff of all departments should take steps to provide maximum convenience to the citizens during rains according to previous experiences and utilize all available resources.

Special attention should be paid to the low-lying areas of the city, where there have been complaints of rainwater accumulation in the past, special drainage arrangements should be made in all these places, especially the main roads and secondary roads should be kept flowing for traffic. Wardens are being posted at these places. He said that the rainwater drainage work will be done in collaboration with the district municipal corporations and every possible effort will be made to save the citizens from problems during the rainy season.

## UAE investor acquires majority shareholding and management control of Summit Bank

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Prominent UAE national, investor, and a longstanding friend of Pakistan, H.E. Nasser Abdulla Hussain Lootah (the "Investor"), has acquired a controlling stake in Summit Bank, a move that was recently approved by the State Bank of Pakistan, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, and Competition Commission of Pakistan. The Investor's vision for the Bank is to transform it into a full-fledged Islamic bank, providing exceptional services, innovative products, and a commitment to the principles of Islamic finance.

To demonstrate his unwavering commitment to the Bank's success and positive vision for Pakistan (despite the current economic situation), the Investor subscribed to 3.98 billion new shares of the Bank at PKR 2.51 per share, giving him a majority equity stake. In this regard PKR 10 billion has already been injected into the Bank in January 2023 through an advance payment for the proposed share issuance.

With the Investor's acquisition and renewed focus on Islamic finance principles, Summit Bank is well-positioned to become a market leader in the banking industry. The Bank's leadership and staff

are enthusiastic about the future of the Bank and committed to providing ethical and transparent financial services to its clients.

The President of Summit Bank, Jawad Majid Khan, emphasized that the Bank's revival involves more than just new equity injection and Islamic banking.

In addition to the acquisition, Summit Bank shall undergo a complete overhaul of its operations and digitalization in accordance with modern banking practices.

This shall also include rebranding of Summit Bank, allowing it for a fresh start and a new identity. The Investor, with the assistance of A.F. Ferguson & Co. (a member firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers) and Haidermota & Co. (Legal Consultants) is in the process of devising a medium and long-term strategic and restructuring plan for Summit Bank.

The Bank's renewed commitment to its clients and principles will be a fundamental aspect of its success. The Bank will also benefit from the Investor's relationships in the Middle Eastern banking industry. With the Investor's acquisition of the majority stake in Summit Bank, renewed focus on Islamic finance, and a dedicated leadership and staff, the Bank's overall future looks bright, and it is poised for success.



LAHORE: The main leaders of Muslim League-Q Chaudhi Shaafa Hussain and Muhammad Sarwar are holding a press conference at the Muslim League House Davis Road.

## Parliament right forum for politicians to initiate dialogue: Kundi

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday said dialogue was a political process which was pursued by the political parties and even countries resolved their differences and issues through talks.

The Parliament was the right forum for the politicians to initiate dialogue and it was not for "the judiciary to arrange their talks", he said while addressing a press conference here at the Circuit House.

"There is no room for recording of private telephone calls of anyone in an independent state but unfortunately, it is being done in our country," he said and called for forensic investigation into the illegal activity to fix responsibility.

"The recent audio leaks of judges' family members raise many questions on the judicial system," he added. Kundi said the coalition government partners had concerns regarding negotiations with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) as the latter had never showed its seriousness on the national issues.

He said PTI leader Asad Qaiser himself contacted the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) representatives

claiming to have the mandate of his party leadership for talks. However, his claim was rejected by the PTI chairman, who nominated other party representatives for the task. It showed the party's non-seriousness towards the talks.

The minister claimed that some 85 cases of PTI leaders were heard by a "specific bench of the apex court and the decisions of 83 were given in their favour". The two pending cases pertained to the record corruption in the Peshawar's Bus Rapid Transport project and the election results of the former National Assembly deputy speaker Qasim Suri, he added.

Expressing his grief over the loss of lives in the recent CTD Kabal incident, he said the investigations into the matter were underway and it would be premature to comment over it before the completion of the inquiry report.

He said the ISPR director general, in his last press briefing, had once again clarified that the Pakistan Army took action on the directions of the Federal Government.

Kundi said the recent wave of terrorism in the country was the result of the 'wrong policies' of the previous PTI government. The terrorists

were allowed to resettle in different areas of the country and those responsible for it must be held accountable, he added. He said Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari would visit India to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's (SCO) meeting, where he would hold meetings with some dignitaries on the sidelines. However, he had no schedule to meet Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

He said the PPP believed that the general elections of the National Assembly and all the provincial assemblies should be held simultaneously. In case the elections were held in only Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, then it would affect the results of National Assembly and other two assemblies later, he added.

Referring to the claim of Imran Khan that he had dissolved the assemblies of Punjab and KP on the advice of the former army chief, he said, "some general were behind the formation of his party and then its government". He said the PTI chief was used to say that whoever left his party would not be able to go in public, but ironically he himself was going outside by "covering his face with a box".

## Sheikh sees political negotiations as time buying tool by PDM

RAWALPINDI (NNI): Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid on Wednesday said the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) had been using political negotiations with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) as a guise for buying time.

In a video message shared on Twitter, Mr Rashid, a key ally of the PTI, said negotiations were a trick adding that the government lavished five-day Eid holidays [to buy time]. "PDM's political fate has been sealed," he claimed.

He went on to say that the people had, today, seen the true face of the 13-party alliance meeting adding that the coalition contained some parties which never bothered to attend the National Assembly's proceedings. "After achieving their vested interests, they [the PDM] say that the problem lies in the Supreme Court of Pakistan's verdict of 4-3," he added.

The problem was [actually] upholding the constitution and the

law, the AML chief said, and the top court would uphold the constitution. "Elections in Punjab cannot be pushed beyond May 14," he added.

All institutions were subservient to the SC and the SC was subservient to the law and the constitution, he said.

Mr Rashid claimed that the PDM did not have candidates to file for elections adding that the PTI had completed the list of its election candidates [instead]. "PTI chief Imran Khan's popularity has seen a rise," he added. Sheikh Rashid said that tomorrow (Thursday) would be an important and historic day - a day of victory for the judiciary, constitution and the law.

Whoever would clash with the judiciary would face defeat, he said.

Sheikh Rashid said the government which could not get approval for the money bill had ceased to exist. Under Clause 7 of the Article 91, the president should ask the government to seek an immediate vote of confidence. "Tomorrow will

be an important and historic day. The judiciary, the constitution and the law would emerge victorious. Anybody defying the judiciary would be punished," he said.

Mr Ahmed said Maryam Sahiba would reach Pakistan alone and Nawaz Sharif would go to London. Punjab election would be held, he said, and the judiciary and the constitution would stand victorious. The former interior minister said Ishaq Dar always tried to befool the IMF by providing wrong data. This time he was caught tampering with the data, the AML chief said. He said the government was exposing itself through audio and video leaks. The Supreme Court had already issued a stay order on Rules and Procedures Bill 2023, he added.

He further said the prime minister violated the constitution by not releasing election funds. He said more than 40 people committed suicide in the coastal belt of Thatta in April due to inflation and poverty.

## Strong showers predicted in next 10 days

LAHORE (APP): The Meteorological Department has predicted a strong rains spell in most parts of the country including the provincial capital, which is likely to start from Thursday and persist till the first week of May.

Maximum temperature is also likely to drop by 5-7 degree Celsius during the period. According to a spokesman for Pakistan Meteorological Department, a westerly wave is likely to spread in central and southern parts of the country on Thursday and may persist till the first week of May. Under the influence of the weather system, rain-wind/ thunder-

storm is expected in Gujranwala, Sialkot and Lahore from Thursday to Sunday. Showers with isolated heavy fall and hailstorm is also expected in south Punjab divisions including Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Bahawalnagar and Sahiwal. Rains have also been predicted in Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Khushab, Mianwali, Sargodha, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Hafizabad, Mandi Bahauddin, Sialkot, Narowal, Faisalabad, Toba Tek Singh, Jhang.

## ‘Beverage industry to use food-grade recycled plastic bottles’

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Food Authority (PFA) Director General Raja Jahangir Anwar announced on Wednesday that a number of beverage companies would be selling their fizzy drinks in PET [polyethylene terephthalate] bottles, made from food-grade recycled plastic (rPET).

In this regard, beverage companies would initially recycle four per cent of plastic bottles of the total production, and the ratio would reach 50 per cent by 2030, he added.

Chairing a meeting of the PFA Scientific Panel at the Punjab Food Authority Headquarters here, the DG said that the purpose of the initiative was to reduce global warming and mitigate the pollution effects in the province.

Members of the scientific panel reviewed technical aspects of the rPET use. He said the companies would conduct laboratory analysis of rPET bottles every three

months and submit a quarterly report to the regulatory body, and ensure that it's safe for human consumption and the environment.

The director general said that the facility to test rPET plastic would be introduced for companies at the Punjab Food Authority laboratory.

Further, the PFA would provide all possible assistance to beverage companies to help overcome their difficulties in the rPET production process, he promised.

Raja Jahangir said that plastic pollution would be reduced with recycling of food-grade plastic, because millions of bottles were being used daily which were affecting environment.

He said that recycling of PET bottles would create a source to bring foreign investment to Pakistan. He said that a further action plan would be prepared in the light of the recommendations of the scientific panel.

## CAA begins screening at Karachi airport

KARACHI (NNI): The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has begun screening passengers at Jinnah International Airport in Karachi after two cases of Monkeypox were reported.

According to the CAA sources, the airport staff started conducting complete medical examinations of all passengers arriving from foreign countries.

Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) declared it mandatory for the airport staff – including porters – to use masks and gloves.

Moreover, the airport staff is restricted to give any protocol to the passenger despite rank or grade, all international passengers will undergo a complete medical examination, while suspected passengers will be immediately isolated and sent to the hospital. It is pertinent to mention here that, as many as two cases of Monkeypox were reported in Pakistan for the first time which was also confirmed by the health department on Tuesday. According to the health ministry, Monkeypox patients belong to the twin cities, of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.



LAHORE: Laborers busy in construction work of bridge at Ferozpur Road during a development project by government in the city.





## Governor stresses for guaranteeing good governance

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali has stressed the need for guaranteeing good governance across the province including in the newly merged districts of the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Area. He was taking to various delegations, which called on him under the leadership of the Caretaker Ministers Justice (Retd) Irshad Qaiser, Shahid Khattak, Bakht Nawaz and Advisor to Chief Minister, Rahmat Salam Khattak here in Governor's House on Wednesday. These delegations congratulated the Governor on Eidul Fitr and also briefed him regarding problems of

their respective areas.

In the meanwhile, representative delegations led by the Chairman Tehsil Mir Ali, North Waziristan, Ahmad Saeed and Senator Abdul Rasheed and Chairman Kaghan Development Authority, Dr Aimal Zaman also separately called on the Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and briefed the Governor regarding the problems faced by the people of their area.

The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa issued directives for the immediate resolution of the problems. Members of the delegation thanked the Governor for taking interest in the resolution of the problems faced by the people.

Talking to the Chairman, Kaghan Development Authority, the Governor said that concerned authorities should not only take revolutionary steps for the promotion of tourism rather also ensure the facilitation of tourists and in case of any hurdle bring them into the notice of the provincial government, so tourism could be promoted in real sense.

Later, the Governor Haji Ghulam Ali also visited Patwar Bala, a suburban locality of the city and expressed condolence over the demise of Janas Khan with his heirs. Ghulam Farooq Khan and Abdul Salam also accompanied the Governor.

## Sherpao demands inquiry of Kabal blasts

PESHAWAR (APP): Chairman, Qumi Watan Party, Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao here Wednesday demanded judicial inquiry of the deadly explosions at Counter Terrorism Department's police station at Kabal in district Swat and compensation to heirs of the martyrs policemen.

In a statement here, Aftab Sherpao said that killing of over a dozen CTD policemen was a great tragedy and a judiciary inquiry was required to identify the exact nature of the explosions.

He said residents of Swat had rendered great sacrifices for protection of the motherland and their sacrifices would not go waste. Aftab Sherpao demanded compensation to heirs of the martyrs and free treatment to all injured of the blasts.

He also prayed Allah Almighty to may rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to members of the dead victims to bear this irreparable loss with patience.

## Metric exams in KP to start on April 28

PESHAWAR (APP): The annual metric examinations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would start simultaneously from April 28 throughout the province.

The spokesman of KP Elementary and Secondary Education told APP on Wednesday that examination halls would be monitored through CCTV cameras for which elaborate arrangements were made by the government to curb unfair means of practice.

The spokesman said that roll number slips were issued to all the students of the province and any student who could not get roll number may contact their respective board of examinations.

Duties of teachers and examination staff were also made with direction to report to their assigned centre by April 28, 2023.

## PAUS to launch PJU F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Institute of Kidney Diseases (IKD), Hayatabad Medical Complex (HMC) in collaboration with Pakistan Association of Urological Surgeons (PAUS) is going to launch the Pakistan Journal of Urology (PJU) which is the most awaited dream of HMC and PAUS.

The PJU is the first publication of its kind in the country. It will enhance the scientific discourse, innovation and research in the field of urology. It is worth mentioning to state that its Chief Editor, Dr Liaqat Ali is a renowned clinician, researcher and medical educationist with more than 70 publications in national and international journals.

It is to be noted that the PJU will be a peer reviewed quarterly publication with availability in both OJS and printed versions.

The PAUS invites dedicated and knowledgeable professionals who can contribute as editors and reviewers from national and international level for this accomplished work.

## GHB offers fateha

PESHAWAR (APP): Gandhara Hindko Board (GHB) and Gandhara Hinkdo Academy arranged a ceremony to offer fateha for those were martyred in Qissa Khawani Bazar on April 23, 1930.

According to a press release issued here Wednesday, tributes were also paid to those who sacrificed their lives against brutality and oppression on 23 April 1980.

General Secretary GHB, Muhammad Ziauddin said that sacrifices of those who laid their lives against imperialism would always be remembered.

He said that young generations should also be informed about barbarity faced by freedom fighters on April 23.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister Irshad Qaiser and Advisor to CM Rehmat Salam Khattak meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali.

## Appointments at KP Assembly: PHC orders to submit reply

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Musart Hilali and Justice Shakeel Ahmad ordered respondents to submit reply recruitment of employees at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly in different cadres while adjourned further hearing till 10 May, on Wednesday. The counsel Bashir Khan Wazir Advocate

argued that an advertisement for Computer Operators, Assistant Secretary, Assistant Protocol Officer and Protocol Officer were issued while successful candidates were neglected for recruitment and high-ups including Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly along with Secretary assembly along with other had appointed their children and wife on the said posts. The counsel argued that

test and interviews were held before dissolution of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly while the assembly officials claimed that recruitment didn't concluded but the petitioner has obtained information that appointment has been completed on the said position. The counsel argued that documents had been produced before court regarding irregularities and nepotism during recruitment and appointment at Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa Assembly. He argued that Speaker along with Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other high-ups had recruited their sons, daughters and wives on the position at the assembly.

The divisional comprising of Chief Justice PHC Justice Musart Hilali and Justice Shakeel Ahmad ordered respondents to submit reply while adjourned further hearing till 10th May.

## Strict action against smuggling and hoarding ordered

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry Wednesday ordered strict action against smuggling and hoarding of wheat, sugar, fertilizer and other essential commodities.

The Chief Secretary presided over a high-level meeting to review progress on measures taken to curb smuggling. Relevant administrative secretaries, Customs and Special Branch officials, concerned Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners and others attended the meeting.

The Chief Secretary directed continued actions against elements involved in smuggling of essential commodities, saying that the district administration should also continue to take measures to stop hoarding. He stressed upon intelligence sharing and closer coordination among authorities concerned for preventing hoarding and smuggling.

The meeting was informed that as



many as 21 check posts had been set up in border districts to prevent smuggling. Similarly, administration of Peshawar in operation against hoarders recovered and confiscated 57 ton sugar while 22 ton sugar (22050 kg) was seized in Khyber district. The seized sugar is sold to the public in markets of respective districts after completion of legal formalities.

Similarly, fines to the tune of Rs29 million was imposed on 6235 busi-

ness units for violation of laws related to profiteering and hoarding during Ramadan.

Secretary Food appraised the forum that more than 15.3 million bags of 10 Kg of free flour were distributed among over 5.2 million eligible households during Ramadan. The Chief Secretary directed that dealers' stocks should be closely monitored and special attention should be paid to control excess supply of essential commodities to the border districts.



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister for Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Haji Manzoor Khan Afridi presiding over a meeting regarding performance of Excise Department.

## Civil servants urged to rise above political affiliations

PESHAWAR (APP): Director General, National Institute of Management (NIM), Capt Retd Usman Gul here Wednesday said that the civil servants must rise above political and ethnic affiliations for effective implementation of constitution, rule of law and achievement of economic development goals.

"Civil servants should modify their attitudes, skills and knowledge to tackle the modern management challenges and changing governance culture," DG NIM Capt Retd Usman Gul while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the 33rd Senior Management Course at NIM Peshawar.

Usman Gul urged the training participants to follow the best practices of the bureaucracies around the world which are refashioning themselves to achieve performance standards compatible with the private and corporate entities in terms of service delivery and output.

While underlining the importance of policy formulation processes, Captain Usman Gul advised the trainee officers

to optimally benefit from the training modules and equip themselves with the latest techniques of policy analysis and evidence-based decision making.

The officers must be able to recommend policies and implementable strategies to augment and promote Pakistan's national interests in order to enhance the quality of life of the fellow citizens, he added.

"This will enable the Government to provide

leadership for good governance through creating an ecosystem conducive for vibrant private entrepreneurial activities."

At the end, Captain Usman Gul reassured the trainee officers that during the 16 weeks of training, NIM Peshawar will provide the best possible training resources and a conducive and enabling environment for the participants to widen their knowledge base and broaden their mental horizon.

## KP puts hospitals on alert against monkeypox disease

PESHAWAR (APP): Health Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has put all hospitals on alert in view of the possible spread of the monkeypox, an infectious viral disease in the province.

Through a notification issued here on Wednesday, the Director General (DG) Health, Dr Shaukat Ali has directed the administration of hospitals for establish-

ing monkeypox isolation wards and allocation of rooms for the purpose beside the provision of all possible treatment and adopting of precautionary measures in case of finding the symptoms of the infectious disease.

Similarly, the Focal Person for monkeypox and Director Public Health, Dr Irshad Ali has said that keeping in view the spread

of monkeypox, screening and testing of the people coming from abroad has begun and a 20-member staff has been deployed at Bacha Khan International Airport for the purpose. Out of this deployed staff 13 members are from the Health Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while remaining 7 are from Central Establishment.

## PEC, Secretary discuss issues in meeting



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial Secretary Local Municipalities and Rural Development Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Amir Afaq met Provincial Election Commissioner Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shamshad

Khan at his office on Wednesday congratulated him on Eid.

Director Local Government Sajid Gul was also present on this occasion. Various issues were discussed in the meeting. The Provincial Election Commissioner presented

the magazine ECP News published by the Election Commission on this occasion.

Provincial Secretary Local Municipalities and Rural Development Khyber Pakhtunkhwa thanked the Provincial Election Commissioner.

## Technology to be used to enable facilities

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Haji Manzoor Khan Afridi has said that the pri-

## Working hours for offices re-notified

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Administration department on Wednesday notified five-day a week and eight working hours for offices in the province.

It said that the public offices would observe 09:00 a.m. to 05:00 p.m. working hours with 30 minutes break from 01p.m to 01:30 p.m. from Monday to Thursday while on Friday the office timing would be from 09 a.m. to 05 p.m. with 30 minutes break from 12:30 p.m. to 01 p.m. Saturday and Sunday would be closed holidays.

Similarly, the offices working on six-day a week basis would observe 09 a.m. to 04 p.m. timings with 30 minutes break for prayer from 01 p.m. to 01:30 p.m. On Friday the office timings would be from 09 a.m. to 01 p.m. Sunday would be closed holiday.

mary objective of government departments is to provide maximum relief to the people. The Excise and Narcotics Control is the most important department of the province and its duty is not only to ensure 100% achievement of its excise recovery targets and effective prevention of narcotics but also to facilitate the public in all matters including vehicle registration, he added. For this purpose, he maintained, technology should also be fully used so that the people are provided with the basic and advanced facilities of this department at home and the revenue of the department is thus also continuously increased.

He was presiding over a meeting related to the goals and performance of Excise Department Peshawar Region at his office, Civil Secretariat Peshawar, in which a detailed review of issues related to reforms in the department was also reviewed. On this occasion, Focal Person and Director of Excise Peshawar Region Safian Haqqani gave a detailed briefing to the Minister of Excise on the ongoing cooperation and future plan of action with the International Drug Control Organizations INL and DEA.

Haji Manzoor Afridi emphasized on establishment of training academy

to increase the capacity of Excise officers and officials, rehabilitation centers for the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts and rehab centers to return the addicted patients to normal life. He asked the department to work round the clock with missionary spirit to cherish these goals.

On this occasion, the caretaker minister was also given a detailed briefing on the new vehicle registration system and universal number plates. He directed that increasing public facilities should be the first priority of the government. He further directed that the provision of the pending number plates of the vehicles should be ensured immediately and the public should not be given any opportunity to complain.

The caretaker minister also issued instructions to increase the scope of tax net and add new tax units to the system instead of putting additional burden on the existing tax payers to ensure the achievement of the targets and to increase the provincial revenue.

