

Historic display of unity
ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Information and Broadcasting said there was a historic display of unity in the NA as 180 members of the House reposed their full confidence in PM. "Historic display of Unity and Strength - 180," the minister wrote on her Twitter handle, attaching the "supplementary orders of the day" that Foreign Minister will move the resolution in the NA reposing full confidence in the leadership of the PM.

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CTD officer martyred
KHUZDAR (PPI): A SHO of CTD was martyred Thursday in a remote-controlled bomb blast near Jhalawan Complex in Khuzdar. The martyred police officer was identified as Inspector Sharbat Khan Imrani. He was reported to be from Nasirabad district. His body was shifted to Khuzdar Teaching Hospital. Sharbat Khan Imrani was on his way to duty from home when the bomb blasted near his car.

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Ready to face removal: PM told NA

Shehbaz says never hurt Parliament's trust

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday categorically said he was ready to face the ouster for respecting the Parliament's decisions, but would never undermine the trust it had reposed in him. The prime minister, after voluntarily getting the vote of confidence of 180 members of the National Assembly, said it was his duty to respect the Parliament's decisions.

The resolution for vote of confidence was moved by Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari saying, "The National Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan reposes its full confidence in the leadership of Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, as the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan." Consequently, 180 MNAs arose from their seats to support the resolution.

"Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was unjustly martyred, Nawaz Sharif was disqualified, Yusuf Raza Gilani was disqualified. Today the Parliament has given me the vote of confidence. By God, if they oust me in response to this vote of confidence, I am ready to go back thousands of time but will not let them down," the prime minister resolved as the members thumped their desks. He said it was not possible that the court granted a stay on a law passed by the Parliament even before its finalization. "The framing and amendment of the Constitution is the Parliament's right. The court has no power to rewrite the Constitution... If the Parliament raises its voice... the threat of contempt is given," he remarked.

He reiterated that the coalition government would only accept the 4-3 verdict of the Supreme Court bench. Referring to the Parliament's decisions on elections, the prime minister said he as well as the government were bound to respect the same. "The Parliament's dignity and constitutional status is being challenged, no one can grab the Parliament dignity and its constitutional powers... Insha Allah, I stand by you and will continue to do so," he assured. The prime minister thanked the members for the confidence vote and assured them that he would come up to their expectations and never undermine their trust.

He expressed gratitude to the coalition parties leaders, including Asif Ali Zardari, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Maulana Asad Mahmood, Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Sardar Akhtar

Prime Minister gets vote of confidence in National Assembly

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday successfully got the vote of confidence in the National Assembly and received 180 votes in his favor.

The prime minister received 180 votes reposing confidence in his leadership in the 342-member National Assembly, the lower house of parliament, Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf said following after Thursday's vote. "One hundred and eighty members (180) members rose in favor of resolution and the resolution is passed. Consequently, Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has obtained the vote of confidence from the National Assembly and commands the confidence of the majority of the members of the National Assembly as the prime minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan".

Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari tabled a resolution for vote of confidence in the Prime Minister which stated "The National Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan reposes its full confidence in the leadership of Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif as the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan". A total of 180 members voted in favor of resolution and the Speaker directed the National Assembly Secretariat to place the names of all members on its website which voted in favor of the resolution. The resolution appeared as supplementary agenda item on 'Orders of the Day'. While tabling the resolution, Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said there are rumors about the parliament and today the government decided to show the whole world that the parliament is standing with the constitution and the parliament as well. Parliament is standing with the supremacy of the constitution, he added. He said that the parliament is standing with the majority decision 4/3 of the honorable Supreme Court.

Mengal, Khalid Magsi, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Aimal Wali Khan, Amir Haider Hoti, Shahzain Bugti, Mohsin Dawar, Aslam Bhootani, Allama Sajid Mir, Dr Abdul Malik, Aftab Sherpao and Mehmood Achakzai. He said Pakistan was faced with utmost challenges jut because of the previous government which was formed through rigged and "fraud" elections.

Recalling the suspension of the RTS system and unnecessary delay in poll results, the prime minister requested the National Assembly Speaker to hold a probe into that rigging to reveal the facts. He said through its two provincial ministers, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leadership tried to impede the International Monetary Fund agreement to make the 220 million people of Pakistan suffer. Blaming Imran Khan for undermining Pakistan's foreign relations, he said thanks to Allah Almighty, a Russian cargo ship carrying cheaper oil was about to depart from Russia, consequent to the incumbent government's efforts, particularly the foreign and petroleum ministers.

Referring to the audio leak of ex-Chief Justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar and Tariq Raheem, the prime minister said the former had been badly exposed as he was the one who stage-managed the 2018 election for the

PTI, besides destroying the institutions, including the Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute just to accommodate his brother. He told the House that despite serious reservations of some of the leaders, the coalition government had agreed to hold dialogue with the PTI through the Senate chairman on a single day election across Pakistan.