Syed Naveed Jamal, Circle Officer Mardan Region and In-charge Excise Intelligence Bureau, Arshad Zaman Khan, Circle Officer Peshawar Region and other officers were present on this occasion.



PESHAWAR: Chairman United Municipal Workers Malik Naveed and Chairman Mazdoor Ithihad Qaiser Bacha meeting with Mayor Haji Zubair Ali.





## In brief

### Rescue tackles 23 incidents F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Rescue 1122 has dealt with 23 various kinds of events in Khyber during Eidul Fitr. Sharing details media coordinating Rescue 1122 Khyber Maqsood Alam said that as many as the department received 1391 calls among those 1291 were informative and unnecessary while 16 calls were fake ones. A total of 23 happens, occurred during the festivity comprising traffic mishaps 09, medical 12, firing incidents 02. At least 25 persons got injured in the incidents while three wounded succumbed to their injuries on way to the health centers. Six persons were referred to different hospitals across the district, the Rescue 1122 official informed.

### Over 70pc building cleared F.P. Report

MINGORA: The clearance operation of the Counter Terrorism Department's police station at Kabal has continued swiftly and over 70percent of the destroyed building was cleared of unexploded explosives materials/devices. According to official sources, the technical experts and urban search and rescue teams of Pakistan Army have successfully cleared the ground and first floor of the CTD's destroyed building and its basement was being cleared with speed. During the clearance operation, five trapped vehicles in the building were also recovered. The operation would continue till clearance of the complete building.

### Three held in encounters

HYDERABAD (PPI): Three accused were held in injured condition in three separate police encounters in Hyderabad, police said Wednesday. The first encounter took place in the limits of City police station, the second Phalili police station and the third Fort police station. The accused held in injured condition were shifted to Civil Hospital. They were identified as Sarwar Oudh, Ajmal Rafiq and Younis Rajput. The police recovered pistols and a stolen motorcycle from them. "The accused had opened fire on the police, and they were injured in retaliatory firing," the police spokesperson said.

### Woman stabbed to death

LARKANA (PPI): A husband, Ghulam Raza Samo allegedly stabbed his 42-year old wife Rehana Perveen to death in Leela Abad area located within the limits of Darri police station on Wednesday and escaped over domestic issues. Her body was rushed to the emergency department of Chandka Medical College Hospital which was handed over to the heirs after legal formalities. Ali Raza Samo, son of the accused, said that my father Ghulam Raza Samo had been torturing my mother for a long time and this morning he started stabbing her mercilessly, killed her and escaped. Neither any arrest was made nor any case was registered till the filing of this report. Meanwhile, Gohar Abad Police on Wednesday claimed that they had arrested an aged woman Sakina Shaikh on the complaint of citizens and recovered four stolen mobile phones from her possession. The police claimed that residents, including Akhtiar Ansari, Jehangir Channo and others of the Railway Station area, complained that their costly phones had been stolen from their homes.



BANNU: Deputy Speaker National Assembly Zahid Akram Durrani inaugurating NADRA office.

## Traders observe shutter down strike in Nawagai

F.P. Report

BUNER: The traders observed shutter down strike and blocked Tor Ghar-Mandanr road at Nawagai Bazaar against failure of administration to ensure timely completion of under construction road because contractor has stopped development works while competent authorities had turned blind eye towards the situation, on Wednesday.

President Trader Union Nawagai Bazaar Aziz-ur-Rehman alias Zezor Bacha has mobilized business community as well as local populace because on one people facing from severe respiratory diseases while on the other hand incomplete works caused traffic accidents and population in the premises.

The president claimed that Nawagai bazaar was shutter down as protest against failure of administration and C&W departments to ensure delivery of public services and good governance. He added that traders will knock every door to obtain relief and place responsibility of delay on competent stakeholders for damages to both public and state.

The traders claimed that they had already meet with



Assistant Commissioner Mandanr Rehmat Ullah three times but he had failed every time to fulfill his promises and to compel contractor for starting incomplete works. They claimed that contractor had stopped development work since start of winter while administration, Communication and Works (C&W) department has neglected delivery of public services.

A trader namely Liaqat Ali said that stoppage of construction works had caused respiratory diseases and traffic mishaps in the premises while on the other hand it had created problems of cleanliness for business community. He claimed that the situation had also impacted trading in the premises because transporters costing high fares for transfer of goods. Another trader and medical store owner Muhammad Aziz said that maximum patients are consulting doctors for respiratory disease because thousands of people are living in the premises from Ambela to Nawagai bazaar. He claimed that competent authorities had turned blind eye toward the situation while didn't responding to public grievances and loss to businesses in the region.

The protesters were dispersed peacefully after toeing of AC Mandanr Rehmat Ullah before trader's demands while promised before public that development work should be restart within one week in the presence of tehsil Nazim Mandanr Naseeb Khan and Gulzar Hussain. However, traders threatened that if their demands will not fulfill then they will be compelled to arrange protest on larger scale.

## Bodies of father, four children found in Bannu

BANNU (INP): The bodies of five persons, including a father and his four children between the ages of five and ten have been found in the Domail area of Bannu district on Wednesday. According to a police spokesperson, the dead bodies were found in the Koshi area of Domail and sent for medico-legal formalities.

A pistol was also found near the dead body of the father, who is identified as Aqleem, a resident of Azeem Kaley (village). Close relatives of Aqleem informed the police that he was under mental stress for the last few months and was also on medication for the problem. Some intoxicating drugs were also found at the site of the crime, the spokesperson added.

The relatives said that the children had gone to their maternal grandfather's home and were returning home along with their father when this incident took place. Police have registered a case and started investigation.

## Babar demands polls on same date

QUETTA (PPI): Spokesperson for Chief Minister Balochistan, Babar Yousafzai, has demanded to conduct election simultaneously across the country.

Addressing a press conference at Quetta Press Club with Coordinators to Chief Minister Balochistan, Musa Jan Achakzai and Shahina, he said security situation was not conducive for conducting election only in Khyberpushtunkhwa and Punjab. He said that Imran Khan was ousted from power through constitutional process, but he started levelling allegations against Pak-Army in order to conceal his government's failure.

He said that during his tenure as Prime Minister, Imran Khan had done nothing for the welfare and development of Balochistan. Coffins of deceased belonging to Hazara community, who had been killed Mach's coal mine incident, were lying on road in Quetta and relatives of the deceased wanted to meet the then Prime Minister to apprise him of their demands, but Imran Khan had not bothered to meet the relatives of deceased and instead declared the protest sit-in of Hazara community as a kind of black mailing.

He said that Chairman, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was deliberately trying to create chaos and anarchy in the country, adding that criticising Pak-Army and other institutions by former Prime Minister Imran Khan was nothing but to gain popularity. He said journalists were put behind the bar during the reign of PTI for the sole purpose of stifling the dissenting voices, adding that treatment meted out to one journalist of Islamabad Muhsin Baig was known to all and sundry.

# Martyred cop laid to rest in Dir

## Swat incident widely condemned

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Police assistant sub inspector Unbar Khan, who embraced martyrdom in the Kabal Swat incident, was laid to rest in his native Toormang village here on Tuesday evening. A large number of local residents, relatives and police officials attended his funeral prayer. The Lower Dir district police officer Tariq Iqbal, DSP Syed Rahim, Khan Nazir, Dir Scouts' Major Waqas and other civil and military officials were also in attendance.

The ASI Unbar Khan along with five other police constables including Imdadullah, Asghar Khan, Naseebullah, Rafiq Ahmad, Fahim Khan and Israr Khan had got injured when a power explosion inside the Kabal police station in Swat occurred on Monday evening. The injured were shifted to the hospital wherein the ASI Unbar Khan breathed his last late on Tuesday. A contingent of police presented a salute to the martyr while the DPO and other officers laid floral

wreaths on his grave. Talking to the martyrs' relatives the DPO said that the police department stood by its brave martyrs and would never leave their families alone.

Meanwhile the political leadership and local peace jirgas demanded the government and state institutions to take practical steps for curbing the current wave of terrorism in parts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The JI central chief Sirajul Haq while addressing an Eid Milan party at Sar Lara here the other day, condemned the Kabal Swat incident and said that it had spread a wave of anger and panic among the masses throughout the province. The JI chief also demanded of the government to make sure the masses were protected so that they could live a comfortable life in their areas.

The Adenzai Qaumi Jirga also condemned the incident and demanded an immediate judicial probe into it. Addressing a meeting of the jirga held at the Chakdara press club here the other day, the jirga senior leaders including

Khurshid Ali Khan of the PPP, Hussain Shah Yousafzai of the ANP, Syed Sultanat Yar Bukhari of the JI, former PTI MPA Humayun Khan, president Anjuman Tajiran Chakdara Khwaja Fazul Ghafor, Qari Nazir Muhammad and other said the Pykhtun were being used as a fuel in a war of someone else. They demanded the government to initiate a judicial inquiry against the Kabal Swat explosion.

The jirga elders said the people of Malakand would no longer allow anyone to sabotage the peaceful environment. They said though the government agencies had clarified that it was not an act of terrorism yet the people worried about it. The speakers said that no one was ready to accept the official stand regarding the Swat explosion as such acts of terrorism had already occurred in Peshawar and other parts of the province. The jirga expressed grave concerns over the growing acts of militancy and demanded of the government to fulfill its responsibility of protecting the masses at any cost.

# PTI workers hold protest against Swat CTD blast

F.P. Report

BUNER: The PTI district chapter leadership and activists were staged protest demonstration against the Swat Kabal CTD Police Station Blast that killed 17 including a kid a mother a father while injured 60. The PTI district secretary information Bahrad Khan lead the protestors as the district chapter president Riaz Khan and general secretary Syed Fakhar Jihan were at Zaman Park for protection Imran Khan.

The protestors were blocked the main Pir Baba Swari and Mingora Mardan roads for an hour right from 3 pm to 4 pm. The protestors were time and again raised slogans for peace. They were carried White flags inscribed the

slogan 'we want peace'.

The protestors jointly offered pray for eternal rest of the martyred of Swat Blast and early recovery for the injured. Those addressed namely Bakhrad Khan Nazim Dagar Rozi Kgan Nazim Gadezai Sher Alam Khan Irshad Khan Fazal Akbar Gul Nawas Khan Baba Irshad Khan advocate Syed Zeb Bacha and dozen others.

The speakers categorically rejected the DIG the IGP version that it was electricity short circuit adding the SOPs and the statement of the injured policeman confirmed there was no electricity in the arm imunation room. They demanded judicial inquiry into the matter so as to find out actual clue and to work it out for avoiding such a devastating incidents.

They were if the view that police were custodians of civilians when the custodians were unsafe it would definitely serge wave of insecurity among civilians. They were crystal that both police and civilians in KPK were under target killing and Punjab was peaceful as Pakhtun were facing blasts and collecting body parts of near dear while people in Punjab were enjoying games right now.

They made it clear Pakhtun both police and public were extremely feed up with bloodshed and wana live in peace even if they have to come on roads with coffin for collective martyrdom or long lasting peace if the government and state institutions did not make sure peace restored on Pakhtun soil.



QUETTA: Coordinator for Balochistan Chief Minister Shania Khan addressing a press conference.

# Protest in Muzaffarabad against Modi's plan

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): A protest sit-in and rally were held in Muzaffarabad, today, to appeal to the G20 countries to boycott the upcoming meeting of the forum being hosted by India in the internationally recognized disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

According to Kashmir, the protest organized by Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir was attended by a large number of citizens. The protesters raised slogans like "Boycott Boycott G20 Boycott", "Go Modi Go Back" and "Go India Go Back".

Holding banners with slogans calling upon the G20 members including Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Indonesia to boycott the controversial meeting, they also marched from Burhan

Wani Chowk to Ghari Pan Chowk.

Addressing the protesters, Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir Chairman Uzair Ahmed Ghazali said that the G20 countries should understand the nefarious designs of India behind the holding of the event in the disputed territory. He said the G20 countries should not forget that India is committing serious war crimes and human rights abuses in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Usman Ali Hashim on the occasion said that the G20 countries should remember that if they accept Narendra Modi's invitation for the proposed meeting in Kashmir, they will be considered as siding with the oppressor. Hurriyat leader Mushtaq

ul-Islam in his address said that instead of participating in the meeting in Srinagar, the G20 countries should highlight the Indian atrocities in IIOJK. he added that the Modi government is plotting to cover up its war crimes against Kashmiris through this G20 meeting.

Social leaders Javed Ahmed Mughal and Dr Manzoor said India cannot change the fact that Kashmir is an internationally recognized dispute and such activities cannot divert the world's attention from Indian atrocities on the Kashmiri people. Student leaders Mohammad Aimal Farzam, Tanveer Ahmad Durrani and Riyaz Awan said by holding this event India wants to give a false impression that everything is normal in IIOJK.



QUETTA: A view of dusty air in the provincial capital during winds.





## South Korea president opens US tour with NASA space centre visit

MARYLAND (Agencies): South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol has toured a NASA flight centre, as his country and the United States signed a joint statement to increase their collaboration in technology and space exploration. "I've always believed that mankind's future lies in space," Yoon said in a speech from the Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland, where he was joined by US Vice President Kamala Harris.

Yoon underscored his vision for transforming South Korea into "one of the world's top five leaders in space technology", with plans to reach the moon for "resource extraction" by 2032 and land astronauts on Mars by 2045. In her remarks, Harris called the US-South Korean alliance "a linchpin of security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and around the world".

She credited the alliance with tackling "some of the most important and pressing issues of our time", including the two countries' "collective defence in the face of aggression and provocation", a seeming reference to North Korea and its recent missile tests. Harris also addressed a shared commitment to confronting the climate crisis. "Together our nations have built and placed satellites in orbit that can track air pollution in North America and Asia," she said.

"Today I have also directed the National Space Council, which I lead, to expand this network to ensure that it also covers the southern hemisphere, specifically the continent of Africa and South America. This cannot be a global initiative if any nations around the world are excluded," Yoon's visit to the space flight centre - one of NASA's original research hubs - marked the first leg of a six-day US tour, which will include a formal White House visit on Wednesday with his US counterpart, President Joe Biden. The trip marks the South Korea's first state visit to Washington, DC, in nearly 12 years



and the first state visit from an Indo-Pacific leader during Biden's term in office.

Yoon's tour is also timed to the 70th anniversary of the 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty, which established the two countries' alliance. He spent part of visiting the Arlington National Cemetery - a memorial site largely for military personnel - as well as the Korean War Memorial with Biden. While in the US, Yoon is expected to push for greater economic cooperation with Washington. Before his initial meeting with Biden, he called for the countries' bond to "leap into a new phase" and "evolve into a supply chain and future-oriented, innovative-technology alliance". His trip coincided with several high-profile deals between US and South Korean industries. Netflix CEO Ted Sarandos announced his company would invest \$2.5bn in South Korean programming after a meeting with Yoon. And, the US carmaker General Motors announced it would partner with Samsung SDI to construct a \$3bn electric vehicle battery plant in the US.

In addition to economic ventures, the US has teased "major deliver-

ables" to be announced during the formal visit on Wednesday, including "with respect to the threat" North Korea poses. "This visit, of course, also comes at a critical moment, as North Korea continues to develop its nuclear and missile capabilities," US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters. "The two leaders will have a chance to consult closely on that." Sullivan's statement comes as the US continues to wrestle with the fallout from the release of classified documents online, some of which purport to show the Biden administration spying and putting pressure on South Korea to supply ammunition destined for Ukraine. Those documents appeared to signal strain between the two allies, though US officials have been quick to affirm that relations with South Korea are "ironclad". The US and South Korea are both part of the non-binding NASA Artemis Accords, a multilateral agreement to collaborate on crewed missions to the moon. The agreement signed at the Goddard space centre is slated to reinforce that commitment, as well as broker collaboration across spaced-based communication, navigation and technology.

*We are probably on verge of a new world war: Putin ally*

MOSCOW (Reuters): An ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the world was probably on the verge of a new world war and the risks of a nuclear confrontation were rising. "The world is sick and quite probably is on the verge of a new world war," Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chairman of Putin's powerful security council, told a conference in Moscow.

He said such a new world war was not inevitable but the risks of a nuclear confrontation were growing and more serious than concerns about climate change. Putin says the world faces the most dangerous decade since World War Two. He casts the war in Ukraine as an existential battle with an aggressive and arrogant West, and has said that Russia will use all available means to protect itself against any aggressor. The United States and its allies have condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine as an imperial land grab. Ukraine has vowed to fight until all Russian troops withdraw from its territory, and says Russian rhetoric on nuclear war is intended to intimidate the West into curbing military aid.

### Mexican official arraigned on detention fire charges

MEXICO CITY (Agencies): The leader of Mexico's immigration agency has been arraigned in court on charges of failing to ensure safety inside the country's migrant detention centres, follow-

ing a fire last month that killed 40 migrants and asylum seekers. Francisco Garduno, leader of the Mexican Immigration Institute, faced a court hearing, where prosecutors presented evidence showing he should have closed facilities that did not meet safety requirements.

Prosecutors have previously noted that the case indicated a "pattern of irresponsibility" on the part of the immigration institute. The deadly fire has brought heightened scrutiny to the conditions that migrants and asylum seekers often experience in countries such as Mexico, where critics say they are frequently subjected to abuse and denied basic rights. The fire on March 27 caught international attention after a video circulated, showing guards making no effort to free a group of 68 men locked in a cell at a Ciudad Juarez detention centre. Prosecutors have said that private security guards asked officials for permission to release the detained men when the fire began but were told not to do so. More than two dozen people were injured in the fire, in addition to the 40 deaths. Many were from Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Venezuela.

Mexican authorities have said the migrants and asylum seekers caused the fire to protest their conditions and deportation. Several migrants in the shelter also said they were told they could secure their release by paying \$1,000, according to prosecutors who suggested that corruption and exploitation had been common prior to the fire.

In April, a Mexican judge ordered the arrest of three immigration officials, a private security guard and a Venezuelan migrant in connection to the Juarez fire. The highest-ranking official to be tried so far is the immigration agency's delegate in the Mexican state of Chihuahua, retired Navy Rear Admiral Salvador Gonzalez. He was charged with homicide and causing injury by omission. Garduno, who had previously overseen Mexico's prison system, was appointed to run the country's immigration agency in 2019, when the country was under pressure from the United States to crack down on migrants and asylum seekers travelling northward. Some advocates point to recent changes in immigration law - like the cross-border expulsion policy Title 42 in the US and other deterrents - as exacerbating the conditions that led to the fire.

## Sudan crisis: WHO warns of biological hazard at seized lab

GENEVA (BBC): The World Health Organization (WHO) says there's a "high risk of biological hazard" at a laboratory caught up in the ongoing conflict in Sudan. Officials said it was unclear who was behind the occupation of the National Public Health Laboratory in the capital Khartoum. The city has been ravaged by fighting between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

The WHO told the BBC that workers can no longer access the lab. And it warned that power cuts were making it impossible to properly manage material at the lab. Officials said that a broad range of biological and chemical materials are stored in the lab. The facility holds measles and cholera pathogens, as well as other hazardous materials. A lack of power is also putting depleting stocks of blood bags stored at the lab at risk of spoiling. The lab is near the centre of Khartoum and not far from city's main airport. It lies just outside the area where Sudan's military headquarters are located, and where a lot of the fighting has been taking place. The particular geography of Khartoum means key strategic sites which are being targeted, such as military buildings, are close to critical infrastructure. Both the military headquarters and the airport are right next to a residential area, with several schools and hospitals nearby.

Only a fraction of health facilities in Khartoum are providing services due to a

lack of staff, medicine and other supply shortages, power outages, or attacks. The Federal Ministry of Health in Sudan has reported that 36% of health facilities in Khartoum city are non-functional and another 25% are unresponsive. Meanwhile, a ceasefire in Sudan appears to be holding, although there have been reports of new gunfire and shelling. It is the fourth effort to stop the fighting which began on 15 April, with previous truces not observed. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the 72-hour truce had been agreed between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) after 48 hours of negotiations. At least 459 people have died in the conflict so far, though the actual number is thought to be much higher. Both sides had confirmed they would cease hostilities. But Tagreed Abdin, who lives 7km from the centre of Khartoum, said she could hear shelling from her home despite the agreement. "The situation right now is that this morning there was shelling and gunfire," she told the BBC. "Obviously the ceasefire hasn't taken," she added. The RSF has accused the army of violating the truce by "continuing to attack Khartoum with planes". Meanwhile, an army spokesperson has told Sky News Arabia that the RSF was responsible for "storming prisons" following reports of gunfire at Port Sudan. Since the violence began, residents of Khartoum have been told to stay inside, and food and

water supplies have been running low. The bombing has hit key infrastructure, like water pipes, meaning that some people have been forced to drink from the River Nile. Hospitals are running out of key supplies and struggling to cope, according to secretary general of Sudan Doctors Union Dr Atia Abdalla Atia. Countries have scrambled to evacuate diplomats and civilians as fighting raged in central, densely populated parts of the capital. There will be hopes the latest ceasefire will allow civilians to leave the city. Foreign governments will also hope it will allow for continued evacuations out of the country. Several EU member states, as well as African and Asian countries, have evacuated hundreds of their citizens, while the UK government has announced it will begin evacuating British passport holders and immediate family members. Germany has said it will conduct its last evacuation flight from Sudan to Jordan, with the remaining German nationals to be evacuated by partner nations in the days after. Mr Blinken said that some convoys trying to move people out had encountered "robbery and looting". Egypt's foreign ministry confirmed that an attaché had been killed while driving to the embassy in Khartoum. The UN is bracing for up to 270,000 people to flee Sudan into neighbouring South Sudan and Chad. Hassan Ibrahima, 91, is among those to have already fled the country.

## Moscow hosts more Turkey-Syria rapprochement talks

MOSCOW (AP): Russia's defense minister hosted his counterparts from Iran, Syria and Turkey for talks that were part of the Kremlin's efforts to help broker a rapprochement between the Turkish and Syrian governments. The Russian Defense Ministry said the talks focused on "practical steps to strengthen security in the Syrian Arab Republic and to normalize Syrian-Turkish relations."

Moscow has waged a military campaign in Syria since September 2015, teaming up with Iran to allow Syrian President Bashar Assad's government to reclaim control over most of the country. Turkey has backed armed opposition to Assad throughout the 12-year Syrian civil war. While the bulk of Russia's armed forces have been busy fighting in Ukraine, Moscow has maintained its military presence in Syria and has also made persistent efforts to help Assad rebuild fractured ties with Turkey and other countries in the region following the civil war that has killed nearly 500,000 people and displaced half of the country's prewar population. In December, Moscow hosted

a surprise meeting of the Turkish and Syrian defense ministers, the first such encounter since Syria's uprising-turned-civil-war began in 2011. And earlier this month, senior diplomats from Russia, Turkey, Syria and Iran met in Moscow for two days of talks intended to set the stage for a meeting of the four countries' foreign ministers.

The efforts toward a Turkish-Syrian reconciliation come as Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is under intense pressure at home to send Syrian refugees back amid a steep economic downturn and an increasing anti-refugee sentiment. He faces presidential and parliamentary elections in May. The Russian Defense Ministry said in its readout of talks that the parties "reaffirmed their adherence to the preservation of Syria's territorial integrity and the need to step up efforts to allow a speedy return of Syrian refugees." The Turkish Defense Ministry issued a similarly worded statement, noting that the four ministers discussed the issue of strengthening security in Syria, the concrete steps that can be taken to normalize ties between Turkey and

Syria, the fight against terrorist and extremist groups on the Syrian territory and efforts for the return of Syrian refugees. The statement said the sides also emphasized the importance of the continuation of the four-party meetings "to ensure and maintain stability in Syria and the region as a whole."

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu also hosted Turkish Defense Minister Hulusi Akar and his counterparts from Syria and Iran for separate bilateral talks. Turkey has de facto control over large swathes of northwestern Syria, and Assad's government has described the withdrawal of Turkish forces from Syrian territory as a prerequisite for a normalization of ties. Syria's Defense Ministry said that talks in Moscow focused on the withdrawal of Turkish troops from Syria as well as the reopening of the M4 highway. The west-east highway cuts through government-controlled coastal regions and passes through the rebel-held northwest all the way to Kurdish-controlled areas in the northeast. Russian and Turkish troops have conducted joint patrols over the past years on the highway, which links the

Mediterranean with the Iraqi border, but repeated protests in rebel-held areas have prevented the return of traffic to normal. The vital highway has been partially closed since 2012. The decision to reopen it was part of a truce reached in March 2020 between Russia and Turkey that ended a monthslong Russian-backed government offensive on the rebel-held northeast. But even as Turkey has supported Syrian opposition fighters in the north, Ankara and Damascus are equally dismayed over the US-backed, Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces in Syria's northeast. Turkey-backed opposition fighters have clashed with the SDF in the past, accusing them of being an arm of Turkey's outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK. The PKK has for decades waged an insurgency within Turkey. Assad's government has cast the SDF as a secessionist force that has been pilfering the country's wealth while controlling Syria's major oil fields. The Russian Defense Ministry noted that during talks "special attention was given to countering terror threats and fighting all groups of extremists on Syrian territory."

## Long days of gravediggers tell story of Ukraine's war dead

KRYVYI RIH, Ukraine (AP): The graves are dug in the morning. Four plots, each two meters deep in the section of a cemetery in a central Ukrainian city devoted to the nation's fallen soldiers. The day begins for Oleh Itsenko, 29, and Andrii Kuznetsov, 23, shortly after dawn, when the two diggers report for the grueling work. A day in their lives tells the story of Ukraine's mounting war dead. They won't be finished until sunset.

With a tractor equipped with an earth auger they bore into the ground. Armed with shovels, they go about carving out perfect rectangles with precision, the final resting place for the country's soldiers killed in fierce battles on Ukraine's eastern front. There will be four funerals today in the main cemetery of Kryvyi Rih, an iron-mining city 400 kilometers (250 miles) from the capital, Kyiv. "It's hard," says Itsenko, a former metal worker. "But someone's got to do it." In Ukraine, even the business of death has become routine as funerals are held for soldiers across the country almost every day, at times multiple times a day. The war's death toll is

kept a closely guarded secret by government and military officials, but it can be measured in other ways: through the long working hours of the two young men, the repetitive rhythm of shovels and spades scooping up soil, the daily processions of weeping mourners. Western officials estimate there have been at least 100,000 Ukrainians soldiers killed or wounded since Russia's full-scale invasion began last year.

Estimates for Moscow's war dead and wounded are double that as Ukrainian military officials report Russia is using war tactics to exhaust resources and deplete their morale. Many soldiers have died fighting in Bakhmut, in what has become the war's longest battle, and among the deadliest. Ukrainian forces in the city are surrounded from three directions by advancing Russian invaders, and are determined to hold on to the city to deprive Moscow of any territorial victories. In the process many Ukrainian servicemen have died. At 11 a.m., when the first coffin arrives, the two men lean back, exhausted, under the late morning sun. Shovels to the side, they peer from

under baseball caps as the familiar scene, now a routine, unfolds.

The family of Andrii Vorobiov, 51, weep as they enter the premises. Dozens more mourners arrive in buses. The deceased's fellow servicemen weep as the coffin, draped in the yellow and blue of the national flag, is placed on the gravel. Vorobiov died in an aerial bomb attack in Bakhmut, leaving behind three children. When the priest is done reciting the funeral rites, Vorobiov's wife throws her hands over his coffin and wails. His daughter holds his medals, won for acts of bravery in the battlefield. "I won't see you again," she screams. "You won't come to breakfast. I can't bear it!" Between tears and screams, Itsenko and Kuznetsov wait for the last handful of dirt to be tossed onto the lowered coffin. Then they can begin the work of filling Vorobiov's grave. The outpouring of grief is normal, Kuznetsov said. He isn't affected most of the time because they are strangers. But once, he was asked to help carry the coffin because there weren't enough pallbearers. He

couldn't hold back his anguish in the middle of that crowd. He didn't even know the guy, he reflected. Kuznetsov never imagined he would be a gravedigger. He has a university degree in Technology. A good degree, he was told by his teachers. "If it's so good then why am I doing this?" he asked, panting as he shoveled dirt into Vorobiov's grave. There were no jobs, and he needed the money, he said finally. Itsenko lost his job when the war broke out, and learned the local cemetery needed diggers. Without any options, he didn't need to think twice. It is 1:30 p.m. While the two young men are still working to fill the first grave, another funeral is starting. The family of Andrii Romanenko, 31, erects a tent to protect the coffin from the afternoon sun. The priest reads the rites and the wailing starts again.

Romanenko died when he was hit by a mortar defending the city of Bakhmut. A fellow servicemen, Valery, says they had served together in Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk but parted ways in December.

## Risk of 'tragic miscalculation' in China's military secrecy: UK

LONDON (Agencies): The United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary James Cleverly has urged China to be more transparent about what he described as the "biggest military build-up in peacetime history", warning secrecy over its military activities carried the risk of a "tragic miscalculation". Cleverly devoted his entire keynote speech at a Mansion House banquet in London to China, sketching out his views on a relationship that has long left behind the so-called "golden era" under former Prime Minister David Cameron.

Cleverly noted that between 2014 and 2018, China launched new wars ships exceeding the combined tonnage of the British Royal Navy's entire active fleet and that it was establishing military bases in the South China Sea as well as beyond. He urged China to be more open about the "doctrine and intent behind its military expansion". "Transparency is surely in everyone's interests and secrecy can only increase the risk of tragic miscalculation," he said. He also warned of the potential "catastrophic" effects of any conflict over Taiwan,

the self-ruled island Beijing claims as its own. "No country could shield itself from the repercussions. Distance would offer no protection from this catastrophic blow to the global economy - and least China's most of all. I shudder to contemplate the human and financial ruin that would follow," he said. "It's essential that no party takes unilateral action to change the status quo."

China has not ruled out the use of force to secure unification and this month conducted a series of war games after Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen met with House of Representatives Speaker Kevin McCarthy on a stopover in the United States. Beijing views Tsai, who was first elected in 2016, as a "separatist" who wants "independence". She says it should be for the people of Taiwan to decide their future. Cleverly also expressed "revulsion" at China's treatment of the Uighurs in Xinjiang province, where the United Nations said last year that Beijing may have committed crimes against humanity. "We are not going to let what [ha]s happened in

Xinjiang drop or be brushed aside," he said, without elaborating. The speech also touched on China's response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, with Cleverly reminding Beijing - one of five veto-wielding members of the Security Council - of the laws and obligations it entered into when it joined the United Nations. "Peaceful co-existence has to begin with respecting fundamental laws and institutions, including the UN Charter, which protects every country against invasion," he said. The speech also included recognition of the "depth and complexity" of China's history and civilisation as well as the country's success in lifting 800 million people out of poverty over the past 45 years. Cleverly stressed there could be no new Cold War and that countries had to work with China to make progress on some of the biggest challenges facing the world. The UK would be doubling funding for "China capabilities" in the government and planned to build a new UK Embassy in Beijing, with China's approval, he added.



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# Bonds of convenience, yesterday's enemies, tomorrow's friends

**ACCORDING** to the US media, the Afghan Taliban are ready to cooperate with the United States in combating the Islamic State (IS) as the regime perceives jihadists as a threat to its own power base. As said, a senior US Defense official told the Washington Post that the dueling armed groups are openly warring, the IS-K is attacking Afghan Taliban, while government forces are actively retaliating by targeting the group's hideouts across Afghanistan. According to the report, the Afghan Taliban has served as a check on ISIS in the post-US scenario after the group took over Afghanistan in August 2021. The Western analysts had repeatedly cautioned the world that the IS was once again using Afghanistan as a staging ground for plots against America, Europe, and other destinations in the world.

A lot has been penned and deliberated regarding the prevailing situation and the issues that confronted the Afghan Taliban over the past one and a half years of the Taliban rule in Afghanistan. After gaining power, the Taliban regime faced multiple issues ranging from a war-torn economy to global economic sanctions against the group, a persistent humanitarian crisis and natural disasters including floods, diseases, and earthquakes also added up to their problems amid a severe scarcity of resources, seasoned leadership, and skilled manpower. Meanwhile, a renewed armed insurgency in the Northern region and the risks of violent terrorism from multiple armed groups including the IS-K pose serious challenges to the Islamic Emarite in Afghanistan.

Realistically, the Taliban, an armed insurgent group that seized power after a two-decades-long war with the US and its allies, neither has a fully trained and suitably equipped Army nor they have a regular government infrastructure, policing, and Intelligence set up that helps them combat an invisible and violent enemy hiding in densely populated cities and far-flung hilly areas across the country. Although, Taliban forces had carried out several successful operations against Daesh yet the volume of the threat is rapidly growing and a lack of training, technology, and shortage of manpower and resources are the major problems that seriously undermined the Taliban's campaign against the IS-Khorasan.

Apparently, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan needs massive technical and material assistance along with an all-time intelligence sharing to effectively cope with the aggravating risk of the IS-K that not only poses a security risk but also competes with the interim regime on ideological and political grounds. On the other hand, the United States and the global community are worried about the current security situation in Afghanistan, as multiple terror groups including the IS-K, and the TTP and its splinter groups have amassed in the country and pose serious security challenges to the United States, Europe, and other neighboring nations. At the same time, Pentagon and US State Department are in search of an ally that collaborates with the US to tackle this risk rapidly taking root in South Asia. Presently, the Afghan authorities had rejected media reports and ruled out any possibility of Kabul's partnership with the United States in the terrorism domain. As, the interim Afghan government is currently embattled with multiple security, economic, and foreign policy issues that could not be unlocked without support from the United States and the West.

Historically, the convergence of interests and similarity of views often brings staunch rivals to the negotiating table while differences of opinion and rigidity estranged the decadeslong friends in a few months. The Arab-Israeli ties, Saudi-Iran rapprochement, and the Taliban's past relations with the United States clearly define this rule. Apparently, the US-Taliban alliance against terrorism is a shared responsibility and common cause of Kabul and Washington. It is a future reality, however, the nature, extent, and volume of their joint work would be decided by both countries as and when the situation arises. After all, the future events would define the fate of the Afghan nation which has already paid a heavy price for the ego of its leaders.

**P**RESIDENT Joe Biden's reelection announcement presents a test for Democrats: how long can a well-past-his-prime octogenarian cover for their failure to identify and advance young political talent? Only 26 per cent of voters want to see Biden run for a second term, according to a recent Associated Press/NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll. That includes less than half of Democrats, though that latter number has improved since January.

Younger and more liberal Democrats are decidedly less enthusiastic about Biden than older and more centrist members of their party. A New York Times/Siena College poll last summer found that 94 percent of Democrats aged 30 and under preferred a different nominee. But no viable alternative to Biden has really emerged. Self-help guru Marianne Williamson isn't well positioned to take on a sitting president, as when Ted Kennedy challenged Jimmy Carter in 1980 (and even that was unsuccessful). Robert Kennedy Jr. may have the family name, but unlike his father and uncles he is a fringe figure. Vice President Kamala Harris has lacklustre poll numbers. She has not especially distinguished herself in any of her policy portfolios, whether they were challenging ones like immigration or feel-good initiatives like the space program. She has for the most part moved away from the tough prosecutorial image that distinguished her as a senator and in California politics. Her softer tone has mostly been a flop, eliciting ridicule of

her speeches and assorted online mockery.

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg was the most promising of Biden's younger 2020 rivals. His Cabinet position was supposed to give him more relevant experience and a better perch from which to pursue the presidency than the mayorship of South Bend, Indiana, a small city. Instead he has presided

**And Buttigieg has rather clearly played a role in botching the public relations aspect of the crises under his watch, consistent with his image as an aloof and grasping political operator. California Governor Gavin Newsom is the only major Democratic officeholder who has done much to prepare for the possibility of Biden not running. But he has done little to deter Biden from seeking a second term and did not want to even be perceived as wanting to challenge him in the primaries, despite offering frequent criticisms of Democratic leadership that implicate the president as much as anyone else. Thus Democrats are left with Biden, who would be 86 at the end of a second term, as their likeliest 2024 nominee. Barring a health setback, he is all but certain to be their general election candidate. That means for the third presidential election in a row, Democrats will need to substitute fear and loathing of former President Donald Trump for genuine enthusiasm for their own standard-bearer. It worked well enough in 2020, amid a pandemic and associated economic downturn.**

over repeated disasters. It can be debated how much blame Buttigieg should rightfully shoulder for train derailments and federal aviation system hiccups. But he has neither made the situations noticeably better nor done anything else to suggest that he should receive a promotion. And Buttigieg has rather clearly played a role in botching the public relations aspect of the crises under his watch, consistent with his image as an aloof and grasping political operator. California Governor Gavin

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**Jim Antle**

2020, amid a pandemic and associated economic downturn. Trump, plus the Supreme Court's reversal of the Roe v. Wade federal abortion rights guarantee, helped limit Democratic losses in the midterm elections. Yet this gambit failed in epic fashion in 2016, when Hillary Clinton was the nominee. And while the

Trump and abortion on the ballot, Democrats dodged a bullet more than they defied history. The Democratic party can barely be said to have a functional majority in the Senate and has wound up acquiescing to a few Republican initiatives already. In 2020, Biden won a large number of raw votes and improved upon Clinton's cumulative

Biden will beat him, especially if national conditions deteriorate further.

Biden receives relatively low marks for his economic stewardship in a time of low unemployment, respectable GDP growth, and cresting inflation. If a recession takes place in the next year, would anyone guarantee he will defeat Trump? It is also not certain Trump will be the Republican nominee. Biden has a plan for running against Florida Governor Ron DeSantis. The whole point of the "ultra MAGA" label is to transform other Republicans into Trump clones, which DeSantis has to some extent endeavoured to do himself. If DeSantis emerges as the Republican nominee, however, he will already have topped one political giant. It wouldn't be too farfetched to imagine he might have it in him to figure out how to upset a diminished Biden.

Moreover a campaign against DeSantis, who turns 45 in September, would magnify the age issue for Biden. Despite boasting a young party in terms of voters, Democrats have become a gerontocracy that can at best fight the Trump Republicans to something a little better than a draw. They have begun to correct this with the replacement of former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the aging Democratic leadership team in the lower house of Congress. It is almost certainly too late to make this change with Biden at the presidential level. Democrats will have to hope Biden is up for one last campaign, perhaps against one of the two Republicans they most fear.

*The Telegraph*

## Nakba is a 75-year-old story awaiting its final chapter

**Ramzy Baroud**

**O**N May 15, 2023, the Palestinian Nakba will be 75 years old. On this date, Palestinians all over the world will commemorate the tragic "catastrophe," which saw nearly 800,000 Palestinians made refugees and nearly 500 towns and villages in historic Palestine ethnically cleansed of their inhabitants. The depopulation of Palestine carried on for months - in fact, years - after the Nakba was supposedly concluded. But the Nakba has never actually ended. Until this day, Palestinian communities in East Jerusalem, in the southern Hebron Hills, in the Naqab desert and elsewhere are still suffering the consequences of Israel's quest for demographic supremacy. And, of course, millions of refugees remain stateless, denied basic political and human rights.

In a speech to the UN World Conference against Racism in 2001, Palestinian intellectual Dr. Hanan Ashrawi aptly described the Palestinian people as "a nation in captivity held hostage to an ongoing Nakba." Elaborating, Ashrawi described this "ongoing Nakba" as "the

most intricate and pervasive expression of persistent colonialism, apartheid, racism and victimization." This means that we must not think of the Nakba only as an event in time and place. Though the massive displacement of Palestinians in 1947-48 was a direct outcome of the Zionist ethnic cleansing campaign, as devised in "Plan Dalet," that event officially ushered in a greater Nakba, which continues to this day. Plan Dalet, or Plan D, was initiated by the Zionist leadership and carried out by Zionist militias with the aim of emptying Palestine of most of its native inhabitants. It paved the way for decades of violence and suffering, the brunt of which was borne by the Palestinian people.

In fact, the current Israeli occupation and the entrenched apartheid regime in Palestine are not simply the intended or unintended outcomes of the Nakba, but are in fact the direct manifestations of a Nakba that never truly concluded. It is widely acknowledged that Palestinian refugees, regardless of the specific events that triggered their forcible displacement, have

"inalienable" rights under international law - even though they are sadly unfulfilled. UN General Assembly Resolution 194 makes it legally impossible for Israel to flout these rights. This 1948 resolution states that "refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date." This must be carried out, according to the UN, by the "governments or authorities responsible."

Since Israel is the government responsible, Tel Aviv quickly moved to shelter itself from any blame or responsibility. "Top secret" files retrieved by Israeli researchers, and reported in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz in 2013, include one known as GL-18/17028. This document demonstrates how Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, attempted to "rewrite history" soon after the first and major phase of the ethnic cleansing of Palestine was completed. To achieve his aim, Ben-Gurion chose the most scandalous of all strategies: blaming the supposed flight of Palestinians on the vic-

tims themselves. But why would the victorious Zionists concern themselves with seemingly trivial issues such as narratives? The Haaretz article pointed out: "Just as Zionism had forged a new narrative for the Jewish people within a few decades, (Ben-Gurion) understood that the other nation that had resided in the country before the advent of Zionism would also strive to formulate a narrative of its own." This "other nation" is, of course, the Palestinian people.

The crux of the Zionist narrative on the ethnic cleansing of Palestine was, thus, predicated on the drummed-up claim that Palestinians had left "by choice," even though it was becoming clear to the Zionists themselves that "only in a handful of cases did villages leave at the instructions of their (local) leaders or mukhtars," as Haaretz reported. However, even in these few isolated cases, seeking safety elsewhere during times of war is not an offense and should not cost a refugee their inalienable rights. If such bizarre Zionist logic was the stan-

dard in international law, then refugees from Syria, Ukraine, Libya, Sudan and all other war zones would have lost their legal rights to their property and to citizenship in their respective homelands.

But the Zionist logic was not intended just to challenge the Palestinian people's legal or political rights. It was part and parcel of a greater process known to Palestinian intellectuals as erasure: The systematic destruction of Palestine, including its history, culture, language, memory and, of course, people. This process was reflected in early Zionist discourses, even decades before Palestine was emptied of its inhabitants, with the homeland of the Palestinian people maliciously perceived as a "land without a people." The denial of the very existence of the Palestinians was expressed numerous times in Zionist discourse and it continues to be employed to this day.

All of this means that 75 years of an ongoing Nakba, and the denial of the existence of this enormous crime by Israel and its supporters, requires a much deeper understanding of what has happened to - and

continues to befall - the Palestinian people. Palestinians must insist that the Nakba is not a single political point to be discussed with Israel or bargained away by those claiming to represent the Palestinian people. "The Palestinians have no moral or legal obligation to accommodate Israelis at their own expense. By any standards, Israel has such an obligation - to correct the monumental injustice it has committed," wrote famed Palestinian historian Salman Abu Sitta, in reference to the Nakba and the right of return for Palestinian refugees.