He questioned why the court was only concerned about the polls in Punjab only and said nothing about the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa elections. Whether the elections only in Punjab would not impact the later polls in other provinces, he posed another question. The prime minister also mentioned the unnecessary delay in the launch of Lahore Orange Line due to the delayed decision by ex-CJP Saqib Nisar just not to let the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) claim the credit of the mega project.

Calling it a double standard, he said Imran Khan got eight bails without in "eight minutes" while the arrest warrants were issued against the leaders of other parties just for appearing late before the NAB (National Accountability Bureau) courts. He also drew the apex court's attention towards hundreds of the people languishing in the Kot Lakhpat Jail while awaiting the hearing of their bail applications.

Govt, PTI finally on table for talks on election date

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)-led government and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Thursday finally sat on the negotiating table to discuss the poll date following Supreme Court's orders.

In the first round of talks — which lasted for around two hours — at the Parliament House's Committee Room Number 3, both sides informed each other about their top leadership's stance, sources told media. The second meeting will be held tomorrow. The government's delegation comprised Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, Pakistan Peoples Party Senator Yousaf Raza Gilani, Railways

Khawaja Saad Rafique, and Commerce Minister Naveed Qamar.

The opposition's delegation included PTI Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi, PTI Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry, and the party's top legal expert Barrister Ali Zafar. The delegation informed the government about PTI Chairman Imran Khan's stance on elections and about how the elections should be conducted.

Talking to journalists after the meeting, Gilani said the ruling parties would consult each other and make a decision. "Whatever is decided, it will be based on input from all parties," Qureshi, while speaking to the media, the consultations ended after two hours and stressed that

political parties find solutions to problems through talks.

"We have entered the talks with a spirit of arriving at a decision [...] but we will not allow the talks to be used as a delaying tactic for polls," the PTI vice chairman said. After the meeting, sources told media that the PTI presented three demands before the government delegation: The national and provincial assemblies should be dissolved in May this year and for extending polls beyond May 14, amendment should be made to the Constitution; If the government decides to amend Constitution, then PTI's resignations will have to be called back; Elections should be held across the country in July this year.

Not ready to hold talks with PTI, says Fazl

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) head and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) supremo Maulana Fazlur Rehman claimed on Thursday that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had shown agreement not to hold talks with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

While addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Maulana Fazlur Rehman said that PM Shehbaz Sharif had shown agreement not to hold talks with PTI during yesterday's session which was attended by the heads of the ruling coalition parties.

"The session's agenda was talks with PTI but on what basis we should hold dialogues with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf." The

PDM head alleged that the Supreme Court (SC) was forcing political parties to dialogue. "Centre is the primary infrastructure structure of the Constitution of Pakistan. If a pillar collapses, the whole infrastructure collapses."

"Saving the federation is like saving the whole country. Why is our judiciary stuck in the 90-day deadline?" Criticising the Supreme Court (SC), Fazlur Rehman said, "The judiciary suggested politicians to hold dialogues, on the other hand, it showed gavel to them. It is a questionable move [of the Supreme Court] to give schedule [for elections] and ask everyone to appease one political party."

He claimed that the SC's verdict was not only unacceptable but also unenforceable which should be realised by the judiciary. "Holding polls is the matter of the election commission and it will take this matter forward." Regarding the digital census, the PDM head said that a lack of confidence was exhibited in the procedure of the population census in different parts of the country including Karachi, rural Sindh and Balochistan capital Quetta. Maulana Fazlur Rehman demanded the government to constitute an investigation committee to ascertain the reasons why the country's population is decreasing instead of increasing after five years in census statistics.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing a session of the National Assembly after getting vote of confidence.

IHC disposes of Imran, Bushra's pleas against NAB

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The Islamabad High Court on Thursday disposed of the petitions of PTI Chairman Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi against the NAB call-up notices in Toshakhana case after declaring them "ineffective".

A two-member IHC bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Babar Sattar heard the petitions. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has submitted its response to the petitions of Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi.

The NAB Prosecutor contended that the petitioners challenged the notices dated 17 February and 16 March while the Bureau had also sent them a third call-up notice.

He further argued that the application against the first two notices became ineffective following the new fresh notice. The CJ directed the NAB to send future notices to the former first couple in compliance with the law. IHC CJ Aamer Farooq observed that the court cannot stop the NAB from taking action and conducting investigation. The court disposed of the petitions of Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi.

MQM delegation calls on PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal to address the reservations of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) regarding the ongoing population census at the earliest.

The prime minister issued the directives during a meeting with a delegation of the MQM led by Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, which called on him here. Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal was also present at the meeting. During the meeting, they discussed the overall political situation in the country.