Indeed, the Nakba is an a l l - e n c o m p a s s i n g Palestinian story of the past, present and also the future.

It is not only a story of victimization, but also of Palestinian "sumoud" (steadfastness) and resistance. It is the single most unifying platform that brings all Palestinians together, beyond the restrictions of factions, politics or geography. For Palestinians, the Nakba is not a single date. It is the whole story, the conclusion of which will be written - this time - by the Palestinians themselves.

## Taiwan voters consider US-China tensions

**Cindy Sui**

**W**HEN Taiwan's former and current presidents each embarked on overseas trips this month, their travels highlighted how rising tensions between the United States and China are seen by the islands' voters who will pick a new leader in January. President Tsai Ing-wen met with US House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and other American legislators during stops in New York and California. Around the same time, Tsai's predecessor, former President Ma Ying-jeou became the first Taiwanese former or current president to visit China since the two sides were separated at the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949.

Generally, Tsai's Democratic Progressive Party supports Taiwanese nationalism and has championed building diplomatic ties with the US and other nations. Ma's Kuomintang party generally favors building ties with Beijing, as well as with the US and other nations, and trying to find consensus. Opinion polls conducted after the trips among Taiwanese adults 20 years and older found some 61% reported

approving of Tsai's meeting with McCarthy while 22% disapproved. Ma's trip found opinions more evenly split, with some 39% of respondents saying they approved, and 43% disapproving.

Tsai, her ruling Democratic Progressive Party known as the DPP, and their supporters see the meeting with McCarthy as an example of Taiwan's right to conduct diplomacy and an important step for Taiwan's security. "In the face of pressure and intimidation, the people of Taiwan will only become more united," she said according to Taiwan's Central News Agency, adding that her meetings with the American legislators "will contribute to cross-Taiwan Strait stability and regional peace."

Soong Hseik-wen, an international affairs professor at Taiwan's National Chung Cheng University, said Tsai's visit will help her party with voters. "It shows that globally, countries like the US accept Taiwan's [de facto] independence," Soong said. "In the future, there will be many countries that support democracy, freedom and human rights, including the EU, the US, Canada, Japan,

and even South Korea, Southeast Asian countries that will stand with Taiwan." Former President Ma Ying-jeou had a different goal for his lower-key journey to China, a "private" visit he made as a citizen, not as a former president, that saw him bring college students and academics for exchanges, to promote more interaction between the two sides as a way of reducing tensions. Ma remains influential after serving two terms in office from 2008 to 2016 at a time when he improved relations with Beijing without losing Taiwan's self-rule, freedoms and democracy.

On his "peace-building" mission this month, Ma told reporters, "the two sides must pursue peace, otherwise both sides will not have a future." Tso Chen-dong, a National Taiwan University political science professor said Ma's visit shows that when the two sides have regular contact, they can gain a better understanding about each other, which can help them out of the current "hostility spiral." "If the two sides continue to hold a negative view of each other, then they are moving towards a

collision," Tso said. "However, if they can change their perception through mutual exchanges, little by little, the collision can be slowed down and even reversed."

While surveys indicated most Taiwanese support Tsai's US visit, some voters worried that embracing Americans could further raise tensions with China. "Tsai keeps going overseas to win over the US and promote her anti-China agenda and then China carries out these military activities. This is not what we want," said Yen Hsiao-lien, who told VOA by phone that she worries her two sons will be drafted into a combat situation. "The median line (in the Taiwan Strait) is gone" Yen said, referring to the more than 100 Chinese warplanes that crossed the invisible line between the two sides in response to Tsai and McCarthy's meeting. "Tsai's supporters think she's doing great and more countries are now paying attention to Taiwan, but practically the whole world recognizes (there's only) one China." She was referring to the fact that almost all countries except 13 nations in the world recog-

nize the mainland as China and do not treat Taiwan as a country or have formal diplomatic relations with the island, although many have close informal ties with Taipei.

Washington adopted the "One China Policy" in 1979 when it switched diplomatic recognition from the Republic of China (Taiwan) to the mainland People's Republic of China. Under this policy, Washington acknowledges but does not accept Beijing's claim that Taiwan is a part of China to be reunified one day, preferring that the two sides reach a peaceful resolution, and urging both not to take unilateral actions that change the status quo. The One China Policy is not the same as the One China principle, under which Beijing asserts Taiwan and the mainland are part of one country to be reunited one day. Splits over what sort of status and relationship Taiwan should have with China continue to divide voters such as Helen Ko, a 30-year-old law student who said she will not vote for the Kuomintang because its concept of "country" encompassing the mainland and Taiwan, "is not my definition." She prefers the DPP's approach

of seeking international support.

"Let's say the whole world thinks Taiwan is very democratic ... and recognizes Taiwan's importance. Could this prevent China from attacking us? If so, the United States, Germany and everyone can come and protect us," Ko said. Analyst Tso, however, cautioned against underestimating Beijing's determination to safeguard what it sees as its territorial integrity. Even if unification is not a top priority for Beijing now, it has vowed to crush moves toward formal independence. Beijing sees the two sides as part of one country to be reunified one day and has not renounced the use of force to do so. But Tso said it was encouraging that the US administration seems to be aware of the need to maintain the balancing act between Beijing and Taipei's concerns, despite the difficulties in doing so. "Those in the US who hope to prevent a collision between the US and China are still mainstream opinions in policy circles," said Tso. "That gives people hope that the two sides can prevent any risk-taking action from really causing a collision."

VOA



# Subcultures key to understanding modern US politics

Kerry Boyd Anderson

**T**HERE are many lenses that analysts of US politics use to try to understand the country's political and cultural divisions: rural versus urban, "blue" versus "red" states, coastal versus interior, wealth disparities, racial and religious identities, and so forth. These frameworks offer useful insights into American politics and society, but they also miss important elements of subcultures that are not confined by city or state borders.

Colin Woodard's "American Nations: A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America" offers an additional lens. Originally published in 2011, an updated version was recently released, and Woodard wrote a follow-up book titled "American Character." He also runs the Nationhood Lab. Woodard argues that Americans have experienced deep divisions dating back to the country's colonial history. Today, the US primarily consists of 11 "nations," or subcultures, which spread beyond the borders of states, he says. Woodard argues that today's subcultures stem directly from the country's settlement patterns, as early immigrants came to North America with their own values and ways of life, which followed them as they moved across new territory.

He identifies the early nations as Yankeedom (today's northeast and upper Midwest), New Netherland (New York City), Tidewater (parts of eastern Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina), Midlands (spreading from parts of the East to the Midwest), Greater Appalachia (ranging from western Virginia to

northern Texas), the Deep South, and El Norte (southwest). The Left Coast and the Far West came later. New France includes a small area in southern Louisiana, while New France and the First Nation have greater representation in Canada. The early settlers of these groups came to the New World with different goals. For example, the founders of Yankeedom sought to create a religious utopia, while the founders of New Netherland built a center for trade. The founders of Tidewater desired to recreate English country society with themselves positioned as gentry, while the Deep South leaders transplanted Caribbean-style slave society to the southern colonies. The early subcultures were informed by European cultural differences, reflecting English, Dutch, German, Scottish, Irish, French, Spanish and other backgrounds.

With such different world-views, the various subcultures had conflicting ideas about religion, the role of government, community versus individual rights and responsibilities, hierarchy versus equality and much more. Some subcultures were pluralistic and relatively tolerant, particularly the Midlands and New Netherland. Others were intolerant, such as Yankeedom, which insisted on the righteousness of its religious views and efforts to reform society, and the Deep South, which insisted on strict class and racial hierarchies designed to serve elites. With time, these subcultures shifted and adapted to new territories and realities but maintained their core

principles. Yankeedom evolved from devotion to religious puritanism to secular ideology. The Far West culture reflects a specific pattern of corporate- and government-led settlement. Tidewater slipped from one of the most powerful early nations to losing much of its influence to the Midlands, Greater Appalachia and the Deep South.

Woodard argues that much of US history has been defined by an ongoing battle for supremacy between Yankeedom and the Deep South. These two subcultures insist on the right to impose their values and social ideals on others. Much of the far left and far right in American politics today draw from Yankeedom and the Deep South. Yankeedom and the Deep South lack sufficient strength to dominate the other, so they form alliances with other nations, according to Woodard. Yankeedom has a solid alliance with the Left Coast and, more recently, with New Netherland. Greater Appalachia has shifted alliances over time but today is closely aligned with the Deep South. This leaves the Midlands, the Far West and El Norte caught in the middle, with the main two alliances competing for their votes but not truly dedicated to their values.

Woodard's analysis offers crucial insights into American history and modern politics. His focus on cultural nations rather than states is a major contribution that reflects the lived reality of many Americans. For example, people living in the state of Illinois have very different political voting records and cultural norms based

on whether they live in Chicago or central or southern parts of the state. In the states of Washington and Oregon, the mountains are a much more useful boundary for explaining political and cultural views than state borders. The construct of American nations also helps to explain why polarization is so entrenched. Americans often like to believe that their country once was united behind common values, but Woodard disproves that assumption. In reality, the country has long been locked in a battle between Yankeedom leaders who want to reform the country in ways that they believe are best and Deep South leaders who believe in hierarchical structures. These beliefs are fundamentally contradictory. As both sides seek to impose their views, compromise is difficult.

Other subcultures provide some balance. The Republican Party today is dominated by the alliance of the Deep South and Greater Appalachia. The latter has different values than the Deep South, particularly opposing the dominance of wealthy, upper-class elites. Yankeedom forms the most "progressive" element of the Democratic Party, but the Left Coast has somewhat different priorities and the Democratic coalition must also appeal to more live-and-let-live cultures such as the Midlands and New Netherland. Woodard's book has some weaknesses. For example, his analysis does not offer much insight into African Americans' influence in modern US politics or the role of Asian immigrants. However, overall, his approach offers a crucial lens to understanding US politics and culture.

Arab News



## Use of explosive weapons in urban areas must stop

**F**OR almost two weeks now, vicious fighting has been going on in Sudan. Both sides of the conflict, the Sudanese army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, have resorted to shelling in densely populated areas, while truces that should have allowed civilians to evacuate have not held so far. Explosive weapons have hit homes, civilian buildings, such as hospitals, and vital infrastructure; fighting has killed at least 427 civilians and wounded 3,700.

**Nujeen Mustafa**  
This is made startlingly clear in a new report by the Explosive Weapons Monitor, which reveals an 83 percent surge in the number of civilians killed or injured by bombing or shelling in urban areas globally in 2022. This staggering toll was largely driven by the increased use of explosive weapons by Russian forces in Ukraine and an escalation of incidents in Ethiopia, Myanmar and Somalia. In the first three months of 2023, there have already been at least 4,237 civilian casualties as a result of explosive weapons being used in populated areas.

Much more needs to be done to protect civilians from the horror of these weapons. Too often, towns, cities and other populated areas are at the centre of fighting with explosive weapons, such as artillery, mortars, aerial bombs and rockets, causing devastating effects. These weapons kill, maim and terrify with a frightening ferocity. Designed for use in open battlefields, they are inaccurate and sometimes deployed recklessly, causing damage well beyond their intended target. They destroy schools, hospitals, water supplies, power lines and other vital infrastructure that people need to survive.

In a blatant disregard for civilians' lives, some armies and combatants set up their bases near civilians or purposefully try to bomb or shell populations into submission. This persistent pattern of harm is detailed in the Explosive Weapons Monitor's report, which also documents the use of explosive weapons

in populated areas in Ukraine, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Somalia, the occupied Palestinian territories and elsewhere.

In 2022 alone, the number of incidents in which hospitals, ambulances and health workers were bombed or shelled globally almost quadrupled to 603, while incidents targeting schools and teachers rose to 168. I know from my own experience the devastating effects that the use of explosive weapons in urban areas can have. The destruction of schools, hospitals, water installations and other civilian buildings makes cities completely unlivable.

We have a chance to stop the suffering of civilians now. States must endorse the Political Declaration on the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, which formally acknowledges that the use of bombs in towns and cities has unbearable consequences for civilians. I was pleased to witness 83 countries sign this ground-breaking agreement in Dublin last year, which commits governments and militaries to adopt policies and rules of engagement that better protect civilians from the explosive weapons in populated areas. Now they must urgently act to implement this agreement, to save lives of civilians in armed conflicts around the world.

And we need more countries to step up and join the declaration. The success of campaigns to ban landmines and cluster munitions show us what is possible when the world stands shoulder-to-shoulder with people like me.

Al Jazeera

# Nuclear power is a vital part of fighting climate change

Don Lincoln

**L**AST week, Germany closed its last three nuclear power plants, becoming nuclear free for the first time in 62 years. While such decisions are rightfully the responsibility of the government and electorate in Germany, it seems to be a premature choice for a world facing a changing climate, driven by humanity's ravenous consumption of carbon-based fossil fuels.

And Germany is not alone. Following the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011, many countries began phasing out nuclear power plants, citing issues of nuclear safety and long-term storage of nuclear waste. While these are valid concerns, let's take a high-level look at energy and the potential role of nuclear power generation. In any conversation about power, we must admit a few things. First is that our technological society requires power to thrive and the need for power is constantly growing. A second consideration is that power generated by burning fossil fuels is indelibly harming our environment. Carbon dioxide released from fossil fuels are heating the planet, with substantial ecological and geopolitical consequences. Taken together, these two facts suggest that humanity needs to find increasing sources of energy which emit a minimum amount of carbon.

In 1980, the annual worldwide energy production amounted to about 88,000 terawatt-hours (TWh) and it grew to 176,000 TWh in 2021, doubling in four

decades. During those 40 years, the sources of energy have changed only modestly. Fossil fuels supplied 80% of the world's energy in 1980. In 2021, it was 77%. Nuclear power grew from 2% to 4%. The remainder was generated using traditional biomass and renewable energy, like solar, wind, geothermal and hydropower. The story is not the same worldwide. For example, in Germany a substantial investment in renewables is showing significant returns. When one compares the 1990 annual German power generation to 2022, one sees a modest increase in energy usage: 550 TWh (1990) vs. 570 TWh (2022). However, the sources of energy have changed dramatically. If one compares the 1990 to 2022 percentages, one finds fossil (64% vs. 46%), nuclear (29% vs. 6%) and renewables (6% vs. 44%). The balance is from other sources.

Thus, we see that Germany is making significant strides towards a green future. The country is to be congratulated for taking the danger of climate change seriously. However, we see that even as proactive a country as Germany still gets nearly half of their energy from fossil fuels, with nearly half of that carbon-based energy from burning lignite, a particularly inefficient form of fuel. While all fossil fuels release carbon dioxide when burned, when lignite is burned, it releases more carbon dioxide to get the same amount of energy than other fossil fuels do.

And even if they hit their goal of 80% of their energy generated by renewables by 2030, that still leaves 20% using fossil fuels. Would not generating that power from carbon-free nuclear power plants be preferable?

Opponents of nuclear energy cite safety concerns and cost. By some measures, nuclear power is more expensive than other sources. However, cost comparisons can be tricky. Costs include more than the fuel and staff needed to generate energy. It includes costs to build the power plants and, in the case of carbon-based fuels, it should include the hidden cost of damages from increasingly violent storms caused by a heating planet. In the US, the regulatory process involved in building a nuclear power plant is slow and obstructive. An American plant can take a decade or more to build, while a similar plant in Japan can take five years from starting construction to attaching the plant on the grid. The difference is mostly because of the much longer regulatory review in the US. This is made worse by the fact that American plants often differ from one another. Streamlining the process and adopting a common reactor design can shave construction costs. And, of course, nuclear power plants emit no carbon dioxide and even the carbon emissions necessary to mine the fuel are relatively modest.

Solar and wind power are excellent prospects for the future, and we

should vigorously pursue them. However, the sun doesn't always shine, and the wind doesn't always blow. These green technologies require energy storage for a rainy day - literally. Nuclear power plants can run day and night, on breezy days and calm ones. Nuclear power generation is not a panacea. It does come with risks. We need to solve the problem of storing nuclear waste. The Yucca Mountain repository in Nevada was a good option, but public outcry shut down the project. Experts agree that the best choice for storing nuclear waste is in an underground facility that is "geologically stable," which means one not prone to earthquakes or change of any kind. The most radioactive waste decays quickly, although some decay more slowly. The threat is substantially reduced in 100 years, and even more so in 1,000. The Yucca Mountain repository was designed to last even longer.

America needs such a facility, and the government and nuclear industry should resume search for a suitable location to store the admittedly hazardous waste that is a byproduct of nuclear power generation. In addition, modern nuclear power plant designs generate less waste than earlier designs and further improvements should be pursued. The one thing we know about humanity is that it will continue to grow, with an associated need for energy. Nuclear power generation should be an important component of humanity's energy future.

CNN

## I am finally out of Sudan with my family, and safe - no thanks to British govt

Leila Latif

**I**AM writing this from Egypt, having completed a chaotic, two-day journey from Khartoum with my husband, children, sister, aunt, cousins and dozens of other people from across the world. The sound of gunfire and shelling is gone. We are safe. But this is no thanks to the UK government or British embassy in Sudan, both of which totally failed us. We are safe because we took matters into our own hands.

Nothing prepares you for the sound of war, which started echoing around us on the morning of Saturday 15 April, as fighting broke out between the Sudanese armed forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. We were based in the suburbs of Khartoum and had access to electricity, running water and wifi. Some of my friends and family were not so lucky; their homes were damaged or even destroyed. Heavy fighting at the main airport meant trying to escape that way was futile. At first the plan was to look after those in the worst of it, grabbing whoever we could during the pockets of quiet around iftar at dusk, and bringing them to the safety of our home. Then we had to think about saving ourselves. Artillery was landing in the garden and none of the ceasefires seemed to be holding for more than a couple of minutes.

I am a dual-national, British and Sudanese, and my husband and children are British citizens - so we contacted the embassy. We were told it was not possible for

the person we had reached out to in Sudan to pass on our details to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office for data protection reasons. So we were advised to ask someone do this on our behalf from the UK. A kind friend in London spent all day with copies of our passports and pins of our locations - and that seemed to work. Several days later we got an email confirming we had been registered, but that there was no plan: we were to just stay indoors and not to reply to the email as it was not monitored. Slowly but surely it became apparent that the British response wasn't working. News that the UK ambassador, his deputy and other senior staff were out of the country didn't help: our lives were in the hands of a group of people who thought that during a period of rising tensions it would be fine for the embassy's senior staff to have some R&R.

In the days that followed, friends texted me sounding thrilled, as the headlines were giving the impression that we would be rescued in hours. In reality we knew nothing, and were getting automated text messages asking us to fill out the same form that we'd already filled out. Some friends joined a UN convoy that was heading to Port Sudan where boats to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia were running. It was chaotic, but they made it. Meanwhile, those "remain indoors" texts were discouraging Britons from joining the convoy.

The final straw for us came on Saturday 22 April when Dutch, French, Italian and Greek citizens - not diplomats - were informed they would be flown back home from an airstrip in Khartoum (this happened on the Sunday and Monday, as the Eid ceasefire was coming to an end). We called the British consulate one last time, wondering if this meant we would be flown out too. We were told in no uncertain terms there were no plans for evacuation, despite what all these other countries were pulling off. Embassy staff and their families were the lucky beneficiaries of the UK's "complex and rapid evacuation" - as Rishi Sunak put it on Twitter - while ordinary British nationals were left to fend for themselves.

So we felt we had no choice but to book seats on a private bus with friends and family, and make the long drive north to the Egyptian border. We set off late morning on Sunday. My husband, kids and I each carried a small backpack with food that quickly perished in the roasting heat. We drove past tanks, fires and large groups of soldiers. Men with machine guns got on board the bus twice on our way out of the capital. Outside Khartoum things progressed more quickly and we zoomed up the road. For the first time in over a week, time passed without the sound of bullets and bombs. We went past everything I love about Sudan: palm orchards, sweeping rivers and thousands of people that

deserve so much better than any of this.

We drove through the night and reached the Egyptian border on Monday. But crossing proved difficult. Visas had to be pre-approved and my sister in London frantically arranged ours from there. We ended up spending the night at the border, sleeping outside until the sun rose. Phone calls were coming from those still in Khartoum, Sudanese and British alike, saying the gunfire was getting worse. I felt intensely grateful to be lying on the pavement, surrounded by those I cared about, safe at last. Many of our party were denied entry, including some British citizens - the British government again seemed to have made no effort to help its citizens get safe passage to Egypt despite its close ties with the country. On Tuesday morning we started heading for the city of Aswan, and hoped to be flying back to London soon.

You're hearing a lot about the British government and the coherence of its evacuation plan. Don't believe a word of it. At the time of writing, its people are stuck in Port Sudan, waiting for a ship. According to the latest headlines, amid a "fragile truce", the government will finally begin evacuating British nationals from Khartoum today. I'll believe it when I see it. At the border, a final ping came from the FCDO telling me to stay indoors and asking me to fill out that form for the sixth time. This time I replied: "Fuck you."

The Guardian

## In famine, 'f' is for failure

**A** person dies of hunger every 30 seconds in East Africa, where famine is looming for the third time in little more than a decade. It does not have to be this way. This crisis - fuelled by climate change, conflict and economic shocks - has left almost 29 million people across Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan in urgent need of humanitarian assistance and protection. That number is the equivalent of the combined populations of Belgium and the Netherlands.

**Fati N'zi Hassane & Reena Ghelani**

Every day, millions of children across the region go to bed hungry and without hope. An entire generation will live with the long-term consequences of malnutrition, stunting, disease and closed schools. This crisis has been brewing for three years. It is a tragic déjà vu of the dreaded 2011 famine when more than 260,000 people died because the world's response came too late. The response to the current crisis has again been too little, too late. Action at speed and scale, some say, will only be undertaken after the attention that comes with an official declaration of that dreaded f-word: famine. But famine declarations are always too late. By then, too many lives and livelihoods have already been lost. If anything, they are declarations of failure. To stand idly by as hunger levels soar is immoral and unacceptable, especially because we know that if we act together, famine is preventable. We have done it before, we can do it again.

Lack of funding is not an excuse. Wealthy governments have long promised to do their part to support immediate life-saving

action when climate disasters strike and to help affected communities recover and adapt to a changing world. National authorities have an obligation to invest in social protection, services and infrastructure and to support families and communities in the face of repeated climatic shocks. We have the technology, knowledge and resources to predict and prevent extreme hunger and to halt the deadly slide into famine. Now we need political courage and commitment

To date, only 20 percent of the \$8.7bn United Nations appeal for East Africa has been funded. The recent record \$250m allocation from the Central Emergency Response Fund to help humanitarian groups stave off famine is very welcome, but it is yet another warning that adequate funding for response is not forthcoming. Without an urgent and major injection of money, emergency operations risk grinding to a halt, and more people will die. We now need political courage and commitment to make this happen. It is said that famine is the most offensive f-word in the English language. Failure to address it is worse.

### Important Notice

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# Dar reviews progress of CDA uplift projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday chaired a progress-review meeting on the development projects carried out by the Capital Development Authority (CDA), especially its housing schemes for overseas Pakistanis.

The meeting was apprised that CDA has initiated a number of short-term and medium-term housing projects for overseas Pakistanis, out of which the Nilore Heights-I is in the completion phase for which over 6,000 applications have been received from 81 countries against 2,000 flats, a news release said.

Highlighting the importance of overseas Pakistanis in the economic and financial development of the country, Ishaq Dar directed the CDA authorities to expedite the works on the development projects for the countrymen living abroad.

He also directed the CDA authorities to hold balloting of the Nilore Heights-I project, which was exclusively developed for Overseas Pakistanis, before May 8 instead of May 16, 2023.

The meeting was briefed on the provision of commercial and residential plots for overseas Pakistanis on an open auction basis.

In the next phase, it was informed that registration for plots in C-14 and C-16 sectors for overseas Pakistanis would commence for which special facilitation desks have been established in the CDA.

For the auction of commercial plots, the Finance Minister directed extending incentives to those investors who pay the amount in US dollars so that foreign exchange reserves could be further bolstered.

He asked the CDA authorities to maintain a public-friendly and transparent system for investors during the sale and purchase process by minimizing physical contact between CDA authorities

and overseas investors and ensuring maximum interaction using the digital platform developed for this purpose.

Ishaq Dar also directed to expedite work on Kuri and Overseas Enclave projects and "the scheme for auction of plots in C-14 and C-16 sectors should be ready by mid of May 2023 for overseas Pakistanis."

Among others, the meeting was attended by Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Finance Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Tariq Pasha, Secretary of Finance, Chairman CDA, Member (Planning & Design) CDA, and senior officers from Finance Division and CDA.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chairing a meeting on CDA's projects for overseas Pakistanis at Finance Division.

## Order for Russian Crude welcomed

KARACHI (APP): President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, has echoed the welcoming and relieving sentiments of the entire business, industry and trade community of Pakistan on the country's first order for Russian crude vis-a-vis rest of the world oil markets – and, as per prevalent rates, Pakistan may benefit up to \$18/barrel or up to 30%.

In a statement on Wednesday, he expressed his hopes that the first cargo will arrive at the Karachi port in May 2023. It makes economic sense as well to import crude only as three big refineries in the country have the capacity to refine Russian crude, he added.

Irfan Iqbal Sheikh also appreciated that the government wants to gradually enhance the total imports of suitable Russian crude to 100,000 barrels per day.

He elaborated that this single step will take some burden off Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves (FER), balance of payment, trade deficit and soaring inflation, as petroleum imports is the single largest category in the country's total import bill.

## Major stock markets mostly retreat

LONDON (AFP/APP): Major stock markets mostly slid and the dollar faltered Wednesday, fuelled by concerns for the banking sector and broader fears of global recession this year.

Tokyo and European indices headed south following Wall Street losses Tuesday.

This followed lacklustre US consumer data and as traders tracked earnings reports.

"Realisation is dawning that more ominous clouds are gathering over the US economy, causing fresh nervousness for investors," noted Susannah Streeter, head of money and markets at Hargreaves Lansdown.

Those concerns were top of mind for traders after US-based First Republic Bank disclosed it lost more than \$100 billion in deposits in the first quarter, intensifying concerns about its long-term prospects after the failures of other mid-sized banks. Shares of First Republic plunged 49 per cent, pressuring other regional banks that have been seen as vulnerable.

Meanwhile, the US Conference Board reported a bigger-than-expected drop in consumer confidence in April. Also weighing on sentiment was the question of interest rates, with Sweden's Riksbank on Wednesday hiking its guiding rate by a half-point to 3.5 percent as it tried to rein in double-digit inflation.

The US Federal Reserve is also mulling further inflation-fighting hikes.

Oanda senior market analyst Edward Moya said the overall outlook suggested "the Fed can stay on their tightening course with the risks of a June hike still remaining on the table".

On the corporate front, Google parent company Alphabet beat market expectations in the first quarter of 2023 with a net profit of \$15 billion, the company said after the close of Wall Street on Tuesday.

Microsoft's results for the first three months of the year also pleased investors, lifted by its industry-leading business cloud products.

## PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 91.76 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 91.76 points, with a positive change of 0.22 per cent, closing at 41,099.58 against 41,007.82 points on the previous day.

A total of 186,900,702 shares were traded during the day as compared to 173,790,631 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 5.781 billion against Rs 5.724 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 332 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 174 of them recorded gains and 133 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 25 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Pak Refinery with 16,012,179 shares at Rs 14.22 per share, Fauji Food Ltd. with 13,692,805 shares at Rs 6.35 per share, and WorldCall Telecom with 10,382,725 shares at Rs 1.14 per share.

Khyber Textile witnessed a maximum increase

of Rs 52.45 per share price, closing at Rs 774.90, whereas the runner-up was Sanofi Aventis with a Rs 40.00 rise in its per share price to Rs 700.00.

Sapphire Fiber witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 74.02 per share closing at Rs 790.51, followed by JS Global with a Rs 24.33 decline to close at Rs 300.21.

**Rupee gains 7 paise against Dollar**

Pakistani rupee gained 07 paise against the Dollar in the interbank trading on Wednesday as it closed at Rs 283.39 against the previous day's closing of Rs 283.46.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of Dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs 287.3 and Rs 289.7, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs1.64 to close at Rs 312.24 against the last day's closing of Rs 310.60, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese Yen surged by 02 paise and stood at Rs 2.12; whereas an increase of 67 paise was

witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 352.90 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 352.23.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal went down by 02 paise and 04 paise; closing at Rs77.16 and Rs 75.54, respectively.

**Gold prices increase by Rs450 to Rs218,650 per tola**

The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 450 and was sold at Rs 218,650 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs 218,200 the previous day. All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold also surged by Rs 386 to Rs 187,457 from Rs 187,071, whereas the price of 10 grams of 22 karat gold went up to Rs 171,836 from Rs 171,482.

The price of per tola silver increased by Rs40 to close at Rs 2570 and that of ten-gram silver also rose by Rs 33.36 to close at Rs 2203.36.

The price of gold in the international market remained unchanged to close at \$2000, the association reported.

## SCCI hails extension in date for payment of bills

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) president Muhammad Ishaq praised the decision of Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) for giving two-day extension in payment of bills for industrial consumers.

Ishaq in a statement issued here on Wednesday stated that SCCI had given a recommendation to PESCO

to make extension in payment of electricity bills while keeping the prolonged Eid holidays.

Following the recommendation of the SCCI, he said PESCO has extended the date for payment of electricity bills for industrial consumers from 26th to 28th April, which is a highly laudable step that has definitely provided relief to industrial consumers to some extent.

The chamber president said PESCO has instructed consumers to make contact with their relevant Revenue Office (RO) following the extension on the date.

Ishaq thanked the Chief Executive Officer and top-management of Peshawar Electric Supply Company for this decision.

He urged the industrial consumers to immediately approach ROs in light of directives of the PESCO.

## Atif Haleem appoints as new chairman of PBF

PESHAWAR (APP): Former President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) Peshawar Muhammad Ishaq Haleem had been appointed as Provincial Chairman of the Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

A notification issued here on Wednesday said that he has replaced Umer Masood ur Rehman.

Talking to the media, newly appointed PBF KP

Chairman said, "The future of Pakistan lies in economic diplomacy and outreach to the world, adding Pakistan must reorient the thrust of its diplomatic efforts towards the economic benefit and prosperity of the masses."

He said, "Economic Diplomacy is not just a buzzword, but a blueprint to leverage our diplomatic assets in the service of our development agenda."

"A serious shift towards

increasing trade and investment stakes of regional partners may well be the only answer to reviving growth and stability," he said.

"It is a real test for the leadership to maturely and sensibly manage this transition from a security-led engagement to leveraging the regional economic potential for shared prosperity and the possibility of catching up with the income levels of emerging Asia."

## Export of sports goods increases 17.78 per cent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The export of sports goods from the country witnessed an increase of 17.78 percent during the nine months of the current fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the export of corresponding months of last year.

The country exported sports goods worth US\$ 306.11 million during July-March (2022-23) as opposed to the export of US\$ 259.904 million during July-March (2021-22), showing growth of 17.78 percent, according to the data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

Among the sports products, the exports of footballs rose by 33.67 percent, surging from US\$ 132.935 million last year to US\$

177.694 million during the current year.

The gloves exports, however, dropped by 7.53 percent by going down from US\$ 56.702 million last year to US\$ 52.432 million during the current year, the PBS data revealed.

Likewise, the exports of all other sports goods rose by 8.14 percent to US\$ 70.267 million from US\$ 75.984 million last year.

Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the sports goods export witnessed an increase of 14.12 percent in March 2023 as opposed to the export of the same month of last year.

The sports goods exports in March 2023 were recorded at US\$ 35.953 million against exports of US\$

31.504 million in March 2022.

During the period under review, the export of footballs and all other sports products surged by 21.07 and 23.69 percent respectively, whereas the exports of gloves decline of 17.91 percent.

Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports of sports goods increased by 26.81 percent during March 2023, in contrast to the exports of US\$ 28.352 million in February 2023, the PBS data revealed.

On a month-on-month basis, the exports of footballs and gloves rose by 36.24 and 25.90 percent respectively, in addition the exports of other sports commodities also increased by 8.02 percent.

## Banks to open on 29th, 30th April to facilitate tax collection

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: All authorised branches of banks will open on April 29 and 30, 2023 (Saturday and Sunday) and observe extended working hours to facilitate the collection of taxes.

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), in a statement issued here on Wednesday, informed that on the request of Federal Board of

Revenue (FBR) it has been decided that all those branches of banks that remain open on Saturday including authorised branches of National Bank of Pakistan and field offices of SBP Banking Services Corporation shall remain open on April 29 and 30 in order to facilitate the taxpayers in payment of Government duties and taxes.

Such branches would also observe extended working hours till 06:00 p.m. to facilitate the collection of taxes through ADC's Over-the-Counter (OTC) facility, it added.

For ensuring the same day clearing and settlement of payment instruments deposited at NBP's authorised branches for customs collection the SBP directed National Institutional

Facilitation Technologies (NIFT) to arrange special clearings at 01:00 p.m. on Saturday, April 29 and at 06:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 30 as well.

The central bank instructed all banks to keep their clearing-related branches open accordingly till such time that would be necessary to facilitate the special clearings by NIFT on April 29 and 30.

## PPL funds Center of Excellence at UET

### F.P. Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL), a leading E&P company since the early 1950s and one of the largest corporate donors in the country, has funded the establishment of 'Center of Excellence for Research, Development & Training (CERDT)' at University of Engineering and Technology (UET), Lahore.

UET, Lahore, is one of the prestigious engineering universities in the country and was established in 1921. It has played a leading role in education, research and training of professionals over the years.

MD and CEO PPL Mr. Imran Abbasy presented the cheque for the first tranche of Rs. 21 million for the

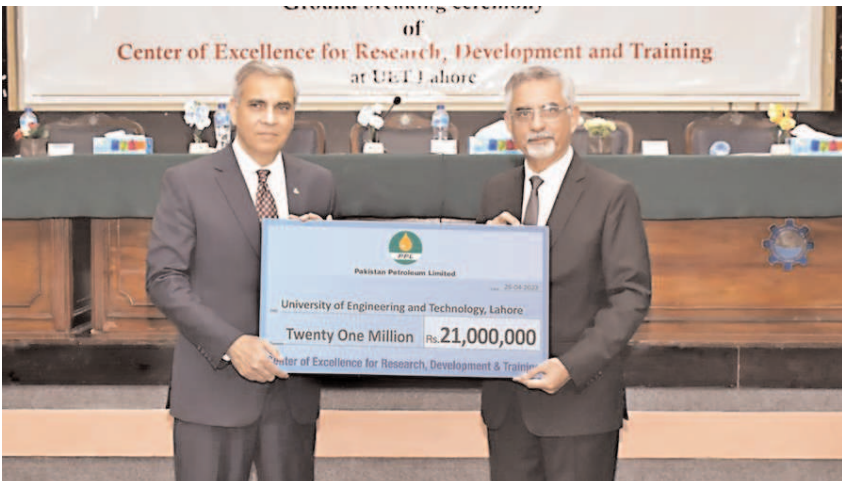
establishment of CERDT to Vice Chancellor, UET Lahore, Professor Dr. Syed Mansoor Sarwar at a simple ceremony held on April 26 at UET, Lahore. Mr. Abbasy also laid the Foundation stone and was briefed on the Project at site. Officials from both organizations were present on the occasion.

As such, PPL has committed an overall grant of Rs. 51.1 million over the next three years which covers construction and completion of CERDT building along with procurement of furniture, equipment and simulation tools.

Speaking on the occasion Mr. Abbasy highlighted that as a major stakeholder in fulfilling the country's energy requirements, PPL remains com-

mitted to investing in human resource development and use of latest technology for the Exploration & Production sector through academia-industry partnership under its Corporate Social Responsibility programme.

The CERDT aims to be the first Center of its kind in the oil and gas sector in Pakistan for capacity building and training of technical personnel to fulfil not only local requirements but also export skilled professionals. The Center will also play a pivotal role in Research and Development in areas relevant to the oil and gas sector and provide support to PPL for in house E&P studies and arrange national and international petroleum conferences and seminars.



LAHORE: MD and CEO PPL Imran Abbasy presents donation cheque for establishment of Center of Excellence for Research, Development & Training at UET Lahore to VC UET Lahore Professor Dr. Syed Mansoor Sarwar.

## President KCCI seeks extension in last date of electricity bills payment

KARACHI (PPI): President Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Mohammed Tariq Yousuf on Wednesday requested the management of K-Electric to extend the last date for payment of electricity bills in view of the extended holidays observed on account of Eidul Fitr.

In a communique sent of Chief Executive KE Syed

Moonis Abdullah Alvi, President KCCI said that the Karachi Chamber has been approached by many of its members and also by all seven industrial town associations who have been asking to request the Management of K-Electric to extend the last date for payment of electricity bills which were either due during extended Eid holidays

or immediately after Eid.

Keeping in view a large number of representations, he requested KE's Chief Executive to issue necessary directives for the extension of last date of electricity bill payment by 10 days as the businesses require additional time to return to normalcy after observing extended holidays whereas another holi-

day on account of Labor Day was also ahead.

He hoped that Moonis Alvi would give affirmative response to KCCI's request which would be widely appreciated as it would enable members of the business community to easily pay their bills within the revised due date without any late payment surcharge.

## Tokyo stocks close lower

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo stocks closed lower on Wednesday as worries over prospects for the US economy and the financial sector weighed on the market.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index ended down 0.71 percent, or 203.60 points, at 28,416.47, while the broader Topix index lost 0.89 percent, or 18.25 points, to 2,023.90.

"Concerns over the outlook of US economy... as well as reignited worries over a credit crunch trig-

gered by a US bank's earnings, prompted investors to sell shares across the board," IwaiCosmo Securities said in a note. The dollar stood at 133.56 yen, against 133.73 yen in New York on Tuesday.

On Monday, regional US bank First Republic said it lost more than 40 percent of its deposits in the first quarter this year, and its shares sank nearly 50 percent by end of trade on Tuesday.

That prompted US shares to fall, which in turn

weighed on the Japanese market, analysts said.

The First Republic crisis helped "reignite concerns about the banking sector", Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a note.

Among major shares in Tokyo, Sony Group closed down 1.38 percent at 12,140 yen, Panasonic slipped 1.12 percent to 1,278.5 yen, and Olympus dipped 2.50 percent to 2,359.5 yen.

Honda ended down 0.74 percent at 3,476 yen after it said it would tie up with

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing as part of efforts to secure a stable semiconductor supply.

Nissan lost 1.25 percent to 475.7 yen, but Toyota closed up 0.19 percent at 1,803.5 yen.

Uniqlo operator Fast Retailing fell 0.78 percent to 31,720 yen.

Airlines ended lower, with ANA Holdings slipping 0.51 percent to 2,930 yen, and Japan Airlines losing 0.23 percent to 2,579 yen.





## In brief

## Munir Aftab passes away

K A R A C H I (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan Junior Football Lyari Team's former captain Muneer Aftab passed away at the age of 26 following a protracted battle with kidney disease. Munir Aftab was buried in Mawa Shah Graveyard Karachi. Munir Aftab was suffering from kidney disease and was under treatment for a long time. He spent his last days in abject poverty due to unemployment and economic hardship. He was among the players who were dismissed from the National Bank. The deceased was a defensive player and had captained Pakistan in Under-14, Under-16 and Under-19 football competitions in addition to other international tournaments. He has left behind a widow and three innocent children to mourn. His youngest daughter is only six months old.

## Rodham, Hamidi Halls, pool to open soon

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Rodham, Hamidi Halls and swimming pool at the Pakistan Sports Complex which were being upgraded in line to host the South Asian Games 2024 in a befitting manner, would be opened in May and July. The South Asian Games (SAG) was a quadrennial multi-sport event held among athletes from South Asia. Pakistan was selected to host the 14th Edition of the South Asian Games by the South Asia Olympic Council (SAOC), the governing body of the games, said a press release. Meanwhile, the repair, renovation and up-gradation work of sports facilities of the Sports Complex and Coaching Centres was underway to make them of international standards. Due to the said work, some facilities were temporarily closed for the safety of athletes and members. However, most of the facilities like Lawn Tennis Courts, Fitness Gym, Athletics Track and Football fields, Liaquat Gymnasium, and Sportsperson Hostels are open for members while national training camps of various sports disciplines are in progress. Besides, a number of sports events have been organized by public and private sector educational and other organizations at Sports Complex during the last year. The management of the Pakistan Sports board was making all-out efforts to make readily available sports facilities for athletes and the general public as early as possible.

## Ronnie's hopes ended by Luca

S H E F F I E L D (Agencies): Ronnie O'Sullivan's hopes of an eighth World Championship title came to an end in the quarter-finals as Luca Brecel staged a superb fightback to win 13-10. O'Sullivan, who equalled Stephen Hendry's record of seven Crucible crowns last year, had led 6-2 and 10-6. But he failed to win a single frame in the final session in Sheffield as Brecel reeled off seven on the trot. The Belgian compiled breaks of 112, 64, 72, 61, 78 and 63 to seal a memorable victory and a place in the last four. Brecel, 28, meets Anthony McGill or Si Jiahui in the semi-finals, with their match finely balanced at 8-8 heading into the final session at 19:00 BST. Brecel's victory came in a remarkable finale that saw 39-time ranking-event winner O'Sullivan fail to win a frame in a session at the Crucible for the first time since his 17-11 loss to Graeme Dott in the 2006 semi.



RAWALPINDI: Tom Latham and Babar Azam pose with the ODI series trophy, Pakistan vs New Zealand.

## Pakistan U19 Cricket squad departs for Bangladesh

KARACHI (PPI): Saad Baig-led Pakistan U19 departed for Bangladesh in the wee hours of Wednesday to feature in a series consisting of a one-off four-day, five 50-over matches and a solitary T20. The series will be played from 30 April to 17 May in Chattogram and Rajshahi.

Karachi-born Saad Baig, also led Pakistan U19 against Bangladesh U19 last year when Bangladesh visited Pakistan for one four-day match, three one-dayers and two T20s in November in Multan.

The squad includes 17 players and three reserve players. Six players apart from the captain Saad and vice-captain Ali Asfand had featured in the previous series against Bangladesh U19. These include Arafat Minhas, Mohammad Ibtisam, Mohammad Ibtisam, Mohammad Tayyab Arif, Shahzaib Khan and Wahaj Riaz.

Head Coach Sabih Azhar said: "We have prepared well for this tour, and our

boys are eager to showcase their talent on the field. We have been working on strengths and weaknesses of the players, and we are confident that the players will put up a good fight against the Bangladesh team at their own backyard."

Captain Saad Baig also shared his thoughts ahead of the tour and said, "We are all very excited to represent our country. We have been training hard and are ready to take on the challenge. As a team, we are focused on playing our best cricket and competing well in every match. We have set ourselves some goals for the series, and are determined to achieve them."

Pakistan U19: Saad Baig (captain) (Karachi), Ali Asfand (vice-captain) (Faisalabad), Ahmed Hussain (Peshawar), Aimal Khan (Peshawar), Amir Hussain (Rawalpindi), Arafat Minhas (Multan), Azan Awais (Sialkot), Hamza Nawaz (Lahore), Mohammad Ibtisam (Sargodha), Mohammad Ibtisam (Sahiwal), Mohammad Tahir

(Fata), Mohammad Tayyab Arif (Sialkot), Obaid Shahid (Lahore), Sajjad Ali (Lahore), Shahzaib Khan (Mansehra), Shamyul Hussain (Islamabad) and Wahaj Riaz (Karachi).

Abidullah (Islamabad), Ikramullah Tareen (Quetta) and Muhammad Zulkifal (Charsadda) (all reserves)

Player Support Personnel – Tauseef Ahmed (manager), Sabih Azhar (coach), Umar Rashid (assistant coach), Hafiz Naeem Ul Rasool (physiotherapist), Yasir Malik (trainer) and Shan Ullah (team analyst)

Tour Schedule: 30 April- 3 May – Four-day match; ZACS, Chattogram

6 May – 1st 50-over match; ZACS, Chattogram

8 May – 2nd 50-over match; ZACS, Chattogram

11 May – 3rd 50-over match; SKS, Rajshahi

13 May – 4th 50-over match; SKS, Rajshahi

15 May – 5th 50-over match; SKS, Rajshahi

17 May – Only T20 match; SKS, Rajshahi.

## Pakistan hockey team seek govt's NOC to play Asian Champions Trophy in India

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) Secretary Haider Hussain has revealed that the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has been requested to issue a no-objection certificate (NOC) to the national team to allow them to participate in the Asian Champions Trophy being held in India.

Six teams will participate in the event, which will take place from August 3-12 in Chennai. "We have written a letter to the PSB for NOC," Hussain told private channel in an exclusive interview. "We have also sent our entry to the Asian Hockey Federation," he added. Hussain also shed light on why Pakistan could not afford to miss the Asian Champions Trophy, while also ruing the lack of funds.

"We will have to pay a hefty fine if the team doesn't participate in the event. It will also pave our path towards Olympics qualifiers," he said. "Lack of funds is the biggest hurdle but we are trying to resolve this issue through the help of the government and the private sector," he added.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan junior hockey team's training camp resumed on Wednesday (today) in Lahore. This will be the final phase of the preparation for the Junior Asia Cup 2023 to be held in Oman.

Sources said that 28 players have been directed to report at the training camp at

the DHA hockey academy.

The Junior Asia Cup is scheduled to be held from May 23 to June 1. The event is also the qualifying round of the Junior Hockey World Cup 2023. The top three teams of Junior Asia Cup 2023 will qualify for the Junior World Cup.

The PHF has planned to organise two-day trials for the selection of the Pakistan junior team. Sources said that the trials would likely be held on April 29 and 30. PHF President Brig. Khalid Sajjad Khokhar, Secretary Hussain and Selection Committee Chairman Kaleemullah will be present on the occasion.

The team management will also organise junior boys' matches against senior players of the Pakistan hockey team or strong departmental teams during the training camp. These practice matches will be organised at the DHA hockey academy.

The schedule for these matches will be announced after the selection of the team. The Pakistan junior team will leave the country on May 20. The training camp will be continued till the departure of the team, sources added. The teams have been divided into two pools. Pool A comprises Pakistan, India, Japan, Thailand, and Chinese Taipei, while Pool B consists of Korea, Malaysia, Oman, Bangladesh and Uzbekistan.

## Rizwan closes in on India dynamo for top batter ranking

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan opener

Mohammad Rizwan has been rewarded for his excellent finish in the recently completed T20I series against New Zealand by making ground on India star Suryakumar Yadav at the top of the MRF Tyres ICC Men's T20I Batting Rankings.

Rizwan compiled an unbeaten 98\* during the fifth and final match of the T20I series against the Black Caps and the right-hander ended the series as Pakistan's leading run-scorer with a total of 162 runs. That helped Rizwan close the gap on Suryakumar to less than 100 rating points, with the dynamic India star still leading the way with 906 rating points while the Pakistan veteran rises from 798 to 811 points and maintains a second place on the rankings.

Pakistan skipper Babar Azam holds onto third place on the latest T20I rankings for batters, although the right-hander dropped 13 rating points to 756 points after he managed just 19 runs in the final match of the series.

Middle-order batters Mark Chapman of New Zealand and Ifthikhar Ahmed of Pakistan are the big movers as they have attained career-best positions at the end of their five-match series that ended 2-2 with the last two matches played in Rawalpindi over the past week.

Chapman, who smashed unbeaten knocks of 71 off 42 deliveries and 104 off 57 in those two matches to finish with a series-topping aggregate of 290 runs, has rocketed 48 places to 35th in the rankings. Chapman's previous best ranking was 54th attained in February 2018.

Ifthikhar, who scored 36 in the final match, has proceeded six places to the joint-38th position. He is the third-highest-ranked Pakistan batter after Rizwan and Babar, who are ranked second and third in the list led by India's Suryakumar Yadav. Ifthikhar's previous best was 43rd position in November last year.

## Raducanu pulls out of Madrid Open before first round

MADRID (Agencies): British number one Emma Raducanu has withdrawn from the Madrid Open with a hand injury hours before her first-round match.

The 2021 US Open champion, hindered by a wrist problem in recent months, was set to face Bulgaria's Viktoriya Tomova on Wednesday.

Raducanu, 20, is now almost certain to drop out of the world's top 100.

Her withdrawal came a day after a terse news conference in which she used just 58 words to respond to 16 questions.

Raducanu's most recent appearance was a one-sided defeat by Jelena Ostapenko in Stuttgart this month,



after which she dropped to 85 in the world rankings.

She skipped Great Britain's Billie Jean King Cup defeat by France the week before that to prepare for the clay-court part of the season.

Defeat in Stuttgart was her second in a row in the opening round, after losing

to Bianca Andreescu in the Miami Open last month.

Raducanu suffered dis-comfort in her right wrist against Andreescu and later said she must find a long-term solution.

The injury ended her 2022 season early and returned before Indian Wells this month, when Raducanu reached the last 16 despite preparations also being hampered by tonsillitis.

Raducanu, who has played only nine matches this season and has also struggled with an ankle injury, is due to compete in the Italian Open in Rome starting on 8 May, before the French Open - the second Grand Slam of the year - begins on 28 May.

## Junaid Alam President Pakistan Judo Federation elected as President South Asian Judo Chief

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Col Junaid Alam, President Pakistan

Judo Federation (PJF) has been elected as President South Asian Judo Federation during South Asian Zone Meeting conducted in Kuwait on 26 April 2023. Mr Masood Ahmed, Vice President PJF is also elected as Head of Education, Coaching & Kata Commission South Asian Judo Federation.

Col Junaid, Former Secretary Army Sports, besides his current appointment as President PJF was also holding the post of Vice President of SAJF (South Asian Judo Federation) from term 2019-2023.

Now he has been unanimously elected by South Asian Judo Federation for next term 2023-2027 during said elections participated by delegates of Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. Elections were held at Crowne Plaza Hotel, Kuwait City.

The elections were supervised by Mr Mukesh Kumar, General Secretary

Judo Union of Asia. Mr Dharma Kumar Sherestha from Nepal was elected as General Secretary.

His Excellency Mr Malik Muhammad Farooq, Ambassador of Pakistan to Kuwait congratulated Col Junaid in person with other business community members at election's venue.

While presenting President PJF a flower bouquet he urged him to focus on developing bilateral ties with Kuwait through this sport especially in this year in which Anniversary of 60 years of Diplomatic Relations with Kuwait is being celebrated.

Judo Union of Asia is located in Kuwait with its President Mr Obaid Al Anzi - a resourceful person at international sports arenas.

It is pertinent to mention that earlier in June 2021, Col Junaid was also appointed as Director International Judo Federation (IJF) Military & Police Commission till date. IJF is placed as one of the top federations of Olympic Movement with the largest network of National Sports federations

of 207 member countries round the globe.

While talking to media, Junaid said that it is indeed another honour for me to be entrusted at this platform, which by virtue of the population is almost one quarter of the world. He added that club leagues will be focused within South Asian Region as it is not financially affordable for this regions' countries to give judokas international exposure involving huge travelling expenses to other continents.

He said that I hope that with this position I would also be able to promote Judo and make a viable strategy to earn laurels for Pakistan in coordination with other concerned stakeholders.

Mr Masood was also holding this appointment in last 2019-2023 and by virtue of his technical services rendered he was unanimously elected in this as well. Mr Masood has a vast experience in the field of Judo and had been the former Secretary General of Pakistan and South Asian Judo Federation.

## Closing ceremony of Wana Football Championship 2023

## F.P. Report

WANA: Closing ceremony of Wana Football Championship 2023 was held on 24 April at Wana District South Waziristan. Total 46 teams (32 local and 14 non local) teams participated in the tournament.

Final match of the tournament was played between Sailab Club MiranShah and Wana Wazir Club in which Sailab Club MiranShah won by 5-3 on penalties.

Prize distribution ceremony was held in Scouts Stadium Wana in order to award prizes to teams and organising committee.

IGFC KP South Major General Haroon Hameed gave away medals, cash



prizes to participants. IGFC KP South appreciated the game of both teams and motivated them to participate in other provincial Tournaments as well.

## Pakistan take on New Zealand in does-matter series in last lap of ODI WC preparations

RAWALPINDI (Cricinfo): When Pakistan cricket fans urged the side to experiment during the T20I series because it "doesn't matter", they meant something along the lines of "it doesn't matter because New Zealand are missing most of their first-choice players, and Pakistan have all of theirs available; so go out, have fun and take risks - the T20 World Cup is 18 months away, the scoreline is immaterial".

But New Zealand clawed back from a 2-0 deficit to get one hand on the trophy after Mark Chapman's heroic exploits earlier in the week, and Pakistan are beginning to find out that there's nothing in their cricket that "doesn't matter". The criticism in the inquest that followed - both from the fans and the media - wasn't really too extreme, as it can be. After all, when a side that played the T20 World Cup final just five months prior follows up a series loss to Afghanistan with a split series against New Zealand, who offloaded most of their best players in India en route Pakistan, it must mean something.

But there's little time for Pakistan to worry about that, or indeed for New Zealand to exult in their feats of the past ten days. For the five games coming up in the 50-over format really do matter, offering some of the last real-match practice ahead of the ODI World Cup in the autumn. New Zealand, again, are without some of the players they will have at their disposal for the World Cup, and so have another opportunity to test their bench strength. But with Kane Williamson a high-profile doubt for that tournament, finding someone who can somewhat adequately fill those huge boots might represent priority number one.

**Lack of ODI time a worry for Pakistan**

For Pakistan, simply the opportunity to play a bit more ODI cricket against a quality side is welcome. Since the end of the last World Cup, Babar Azam's side has played just 23 ODIs; they played 82 in the preceding World Cup cycle. The last time Pakistan took part in fewer ODIs between two World Cups was the 1979-1983 cycle,

and even that included 25 games. Some of that has to do with the postponements and cancellations of the Covid-19 pandemic forced, but ODI cricket's gentle decline from relevance appears to have hit Pakistan's scheduling especially hard. Even the games they have played haven't often come against the highest class of opposition; they include six against Netherlands and Zimbabwe, a further three against West Indies during the off-season in Multan, and another three against a completely second-string England side.

But that doesn't mean this is a weak ODI side; if anything, Pakistan have greater role clarity and offer more consistency in this format than any other. They won a home series against the No. 1 ranked Australia a little over a year ago, boast a top three that could hold its own against any in world cricket, and eye-watering depth in the pace-bowling attack. There's quality in the legspin department thanks to Shadab Khan - and recently even Usama Mir - while Mohammad

Nawaz's utility to the side, particularly as a lower-order batter, has grown. They were within one win of rising to the top of the ODI rankings just three months ago, but ended up falling short when New Zealand launched a comeback to take that series 2-1.

That remains one of just two series Pakistan have lost in the World Cup cycle, but there remain issues to address. Pakistan are still trying to find a way of sorting out a suspect middle order to balance the burden of run-scoring more evenly through the team; in the period between the two World Cups, no team has relied on its top three more than Pakistan. Haris Sohail was brought back in from the cold to help alleviate that problem, while Agha Salman offers potential of providing some of that stability. Pakistan will hope Mohammad Rizwan can begin taking to this format with the same adroitness as he has the other two formats, and want allrounders Nawaz, Faheem Ashraf and Shadab to fill in some of the gaps.

**New Zealand's chance to lock World Cup contenders**

It might appear New Zealand are in a better space with much less pressure and fewer expectations, but this close to a World Cup, any team would wish to have its full squad available. A stronger New Zealand side, after all, did walk away with the series trophy in Pakistan three months ago, and doubling up on that would bring calm to a side that has been extremely dominant this cycle at home, but crumbled frequently against stronger opposition away.

That win in Pakistan is something of an outlier; every other New Zealand series win this cycle has either come in New Zealand, or against Ireland, Scotland and - relatively more notably - West Indies. While home forms, which includes two series wins against India, is nothing to be sneezed at, it will bear little relevance to the World Cup in India itself. When New Zealand visited India immediately after that Pakistan triumph, they were swept aside 3-0 rela-

tively comfortably.

But New Zealand will be encouraged by how well some of the reserve players held up against Pakistan in the T20I series. This close to a World Cup, the incentive to hit another level and book a spot at that tournament will be high. There was little in Chapman's recent T20 matches to suggest the quality he displayed in Pakistan, and he was instantly rewarded with an ODI berth. That puts him in immediate contention for the World Cup, and if Chad Bowes or Rachin Ravindra - who have showed flashes of form in the T20Is - can replicate their performances, these ODIs may offer New Zealand a lot more cover for their bench over the coming months.

New Zealand may have a lot of players in India at present, but even the ones here will fancy a trip across the border in six months. The T20I series may have been shared and will soon be forgotten, but you won't catch too many claiming this ODI series doesn't matter either.





## In brief

### Sanjrani condoles Khosa's demise

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani has expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the sad demise of former Speaker of the Balochistan Assembly Mir Zahoor Hussain Khosa. In his condolence message, Sanjrani paid tribute to late Mir Zahoor Hussain Khosa's political and social services adding that the late Khosa was an excellent human being and an accomplished politician. Sanjrani expressed his heartfelt condolences to the family of the deceased and prayed to Allah Almighty to elevate the status of the deceased and grant patience to the bereaved family. The Deputy Chairman of the Senate, Mirza Muhammad Afridi in his separate message expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of former Speaker Balochistan Assembly Mir Zahoor Hussain Khosa and prayed to Allah Almighty to grant patience to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss.

### IRSA releases 93,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 93,700 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 107,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1444.64 feet and was 46.64 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 28,400 cusecs while outflow as 22,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1119.20 feet, 69.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 39,700 cusecs and 32,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 26,400, 43,700, 34,900 and 6,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 24,500 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 7,100 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

### AIOU commences final exams today

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is commencing final examinations of different programs on April 27 including Associate degree in Arts (B.A.), Associate degree in commerce (B.Com), Associate degree in Education, Associate degree (Human Resource Management and Islamic Banking & Marketing), B.Ed, BBA, BS (Accounting and Finance) and BS (ODL) programs which were offered in autumn 2022 semester. According to Controller Examinations, these exams were scheduled to be held on April 25 but due to Eid Holidays, the exams of April 25 and 26 have been rescheduled and will be conducted on June 20 and 21.

### Two proclaimed offenders arrested

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested two proclaimed offenders wanted in different cases here on Wednesday, informed a police spokesman. Taxila police netted Rizwan, wanted in a theft case since 2020. Similarly, New Town police nabbed Zeeshan, wanted in a cheque dishonor case since last year. The Divisional SPs appreciated the performance of police teams adding that the crackdown against the wanted criminals would be accelerated. Meanwhile, Rata Amral police held a bookie and recovered Rs 4,500 from his possession during the raid.



ISLAMABAD: A beautiful view of seasonal flowers in the Federal Capital.

## Don't lost opportunity to develop consensus on polls: JI Emir

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Sirajul Haq has warned the politicians that perhaps only the "local government polls" would be held in the country if they lost opportunity to develop consensus on the general elections.

In a statement issued from Mansoorah on Wednesday, he said that getting consent of the allies on national vote was also a test case for the prime minister. Extremist approach in both the political and religious matters was dangerous for a society, he added.

Haq said that some people in the country wanted martial law in democracy and the same aggressively talked about people's right to vote for during military rule. It

was also obvious from the past examples and prevailing circumstances that the VIPs took benefits in both the cases while the common man and the country had to bear the burnt, he added. People were standing in queues for the bag of wheat flour in every city, the prices of bread touched the skies and ruling elite was busy in fight, he regretted, reminding the politicians their prime responsibility to provide peaceful environment to the masses for elections. Neither the establishment, nor the political parties and judiciary owned the country but they were the people of Pakistan who had to make the ultimate decision, he said.

The JI chief said the three-member bench of

the top court had an option to convene the full court session if it wanted to stick to its position on election date in Punjab as everyone would be bound to accept the decision.

Earlier, addressing a mass meeting in Lalamosa Gujrat, Sirajul Haq said the country needed honest and competent leader to get rid of the prevailing crises. He said the country was full of resources but the corruption and unfair distribution of resources created the problems. He said that nobody from abroad would now come to help out Pakistan and the problems would be resolved only if the national leadership would come forward. He said the JI could make the country a welfare Islamic state if voted to power.

## PML-Q distributes tickets among 50 candidates in Punjab

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam (PML-Q) has fielded strong candidates in the upcoming election contests by distributing party tickets to more than 50 candidates in Punjab.

According to Pakistan Muslim League (Q), Chaudhry Sarwar and Chaudhry Shafay Hussain distributed tickets in a ceremony held in Lahore. However, the tickets of North Punjab were distrib-

uted by the party leaders including Mrs. Farrukh Khan, Mustafa Malik, Chaudhry Ansar Farooq and Rizwan Sadiq. The tickets have been issued to Hamad Abbasi from Murree, Nargis Jabeen from Rawalpindi, and Chaudhry Babar Javed from Taxila.

Leader PML-Q Mrs. Farrukh Khan in a statement said that the tickets were given to more than five percent of women.

The party will play a key role in the upcoming elections, said PML-Q leader Mustafa Malik. He further said that the party has also supported candidates in more than a hundred constituencies. Meanwhile, Chaudhry Ansar Farooq said that under the leadership of Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain and Chaudhry Sarwar, the Muslim League-Q is emerging as a major political party across the country.

## Wafaqi Mohtasib intervenes to expedite payment of Rs.750,000 as compensation

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A widow was paid Rs.750,000/- on the intervention of Wafaqi Mohtasib, Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi by Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) as her son has died of electrocution caused by an electric pole in the street. The widow has lodged a complaint to the Wafaqi Mohtasib stating therein that her sixteen years old son met a tragic accident and died due to electrocution on 13th March 2021.

It was learnt that an electric pole was installed in the street by IESCO for feeding supply to a private poultry farm. The residents of the areas had repeatedly approached IESCO who failed to address the danger posed by the short circuited electric pole in the street.

Legal proceedings were initiated by the

aggrieved family whereby the private poultry farm paid some compensation whereas IESCO did not pay its share of Rs. 7,500,000/- despite hectic efforts by the widow for over two years.

Wafaqi Mohtasib's Office, on receipt of this complaint, took up the matter with the concerned agencies, IESCO and NEPRA including provincial authorities, Punjab Forensic Science Agency and the Punjab Police. Its efforts with these federal and provincial agencies, undertaken as part of the Informal Resolution of Disputes (IRD) project as well as regular complaint handling mechanism, yielded positive results and a cheque of Rs. 7,50,000/- was delivered to the widow on 14th April, 2023.

The complainant has thanked Wafaqi Mohtasib for his timely intervention in getting her lawful right without further delay.

## ‘PTI must stop for abusive language against opponents’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leader Uzma Bukhari on Wednesday criticized the leaders of Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) and said they must stop for using abusive language against other political parties and the leaders as well.

Talking to a private news channel, she said that the parliament is the best forum to discuss public issues and all political leaders of different parties should start debates over there.

She suggested that the voters had given the mandate to the government to resolve

their issues through the parliamentary forum. "Imran Khan focused to come back into power by creating chaos in the country as he misguided the public through speeches in various gatherings," she said.

Replying to a question, she said PTI needs to stop dictating other parties as our party knew very well as what to do when and where. Commenting on the judgment of the Supreme Court over elections, she said, we are not touching anything falling into the jurisdiction of the judiciary as political parties had demanded a full court bench to listen their views.

### PHA working to combat dengue fever

RAWALPINDI (APP): Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi is working to combat dengue fever and control the spread of the disease, said a PHA spokesperson.

She informed that Director General, PHA, Ahmed Hasan Ranjha had urged the citizens to pay special attention to cleanliness asking them to properly dispose of the stagnant water.

She said the Rawalpindi district administration was creating an awareness among people about the danger of dengue and all possible preventive measures were being taken to cope with this disease.

The spokesperson said PHA was also working in collaboration with the Rawalpindi District Administration and the District Health Department to combat dengue.

The DG had also advised the citizens to use mosquito repellent spray regularly, she added.

The DG had directed the PHA officials to take all possible steps to prevent the spread of dengue in the office premises. Walks were also being organized in different parks and roads to spread awareness, she said adding, a large number of PHA officers, employees, and citizens were attending the walks.

### 14 outlaws held during search operation

RAWALPINDI (APP): On the special direction of City Police Officer CPO Khalid Mahmood Hamdani, search operations were conducted in various areas of Rawal Town. During operations, Police have arrested 14 outlaws and recovered more than 02 kg drugs, 85 liters of liquor, weapons and Rs 7,500 from their possession. Rata Amral police held two liquor supplier Daulat Khan and Aleem Khan besides recovering 60 liters of liquor from their custody.

Similarly, Bani police nabbed 05 outlaws Numan, Haseeb, Shehryar, Jahanzeb and Numan and recovered 02.3 kg drugs and 01 pistol 30 bore from their possession. While, Pirwadhi police held Kashif, Zafar, Naveed, Umeer and Shoaib and recovered 525 grams of charas, 25 liters of liquor and Rs 7,500 were also recovered.

## PUC urges all stakeholders in Sudan to resolve issues through dialogue

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) on Wednesday urged all stakeholders in Sudan to resolve the issues through dialogue.

The council also urged the United Nations (UN), the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member countries to play an active role in ending the civil war situation in Sudan.

It appreciated the timely action of the leadership and government of Saudi Arabia in the evacuation process of foreigners stranded in Sudan besides its own nationals who had safely arrived in Jeddah. It further raised its voice to resolve Kashmir issue in accordance with the UN resolution. PUC Chairman and International Tazim-e-Haramain Sharifain Council Secretary General (SG) Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Allama Abdul Haq Majahid, Maulana Muhammad Rafiq Jami, Maulana Asad Zakaria Qasmi, Maulana Noman Hashir, Maulana Muhammad Shafi Qasmi, Maulana Asadullah Farooqui, Allama Zubair Abid, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awan, Maulana Abu Bakr Hameed Sabri, Maulana Qasim Qasimi, Maulana Abaidullah Gormani, Allama Tahir Al-Hasan, Maulana Muhammad Ashfaq Pitafi, Maulana Aslam Siddiqui, Maulana Aziz Akbar Qasmi, Maulana Saadullah Shafiq, Maulana Abdul Sattar, Qari Abdul Hakeem Athar, Mufti Umar Farooq, Maulana Zubair Khatana, Hafiz Saqib

Munir, Maulana Anwar-ul-Haq Mujahid and others, in a joint statement, said, "The Muslim Ummah is like a body, if any part of the body suffers, it causes pain for the entire Ummah."

The Ulema and Mashaykh said Iran-Saudi Arabia relations had been restored, the gap between the Arab-Islamic countries was being bridged, and the relations of the Arab-Islamic countries with Syria were also on the way to recovery.

At this movement, the state of civil war in Sudan was a cause of concern for the entire Muslim Ummah, they added.

They said the efforts that the Saudi leadership was making under the supervision of the Saudi Crown Prince Amir Mohammed bin Salman under the patronage of the King of Saudi Arabia, Salman bin Abdulaziz, were appreciated by the entire world. They said the PUC was continuing its efforts on the issues of Ummah including Kashmir and Palestine. Pakistan's position on the Kashmir issue was clear. They said the council had appealed to the countries included in the G20 to boycott the meeting being held in Srinagar, keeping in view India's atrocities on minorities and innocent people of Indian Illegally Occupied and Kashmir (IIOJK). They expressed the hope that religious leadership included in R20 would not attend any kind of meeting in the Indian IIOJK.

## Sherry Rehman calls for vigilance as Pakistan braces for heavy rainfall

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman has advised the provinces on Wednesday to take necessary precautions and remain vigilant as Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has issued a weather advisory predicting heavy rainfall from April 26th to May 7th.

The minister urged all the provinces to take necessary precautions to ensure public safety during the forecast period of heavy rainfall. This includes cleaning storm drains, ensuring electricity pole stability and maintaining road access in the event of local flooding, she added.

She emphasized for taking extra precautions in the areas where reconstruction work is going on as a result of damages caused by the 2022 floods.

The minister feared that the country may fall into a recovery trap if it did not have sufficient resources to deal with the devastation caused by the 2022 floods.

"My fear is that Pakistan will be in the resilience and rebuilding trap if there are not enough resources to plough into the devastation wrought by the 2022 flooding. While there is no clarity on what level of monsoon to expect next, the rebuilding projects will certainly be impacted as well as economic recovery, if even a fraction of the devastation repeats itself."

Sherry Rehman said, "The forecast predicts strong winds and hailstorms that may cause damage to infrastructure and standing crops, particularly the wheat crop. Farmers must manage their activities keeping in view the weather forecast to avoid damage to crops and infrastructure. In addition, heavy rains may cause flash floods in Mansehra, Abbottabad, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Kashmir from May 1st to May 4th. Parts of Balochistan and hill torrents of D.G Khan may also experience heavy rainfall from April 28th to May 2nd. Landslides may occur in hilly areas of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir, Murree, and Galiyat during the forecast period."

The minister highlighted that across Pakistan, from Kashmir to Karachi, we must prepare to expect unstable weather patterns leading to sporadic urban flooding "The fishing community is advised to be cautious, particularly off the coast of Ormara, Pasni and Gwadar, due to the possibility of choppy seas and extreme weather conditions. It is important for the citizens to take necessary precautions and stay informed about weather updates during this period."

According to PMD, the regions that will be affected by rain, wind, and thunderstorms include Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Swabi, Mardan, Bajaur, Kurram, Waziristan, Kohat, Islamabad, Murree, Galiyat, Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Gujranwala, Sialkot and Lahore from 26th April (evening/night) to 29th April.

## Ban on kite flying continues to prevent accidents, ensure safety

ISLAMABAD (APP): The District Administration of the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) on Wednesday warned the citizens that kite flying within the city was banned and that any violation of the ban would result in legal action being taken under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).

ICT Deputy Commissioner (DC) Irfan Nawaz Memon in a media statement said that the ban was imposed on April 4 for a period of two months, in an effort to prevent kite flying accidents and protect lives and property.

He also instructed Assistant commissioners

(ACs) magistrates, and law enforcement agencies to ensure strict compliance with the ban while directing them to take immediate action against kite flyers and kite sellers.

Memon said that kite flying had become a major public safety issue in the city, especially during the spring season.

The use of sharp strings and high-flying kites caused numerous accidents in the past, resulting in fatalities and injuries, he said, adding that the ban was aimed at curbing this menace and ensuring the safety of citizens.

He asked the law enforcement agencies to

ensure strict compliance with the ban and take action against violators. He also urged the public to cooperate with the relevant authorities and report any violations of the ban.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Office of District Magistrate ICT had prohibited the manufacturing and selling of kites, kite flying string sharp Maanjha metallic wire and nylon cord within the revenue/territorial limits of Islamabad district for a period of two months through an order on April 4. The order asked the owners/occupants of the house, shops, hospitals, buildings, etc not to allow kite flying activity on their roof-tops.



ISLAMABAD: An old man is selling brooms at a roadside setup to earn some livelihood.



### Trapped child rescued

FARAH (Agencies): The forces of the National Defense Ministry rescued a trapped child from a deep well in Farah. A four-year-old child who fell into a deep well in Farah was rescued by the Ministry of National Defense said the Ministry in a statement. The child had fallen into a well in Khairabad district of Farah province, he was rescued by the technical team of the Ministry of National Defense and with the cooperation of the forces of the 215th Army Corps.

## The Frontier Post

# AFGHANISTAN

Shawwal 06, 1444 — Thursday, April 27, 2023

### Low-quality items collected

KABUL (Agencies): Up to 1,500 kilograms of low-quality items, mostly edible staff have been collected around the Kabul city's 1st municipality district and taken to a special site for distraction, the Kabul Municipality said in a statement. "The low-quality goods have been collected from different markets in the 1st district and transferred to an appropriate area for elimination," said the statement from the municipality.

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

## Kabul Airport attack mastermind killed by Taliban: US officials

KABUL (Khaama Press): US officials said that the Taliban had killed an Islamic State fighter who was the "mastermind" behind a suicide bombing at Kabul's international airport in 2021 that claimed the lives of 13 American soldiers and scores of civilians during the United States chaotic evacuation from the country.

The bombing occurred on August 26, 2021, as US troops were trying to help Americans and Afghans flee in the chaotic aftermath of the Taliban's takeover, and compounded America's sense of defeat after 20 years of war, Reuters reported.

"He was a key ISIS-K official directly involved in plotting operations like Abbey Gate, and now is no

longer able to plot or conduct attacks," White House spokesperson John Kirby said in a statement, referring to the Abbey Gate entrance to the Kabul airport where the blast occurred. He did not name the official.

The Washington Post reported earlier this week that according to leaked Pentagon documents, Daesh has made Afghanistan a key coordination hub for attack planning across Europe and Asia and engaged in "aspirational plotting" against the United States.

According to the documents, the attack planning reveals deliberate attempts to target embassies, churches, business areas, and the FIFA World Cup, which drew more than 2 million spectators to Qatar last year. These plots, organized

by Daesh leaders in Afghanistan, were made known to Pentagon authorities on December 9.

The leaked documents emphasized the mounting danger Daesh presented in Afghanistan. However, there are no signs of Qaeda's resurgence, which many counterterrorism experts predicted would occur after the US pullout.

Daesh is an enemy of the Taliban, which first appeared in eastern Afghanistan in 2014 and later made inroads in other areas, the report said.

However, the de facto administration rejected the presence of Daesh. It said it is propaganda that Daesh is using the country to plot and coordinate terror attacks against the US and its allies.

### Falol residents lost access to drinking water

P U L - I - K H U M R I (Pajhwok): Land sliding caused by recent flash floods have blocked natural streams of drinking water in the Falol village of northern Baghlan province's Burka district due to which local residents have lost access to drinking water.

Burka District Council Chief Haji Abdul Wal told Pajhwok Afghan News that thousands families of Flol Gharanez area were facing acute drinking water shortage.

"Local residents brought drinking water from natural streams but after land sliding caused by recent flash flood blocked the natural water resources and the residents were currently facing water shortage," he said.

He said around 5,000 families lived in the area and they desperately needed drinking water.

District Chief Abdul Hanan Huzaifa also acknowledged the issue and added from the past 15 days the residents of Falol area were facing drinking water issue.

He said if the drinking water issue of these families not resolved they may be forced to migrate.

Abdul Waheed Obaida, head of the Rural Rehabilitation and Development, said with the support of some NGOs, the survey of flood affected people in Falol area had been conducted and work on rehabilitation of natural streams had been launched.

He said such emergency issue could not be addressed due to the lack of fund.

### British man being held

KABUL (Khaama Press): Kevin Cornwell, 53, a British man arrested in Kabul in January, is seriously unwell and in need of immediate treatment due to the risk of dying from kidney issues.

Kevin Cornwell, 53, one of the three British men being held in Afghanistan, is seriously unwell and in need of immediate hospital treatment due to "life-threatening" kidney issues, according to a non-profit group negotiating with the Taliban on his behalf, The National reported.

Scott Richards, the co-founder of the UK-based Presidium Network, negotiating for two of the three men, told The National Mr Cornwell suffers from kidney issues, which have worsened significantly.

Cornwell is receiving "some degree of pain relief" but only recently became aware of the seriousness of his illness, according to Scott Richards, co-founder of the UK-based Praesidium Network, negotiating for two of the three men.

"Both kidneys are in a poor state, but his right kidney was meant to receive hospital treatment and, without doing so, will occlude," he said.

"Occlusion will lead to sepsis which would be fatal. Mr Cornwell is anticipated to require immediate hospital treatment after his release."

Three British nationals were arrested in Kabul in January and are currently held in custody by the Taliban, including so-called "danger tourist" Miles Routledge. He and his aid worker, an unidentified UK national, manage a hotel in Kabul.

Mr Cornwell is suspected of keeping an illegal handgun in his room safe, yet other than his family; he received a license for it. "Over the past few weeks, we have systematically addressed statements coming from Afghanistan, some understood to be official and others speculative," said Mr Richards.

"We demonstrated first that Mr Cornwell worked for the UN and was a paramedic in response to state-medic that he was a journalist and in Afghanistan for other purposes.

"Last week, we issued the license for the weapon along with a photograph of the pistol where serial numbers match. We have demonstrated consistent and supported evidence that this is a misunderstanding."

## 500 Afghans formerly addicted to drugs now working

HERAT (TOLOnews): At least 500 addicts who were treated in Herat have been hired to work in the salt mine of the province as a result of an agreement between the counter-narcotics department of Herat and the salt extraction company.

The counter-narcotics department of Herat has been treating these drug users for about five months with the people's financial support.

"We provide the facilities for the people we transfer, including food and expenses and accommodation," said Nasser Omid, head of the salt mining company. "I spent around four months in the facility before leaving. Now, thank God, I'm really happy, with Allah. I am clean, healthy, and I live healthy," said Abdul Salam, a drug user who has received treatment.

"We are ready to go to work and provide bread for our families," said Abdul Latif, another drug user who has received treatment.



Local officials in Herat said that they would not let the addicts leave their treatment facilities until they were provided employment possibilities.

"We sent about 24 individuals to them in the first phase a few days ago, and now we have gathered

about 50 people to send to them. We have spoken to them about 500 people," said Hayatullah Rouhani, director of the counter-narcotics department of Herat Police Command.

The counter-narcotics department of Herat gathered over 5,000 drug users

from the city of Herat over the previous winter and registered them in addition treatment centers.

Most of these addicts, according to department officials, have received treatment and are now prepared to reintegrate into society.

## Mines unprofessionally dug in Nuristan geological zone

PARON (Pajhwok): Geologists and miners say mines in the geological zone of eastern Nuristan province are being dug unprofessionally, causing different problems.

The zone encompasses some mines of Kunar, Nuristan and Nangarhar provinces. These mines are being dug in an unprofessional manner and as a result most part of the minerals is lost and this causes losses to the government and the people.

Nuristan Department of Mines officials say common people dig mines in many areas of the province and they are given six part based on the current system. These miners submit legal revenue to the government under the framework of the Ministry of Mines and can commit no violation.

Geologist Engineer Taseerullah said the Nuristan geological zone was one of the six important zones of the country based on geology and had sufficient reserves of tourmaline, plates and lithium, but unfortunately these minerals were extracted informally.

He believed if the minerals were extracted professionally, it would help increase the government's revenues.

Engineer Taseerullah said minerals were damaged when excavated in non-technical way and caused damage to the miners, environment, water surface and plants and even caused various diseases.

Miner Mohammad Omar, who has been associated with precious stone mining in Chapa Dara district for almost 15 years, he was suffering from lung

disease caused by unprofessional mining.

Hazrat Mohammad Hazrati, a doctor in Nanglam area of Kunar province, said 99 percent of miners die of lung diseases.

In addition to lung disease, he said, 80 percent miners suffered from stomach disease and many of his clients faced these problems.

Dr. Hazrati said unprofessional mining was dangerous as it took the lives of many people and sometimes seriously injured people were brought to his clinic.

He said people who had worked in the mines for more than 10 years must have been affected by these diseases.

Nuristan Department of Mines officials confirmed mines were dug by common people and councils in

many areas of the province, who received only the sixth part based on the current system.

They say the miners submit legal revenues to the government under the Ministry of Mines and cannot commit any kind of violation. They add they are trying with the relevant ministry to advance according to a known procedure.

Maulvi Said Rahim Omair, director of mines of Nuristan province, told Pajhwok that the ministry had sent the mining procedure the Islamic Emirate's leadership and after its approval mines would be dug professionally.

Nuristan has precious and semi-precious stones' mines in many areas, but geologists are concerned about their unprofessional excavation, which they say damages the entire environment.

## Appointment of Turkish envoy as Afghanistan coordinator hailed

KABUL (Agencies): Former US special envoy for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad on Wednesday welcomed the UN secretary general's move to appoint a special coordinator on Afghanistan affairs and said the upcoming meeting in Doha must produce a road map for engagement with Kabul – a step that "will define the ambassador's mission".

In a series of tweets on Wednesday Khalilzad described Feridun Sinirlioglu as an "excellent choice" for the position and said the "ambassador has two great attributes: vast experience and good judgment."

Khalilzad stated that "3 other steps are needed." According to him, the

meeting scheduled for May 1, which will be hosted by UN chief Antonio Guterres, "must produce a road map for international engagement with Afghanistan. Such a step will define the ambassador's mission."

He reiterated his previous suggestions and said: "As I have stated many times, the best option is for the implementation of the still open steps in the Doha Agreement. It would be important that Ambassador Sinirlioglu attend this meeting." He also suggested a meeting with the IEA during the Doha gathering "to determine their commitment to full and complete implementation of the Doha agreement."

The May 1 meeting aims

to drum up international engagement around common objectives for a durable way forward on the situation in Afghanistan.

Stéphane Dujarric, Spokesman for UN Secretary General, said recently that "the Secretary-General has said and continues to believe that it's an urgent priority to advance an approach based on pragmatism and principles, combined with strategic patience, and to identify parameters for creative, flexible, principled, and constructive engagement."

"It is his aim that the discussions, which will be held behind closed doors, can contribute to a more unified consensus regarding the challenges ahead,"

Dujarric said. The IEA has however revisited the issue of Afghanistan's seat at the UN and repeated their call last week for the seat to be handed over to the IEA's designated representative.

"Without a doubt, this is an injustice to the people of Afghanistan. A great nation in this region should have its place in the United Nations, and in all discussions about Afghanistan, there should be the real representative of the people of Afghanistan, which is currently the Islamic Emirate," Bilal Karimi, deputy spokesman of IEA, said.

He said that putting pressure on the IEA will not work and it will rather undermine the credibility of the foreign community.

## Americans deliberately left weapons in Afghanistan



KABUL (TOLOnews): The Russian foreign ministry's spokesperson, Maria Zakharova, in a press conference claimed that the the US deliberately left weapons in Afghanistan, and "now they are destabilizing the situation because terrorists may get hold of them."

Speaking at the press conference, Zakharova said that "we will not be surprised if these weapons soon surface in disputed areas of the region and other places."

"We keep saying that the failed 20-year-long military campaign by the US and NATO in Afghanistan is still adversely affecting both Afghanistan and the entire

region around it. It seems like the Americans deliberately left these weapons there, and now they are destabilising the situation because terrorists may get hold of them. We will not be surprised if these weapons soon surface in disputed areas of the region and other places," she said.

However, the Islamic Emirate's spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid, disputes the sale or smuggling of military equipment in Afghanistan and said that the current government will take care of this equipment responsibly.

"The concerns expressed are untrue. We reassure them that every weapon the

Americans left behind has been stored safely at a depot and won't fall into the hands of anyone. All of them under control," Mujahid noted.

"The remarks made by Russian officials are media propaganda and not entirely reliable. Before the pullout, America made all its major weapons, such as aircraft and heavy weapons, unusable," said Tariq Farhadi, a political analyst.

In the meantime, former US president Donald Trump, in an interview with Fox News, said that 700,000 advanced pieces of military equipment has been left in Afghanistan.

"They are the second largest arm dealers in the world right now. We give it to them—brand new trucks, brand new planes, brand new guns, rifles. 700,000 rifles and guns, think of that: 700,000. They only need 40,000, probably not even that, so they are selling the rest, making a fortune, we left it there," Trump said.

The Ministry of Defense of the Islamic Emirate also said it prevented the smuggling of thousands of weapons.

## ‘\$4.62 billion needed for aid to Afghanistan’

KABUL (TOLOnews): United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Afghanistan said that humanitarian aid remains the last lifeline for the citizens of Afghanistan.

OCHA added that in 2023 they need US\$4.62 billion for humanitarian aid to the Afghanistan people.

"With Afghanistan facing its 3rd consecutive year of drought, 2nd year of severe economic hardship, and consequences of decades of war & recurrent natural disasters, humanitarian aid remains the last lifeline for much of the population. \$4.62bn is needed to assist 23.7m people in 2023," said OCHA.

Karimdad is a low-income man who lives in

Kabul who said that he faces economic challenges, and unemployment has increased his problems.

"We call on OCHA to help us, and provide work for us," said Karimdad.

Meanwhile, the deputy of the Ministry of Economy emphasized the need for continued humanitarian aid to Afghanistan and asked the international community not to politicize humanitarian aid.

"The international community must not politicize humanitarian aid, it must help the Afghan people and continue aid. Along with humanitarian assistance, help should also be provided in the field of development and progress," said Abdul Latif Nazari, the deputy of the Ministry of

Economy.

Several economists said that in order to reduce poverty in Afghanistan, it is necessary to implement infrastructure projects.

"To decrease the level of poverty in countries, it is necessary that the world cooperates with us with economic aid," said Abdul Naseer Reshtia, an economist.

"When big economic projects restart and work is provided for people, we can find stability in the economy," said Nazok Mer Ziyarmal, an economist.

Earlier, the United Nations and other organizations expressed concern over the increase in poverty in Afghanistan and said that 28 million people are in poverty.

## Committee formed to collect electricity bills

KABUL (TOLOnews): Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat said that a committee has been established to collect debts.

DABS official Safiullah Ahmadzai said that this committee is made up of representatives of the company, intelligence, and the Ministry of Interior.

"This committee has been formed by the Prime Minister and led by Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat, and it also includes intelligence and the Interior Ministry to collect the electricity bills of those who do not pay their debts," said Safiullah Ahmadzai.

Meanwhile, according to

this company's numbers, in 1401 they collected 32 billion Afs in revenue and eighty percent of this income will be paid to electricity exporting countries.

In 1401 Breshna Sherkat had 32 billion Afs in revenue, eighty percent of this income will be paid to electricity exporting countries, and 20 percent will be used for internal expenses," said Ahmadzai.

"Urgent measures must be taken, the medium-term plans should be implemented right now so that Afghanistan can reach a positive and self-sufficient path," said Amanullah Ghalib, former head of

Breshna Sherkat.

Several economists believe that investments in infrastructure can provide the country with needed electricity.

"We have about 8 billion cubic meters of Afghanistan's water resources, by creating large and small dams, it can provide most of the renewable energy from Afghanistan," said Qutbuddin Yaqubi, an economist.

According to information of Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat, it's expected that in 1402 the Mahiper turbine will be rebuilt, and the capacity of this dam should increase by 25 MW.

## Tourists visit Aryob Zazai in Paktia

PAKTIA (TOLOnews): In recent weeks, the Aryob Zazi district of Paktia province has witnessed a large number of tourists from various provinces of Afghanistan.

The tourists say they would like more facilities in recreational areas in the provinces.

"We came here to the Aryob Zazi district of Paktia, and it's a beautiful place," said Mohammad Iqbal, a Helmand province resident.

"The Aryob Zazi district is a beautiful place in our country," said Hamyon, a Kandahar resident.

Some residents of Paktia called on the government to provide facilities in the area and to start reconstruction projects.

"The income that is obtained here should be used in the Aryob region," said Mohammad Anwar Sediqi, an elder.

The management of the recreation area of Aryob Zazi district has been contracted with a private company for 25 years. Although the company has provided facilities for tourists, some tourists had complaints.

"The road is so bad, and It should be renovated, and other facilities should be provided," said Ramazan, a Kandahar resident.



"It will be good if this place is designated a national park," said Mohammad Siddiq, a Kandahar resident.

Local officials said that people's problems and suggestions have been sent to the central office and in the future these requests will be addressed.

"More facilities have been provided compared with last year," said

Abdul Moyne, deputy of the district governor.

"We have prepared seven tour guides for tourists so that they are not upset and treated well," said Bismillah Akbari, the head of the tourism company.

According to local officials, since the first day of Eid, 50,000 people from various provinces have visited this area for entertainment.





**BELJING:** Chief of the Army Staff, General Asim Munir Ahmed being presented with the guard of honour at PLA Army Headquarters.

# UNSC urges Sudanese warring parties to respect ceasefire

UNITED NATIONS (APP): UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has warned that the ongoing power struggle between Sudan's top generals not only puts the future of the country at risk, but threatens to "detonate across borders".

The UN chief was addressing an emergency session of the UN Security Council in New York late Tuesday night and again demanded an end to the fighting between troops loyal to Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) leader Fattah al-Burhan, and his deputy on the so-called Transitional Sovereign Council, Rapid Support Forces (RSF) leader, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo "Hemedti".

"It is incumbent on Sudanese leaders to put the interests of their people front and centre", said the secretary-general, who began his speech by paying tribute to all the Sudanese men, women and children, who have lost their lives or been injured since the faction fighting began. Guterres said a prolonged full-scale war was "unbearable to contemplate" warning that seven countries border Sudan, all of which had seen conflict or serious civil unrest in the past decade.

Poverty and hunger are already rampant across the whole region, he added. "This conflict will not, and must not, be resolved on the battlefield, with the bodies of Sudan's children, women and men." Following the popular overthrow of long-term dictator Omar al-Bashir four years ago, the generals carried out a joint military coup in 2021, ending the brief and fragile civilian power-sharing agreement that it was hoped would take Sudan into a new era of peace and civilian rule.

As negotiations advanced following positive steps towards elections and a democratic future, the two military factions failed to agree on how to integrate the SAF and RSF forces, sparking this month's in-fighting. The secretary-general said the Sudanese people, "have made their wishes very clear. They want peace and the restoration of civilian rule through the transition to democracy", he told ambassadors in New York.

He urged all with influence and interests in restoring peace, to press

the generals to return to the negotiating table immediately. Turning to the UN operations, he repeated that despite relocating staff to protect personnel and their families, the Organization is committed to "staying and delivery support to the Sudanese people." He said Special Representative Volker Perthes would be staying in the country, along with other senior leaders: "We are establishing a hub in Port Sudan to enable us to continue to work with our partners in support of peace, and to alleviate human suffering".

"Above all, we stand with the Sudanese people", Guterres concluded. Addressing the 15-member Council via videolink from Sudan, Perthes said a United States-brokered 72 hour ceasefire that began on Monday, had held "in some parts" but the rival militias had continued accusing each other of violating the truce, while in Khartoum fighting had largely continued "and in some cases, intensified." "Residential areas near SAF and RSF installations have come under persistent attack", he said, with many civilian areas damaged, including schools, shops, utilities, mosques, hospitals and other health facilities — some now "fully destroyed."

Home invasions, looting of shops and cars at checkpoints, has been "rampant", including homes and cars of local citizens, UN staff, humanitarian workers and diplomats. "We have also received disturbing reports of attempted sexual assaults. With supply lines running out and destroyed in airstrikes, fear of increased criminality is mounting", he said, with reports of prisoners being released onto the streets. He detailed the volatile situation in Darfur, and mixed responses to attempted ceasefires, with thousands on the move to escape fighting, amid spiraling prices and reports of armed robbery.

"The fighting in Sudan has created a humanitarian catastrophe, with civilians bearing the brunt", he told the Council. At least 450 have been killed, and over 3,700 injured, Perthes said, almost certainly conservative estimates which are climbing upwards. In a glimmer of hope, civil society and grassroots networks have mobilized to fill a vacuum left by the

forced humanitarian retreat, he said.

He said that UN brokered ceasefire efforts of recent days had not been entirely fruitless, and in the few hours of time negotiated during brief humanitarian pauses, "some brief respite" had been gained, and UN staff were able to relocate on the lengthy journey to Port Sudan. Perthes warned that reports of some tribes and armed movements mobilizing in Darfur, taking sides in the power struggle, were "dangerous and could draw in Sudan's neighbouring countries. I renew my call on all communities to maintain their neutrality and refrain from taking sides." He said the two generals responsible for the violence were continuing to trade accusations and issuing competing claims over territory won, and "there is no unequivocal sign that either is ready to seriously negotiate, suggesting that both think that security a military victory over the other, is possible.

"This is a miscalculation. As fighting continues, law and order will further break down", said Perthes, who also heads UN mission UNITAMS, "and command and control dissipate. Sudan could become increasingly fragmented, which would have a devastating impact on the region." He said the UN was continuing to ensure that national staff in Sudan, "can relocate as needed to safe areas." Like the Secretary-General, he stressed that "our relocation and evacuation do not mean that the UN is abandoning Sudan", and there were now three immediate priorities for the UN and partners.

First, a sustained ceasefire with a monitoring mechanism in place. Secondly, a return to political negotiations, and finally, "the alleviation of human suffering." "The courage and resilience of our Sudanese friends, national staff and partners, continue to motivate us", concluded the Special Representative. "The entire UN family will work tirelessly towards ending the violence in Sudan and restoring hope for a better future." Briefing the Council on the humanitarian effort, the UN Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Joyce Msuya, said events since 15 April had been "a nightmare for ordinary citizens and aid workers alike."

## Parliament's authority to allocate funds for polls: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Wednesday asserted that the Parliament possessed complete authority to allocate Rs 21 billion to the Election Commission of Pakistan for conducting the upcoming elections in the Punjab province, scheduled for May 14.

"The use of the phrase 'sovereign powers' implies that the decision is legally and constitutionally valid, allowing the Parliament to exercise its jurisdiction in this matter," he added.

The minister was speaking in the National Assembly after obtaining approval to suspend the Question Hour and deliberate on the Federal Cabinet's decision to refer a summary to the Parliament for the allocation of Rs 21 billion to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for the upcoming general elections in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces.

He emphasized that certain clauses in the Constitution "explicitly state that expenditures necessitate the approval of the National Assembly. The Federal Cabinet has once again submitted the Supreme Court's directives from April 19, requesting for the allocation of funds, to the National Assembly." The minister raised a question regarding the Supreme Court's instructions to disburse the amount without the National Assembly's authorization, stating that if the election funds were released without their approval, it was unclear from whom the amount would be recovered.

Tarar was of the opinion that the election fund bill had been declined twice by both houses of the Parliament. As a result, the government could not distribute funds without the approval of the National Assembly.

## CJP-led bench de-listed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The roster for Bench I of the Supreme Court was revised on Wednesday due to the indisposition of Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial. The CJP's bench was de-listed along with all cases before it.

The SC Registrar issued a notification de-listing the cases but did not specify the reasons. "It is to inform that the Court Roster regarding Bench-I for Wednesday, 26th April 2023, has been revised due to the indisposition of the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan," read the notification issued by SC PRO.

## Six cops martyred in gunbattle

JACOBABAD (PPI): Six Balochistan policemen, including an inspector, were martyred during an encounter with dacoits in Sindh district of Jacobabad on Wednesday.

According to SSP Sumair Noor Channa, Balochistan and Sindh Police jointly challenged the dacoits and the ensuing battle took place in the limits of Jageer area in Moladad police station. During the exchange of fire, six officials of Jaffarabad police, including an inspector were martyred and two others were injured by the firing of robbers.

After the incident, a heavy police contingent was dispatched to the encounter site in Jacobabad. A joint operation was being conducted along with Jaffarabad police to recover rice mill owner Furqan Soomro, said SSP Sumair Noor Channa.

# Failure in holding of KP Assembly polls Writ sought charges against KP Governor under Article-6

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A writ petition has been filed at Peshawar High Court (PHC) seeking power suspension of Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and framing of charges of high treason under Article-6 for his failure to announce schedule for election to provincial assembly in 90 days.

Deputy Organizer Insaf Lawyer Forum (ILF) Shumail Ahmad Butt Advocate filed the petition while argued that Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has dissolved provincial assembly on Chief Minister advise on 18th January 2023.

The petition stated that Governor has failed to hold election in 90 days for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly which was

responsibility of Ghulam Ali while Caretaker government as well as Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) also failed to perform their constitutional obligation.

The writ argued that Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) also take Sou Moto notice because Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and ECP didn't fulfilled their constitutional responsibility. The executive, state institutions and legal procedure should be performed under the constitution but Governor Ghulam Ali has failed to hold election in 90 days which has deprived people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from their representation, the petition added.

There is no legal ground for acts and decision of Caretaker government after completion of 90 days from

dissolution of provincial assembly while Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has committed high treason due to his failure for announcement of schedule for polls to provincial assembly, the writ stated.

The petition seeking to compel caretaker government for withdrawing their offices after completion 90 days and demanding to direct ECP to hold election for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly as well as to suspend power of Governor till disposal of writ petition. The petitioner seeking to direct President of Pakistan to appoint Acting Governor. President of Pakistan, Ministry of Interior, ECP, Governor and Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are respondents in the writ petition filed by ILF.

# SC law clipping CJP's suo moto powers challenged

LAHORE (INP): The Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023 — which aims to curtail the suo motu powers of the office of the chief justice of Pakistan (CJP) — has been challenged before the Supreme Court Lahore registry. Lawyer Shahid Rana filed a petition with the Supreme Court's Lahore registry.

The petitioner maintained that the formation of benches in the top court is the administrative authority of the chief justice of Pakistan. It argues that the right to appeal in suo motu cases is not possible without making constitutional amendments. The petitioner urged the apex court to declare the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023 null and void.

It is pertinent to mention here that despite Supreme Court's directive, the National Assembly last Friday notified the conversion of Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill 2023 — which aims to curtail the suo motu powers of the office of the chief justice of Pakistan (CJP) — into an act. National

Assembly Secretariat notified that the bill of the Majlis-e-Shoora (Parliament) deemed to have been assented by the president (with effect from April 21, 2023) under Clause (2) of the Article 75 of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

President Dr Arif Alvi, for a second time, refused to give his assent to Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill, 2023 and sent it back to parliament, maintaining that the matter was now sub judice before the apex court. The bill was approved by the federal cabinet on March 28 and then passed by both houses of parliament — the National Assembly and Senate.

The passed bill — the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill, 2023 — aims at giving the power of taking suo motu notice to a three-member committee comprising senior judges including Chief Justice. It also aims to have transparent proceedings in the apex court and includes the right to appeal. Regarding the constitution of benches, the

bill states that every cause, matter or appeal before the apex court would be heard and disposed of by a bench constituted by a committee comprising the CJP and the two senior-most judges. It added that the decisions of the committee would be taken by a majority.

Regarding exercising the apex court's original jurisdiction, the bill said that any matter invoking the use of Article 184(3) would first be placed before the above mentioned committee. The bill says that if the committee is of the view that a question of public importance with reference to the enforcement of any of the fundamental rights conferred by Chapter I of Part II of the Constitution is involved, it shall constitute a bench comprising not less than three judges of the Supreme Court of Pakistan which may also include the members of the committee, for adjudication of the matter. The bill additionally said that a party would have the right to appoint its counsel of choice for filing a review application under Article 188 of the Constitution.

# At UN, Pakistan calls for closing digital gap

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has called for addressing the digital divide — the gap between under-connected and highly digitalized countries — to help the developing usher in rapid all-round progress. "Most of the poor around the world lack reliable and affordable internet access giving rise to the digital divide, which is emerging as a new form of inequality between and among states," Pakistani delegate Mariam Shaikh told the UN Committee on Information as it began its general debate on Tuesday.

Ms Shaikh, who is the press counsellor at the Pakistani mission to the UN, also voiced concern over the issue of growing inequality in access to timely, multilingual communications, with a reported 2.9 billion people never having used the Internet, 96 per cent of whom reside in developing countries. "We believe that a Global Digital Compact can potentially serve as a universal and consensus global framework on digital issues, especially in addressing the digital divide, enhancing connectivity, and supporting digi-

tal transformation," she added.

Emphasizing the importance of trustworthy, verifiable information in a world beset with crises and in an environment rife with inaccurate reports, Ms Shaikh called for mainstreaming multilingualism and redoubling efforts to combat misinformation and disinformation. In this regard, the Pakistani delegate called for support to be lent to the digital transformation of developing countries.

Further, she called for efforts to be made to address the issue of unequal access to information, due to a lack of linguistic diversity, pointing out that this posed a challenge amid the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the recent floods in Pakistan, with a report by Translators. Without Borders drawing attention to a dangerous information gap that amplified the risk faced by affected communities. To address this issue, Ms Shaikh called on the UN Department for Global Communications to strengthen international support for the dissemination of multilingual information, enabling it to be available in multiple lan-

guages in times of emergency.

Further, steps must be taken by the Department to raise awareness about assistive technologies and to promote their design and distribution, she added. Disinformation, misinformation, and other forms of false information especially online, she said, were inciting social divisions and creating mistrust in public institutions and widening the information gap. In addition, it leads to the growth of hate speech and propaganda of Islamophobia and other forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, negative stereotyping, and stigmatization.

"Hate is a threat to everyone; Combating it must be a collective effort," the Pakistani delegate added. In conclusion, Ms Shaikh reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to the principles of the UN Charter and human rights, including the freedom of expression and access to information, combating disinformation in all its manifestations, as well as upholding the principles of independence, pluralism, and diversity of the media.

# Ship carrying 37 Pakistanis from Sudan port reaches Jeddah: FO

ISLAMABAD (INP): A ship carrying 37 Pakistani nationals from Sudan — where fighting between the army and paramilitaries has killed and wounded hundreds — arrived in Saudi Arabia's Jeddah on Wednesday, the Foreign Office (FO) said.

"Evacuation plan for Pakistani nationals in Sudan continues. The ship carrying 37 Pakistani nationals from Port Sudan arrives in Jeddah," it said in a tweet. "They were received by CG in Jeddah, Khalid Majid on arrival at Jeddah Port. We are grateful to the Government of KSA for its support & hospitality," the FO added.

According to the Saudi Arabia Foreign Ministry, the boat with 1,687 civilians from more than 50 countries arrived in the kingdom today, which is the largest rescue effort by the Gulf state to date. The group was "transported by one of the Kingdom's ships, and the Kingdom was keen to provide all the basic needs of foreign nationals in preparation for their departure," it said in a statement.

Fighting broke out in Sudan on April 15 between forces loyal to army

chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and his deputy-turned-rival Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who commands the powerful paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). At least 459 people had been killed and more than 4,000 wounded as of Tuesday across Africa's third-biggest country, according to UN agencies. A three-day US-brokered ceasefire between the warring generals brought some calm to the capital on Tuesday, but witnesses reported fresh air strikes and paramilitaries claimed to have seized a major oil refinery and power plant.

Saudi Arabia has received several rounds of evacuees by air and sea, starting with boats that arrived in Jeddah on Saturday carrying 150 people including foreign diplomats and officials. On Monday, a C-130 Hercules military plane flew dozens of South Korean civilians to Jeddah's King Abdullah Air Base, and a boat ferried nearly 200 people from 14 countries across the Red Sea from Port Sudan. Thirteen of the civilians who arrived on Wednesday were Saudi, while the rest came from coun-

tries across the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia and North and Central America, the foreign ministry statement said.

All told, 2,148 people have been evacuated to the kingdom from Sudan so far, including more than 2,000 foreigners, the statement added. A day earlier, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had said that more than 200 Pakistanis were evacuated to safety in chaos-torn Sudan, bringing the total number of rescued nationals to 700. "In keeping with the commitment of the Government of Pakistan to the welfare of overseas Pakistanis, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continues to lead in the relief and rescue of Pakistanis in Sudan. Today, another convoy carrying 211 Pakistanis dispatched from Khartoum has arrived in Port Sudan," the minister said in a statement. The ceasefire between Sudan's warring generals entered its second day today but remained fragile after witnesses reported fresh air strikes and paramilitaries claimed to have seized a major oil refinery and power plant.

# CTD blast: Challenge ahead for probe committee to find mystery

MINGORA (APP): The powerful explosions at the counter terrorism department (CTD) at Tehsil Kabal of district Swat on April 24, which claimed 18 lives, have left several questions for a two-member fact finding committee to answer.

The probe committee comprising Secretary Home Muhammad Abid Majeed and Deputy Inspector General of Police, Special Branch, Sagib Ismail Memon have to seek out answers of the riddles left behind the deadly explosions that claimed 18 lives and injured 51 others.

Syed Akhtar Ali Shah, former IGP and Home Secretary told APP on Wednesday said that the probe committee would have to dig out the nature of blasts, negligence on behalf of CTD department if any, safety measures and

existing capacity to store huge quantities of explosives, arms and weapons at the compound.

He said the storage of explosives and ammunition at a place with electricity supply was apparently a serious negligence and an investigation was required to ascertain the actual cause behind the explosions. KP IGP Akhtar Hayat Gandapur during his visit to explosions hit Kabal police station ruled out the possibility of terrorists act and added that two explosions occurred in 12 minutes intervals in the explosives' store that caused the collapse of the CTD police station's old building.

Explaining his stance, the IGP said that no incident of firing or attack at the police station was reported on the fateful day and about five policemen

deployed at the gate of the CTD centres were present at the time of explosion with no evidence of ambush on them. Besides the killing of six civilians and nine policemen of CTD, he said that five under custody prisoners at the compound were also killed and 51 injured.

The brother of Shaheed Sub Inspector Umbar Khan from Lower Dir, Shaheed Umbar Khan Lala told APP that Umbar Khan was planning to perform Umrah after Eidul Fitr but departed for eternal abode by embracing martyrdom at CTD Kabal. "ASI Sher Alam Khan from Malakand, who was also martyred in the explosion had joined the police force to embrace Shahadat in the way of Allah Almighty and his dream came true at the night of explosions in CTD Kabal police sta-

tion," his family members recalled.

Police sources said that an initial investigation into the incident revealed that the explosives material including mortars, IEDs and detonators was being stored in the compound from the last three to four years as recovered by the police from Bajaur, Dir, Swat and Buner in various raids and crack-downs.

It disclosed that the first explosion occurred at 8:14pm followed by another huge bang at 8:25pm that caused the collapse of the CTD compound and damage to nearby buildings. The bomb disposal squad and Rescue 1122 continued the search and clearance operation on the third day and defused arms and explosives at the compound and shifted the discharge wounded cops to their native villages.

The senior government officials rushed to Kabal and inspected relief and rescue operations there soon after the incident. Chief Secretary KP, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary also visited the blast site in Kabal and reviewed the pace of rescue and clearance operation and directed early completion of the inquiry report. He also visited Saidu Sharif hospital in Swat and inquired after the health of injured cops.

Meanwhile, people of all walks of life started coming to the residences of the victims in Malakand division and offering Fateha. Grief and sorrow prevailed at Kabal and villages of the martyred police cops who were laid to rest with full police honour.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governor Ghulam Ali and caretaker chief minis-

ter Azam Khan said that premature early statements without knowing the facts in the media by some elements were an irrational and illogical attitude. The governor said that an inquiry has been ordered and we should wait for its findings before making speculations. The Governor said elements involved in the negative propaganda were against an enemy of the country and the nation, adding politicking on such unfortunate incidents was not only highly deplorable but a deep conspiracy against the country and the nation. He said such elements would be exposed before masses and their nefarious designs would be frustrated with the power of people. The sacrifices of security forces, police and the Pakistani nation for peace would not go waste, he concluded.