The MQM delegation thanked the prime minister for playing his role to address the party's reservations to a great extent. The delegation comprised MQM Convenor and MNA Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Federal Information Technology and Telecom Minister Syed Aminul Haq, former MNA Farooq Sattar, and former Senator Mustafa Kamal.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif wished President of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdogan complete recovery and good health.

"Greatly relieved to learn that my brother H.E. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has recovered from his illness by the grace of Allah Almighty. My deepest prayers & best wishes are with him for a complete recovery & good health," he said in a tweet.

Simultaneous general election SC can't direct political parties to hold talks: CJ

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial on Thursday said the Supreme Court could not direct the political parties to hold dialogue on simultaneous general election of all national and provincial assemblies.

The CJP expressed these views while heading a three-member bench comprising Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar, which heard the case regarding holding of simultaneous election of all assemblies across the country. During the course of proceedings, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan informed the court that the first meeting between the coalition government and opposition parties was held on April 19 and it was decided that the next one would be held on April 26.

He said Ayaz Sadiq and Khawaja Saad Rafiq met former National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser on April 25 where the latter stated that he was not authorized by the party to hold negotiations. He said the meetings of the coalition government parties

were held yesterday and two of them had objections on the negotiations, but a way was found. The Senate chairman had written letters to the government and the opposition in the Upper House of the Parliament and sought four names each from the two sides, he added.

The Chief Justice asked what efforts were made after Asad Qaiser who was not authorized to negotiate. The Attorney General said it was learned from the media on Tuesday that Shah Mehmood Qureshi was authorized by the PTI to negotiate. The Chief Justice said if the government were serious about negotiations, it would take steps itself. The court could not force them to negotiate, and it only wanted to follow the Constitution so that the dispute could be resolved.

Advocate Farooq H Naek, counsel for the Pakistan Peoples Party, said all the coalition parties in the government were willing to negotiate with the PTI and the Senate was the only forum where all parties were represented. He

said the role of the Senate chairman was only to facilitate the negotiations between the committees of the political parties.

PTI leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi said the court had given an opportunity for political consensus on the insistence of the government. The leadership of all the political parties appeared in the court, but even today there was no consensus on the negotiations in the PDM (Pakistan Democratic Movement). He said the PTI took the court order seriously. Though the Supreme Court's decision of May 14 was final yet it had provided an opportunity to the political parties in the national interest.

However, no contact had been made with the PTI. The party had nominated him, Fawad Chaudhry and Ali Zafar for negotiations, Qureshi added. After the completion of today's hearing of the case, the Chief Justice remarked that the court was neither issuing any directive nor issuing any timeline and would issue a written order in the case.

Seven killed as Karachi Express train catches fire

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Railway (PR) experienced yet another tragedy when the business-class cabin of Lahore-bound Karachi Express suddenly caught fire near Tando Masti in Khairpur, killing seven passengers including a woman, while many others were injured on Thursday.

The fire broke out in the business-class train's coach number 17 late Wednesday night near Gambat Railway Station. The train was on its way to Lahore from Karachi. As soon as the blaze started many passengers saved their lives by jumping off the moving train.

A woman died after leaping from the train to escape the inferno whereas charred body of another person was also found in the affected bogie, whose identity has not been ascertained, the authorities said. Later, the rescuers retrieved four more dead bodies from the burnt-out coach, taking the death toll to seven.

Pakistan Army soldiers also joined the Railways officials in finding the cause of the blaze. According to District Coordination Officer (DCO) Mohsin Siyal, two children of a family also went missing during the incident, but they were later found at bogie number 18.

Exact details of casualties, however, can only be determined after a thorough inspection of the affected bogie and the railway track. On the other hand, a passenger named Colonel

Ikram said that his four children, including a daughter and three sons were still missing in the incident.

The railway staff brought the fire, which was not intense, under control on their own. Railway traffic, on the other hand, was disturbed as other trains were stopped at different stations. Pakistan Express was stopped at Khairpur, Allama Iqbal at Tando Masti and Tezgam at Mehrabpur. Railway authorities said after detaching the affected coach, the Karachi Express was cleared to continue its journey to Lahore.

Railway Minister Khawaja Saad Rafique took notice of the fire incident in the Karachi Express' bogie and formed an inquiry team to probe the tragedy. As per railway sources, the inquiry team led by Federal Government Inspector of Railways (FGIR) will conduct a comprehensive investigation into the incident and will arrive in Khairpur tomorrow to determine how the fire started in the bogie.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday ordered an inquiry into the Karachi Express train fire incident that killed six passengers. Taking notice of the incident, the PM asked the Minister for Railways to submit the inquiry report at the earliest. Shehbaz Sharif also expressed deep grief over the death of passengers and directed the relevant authorities to provide the best medical assistance to the injured.

3 monkeypox cases detected in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan on Thursday detected three more suspected cases of monkeypox in people who travelled to the country from abroad. According to sources, all three passengers arrived in Karachi on two different flights from UAE on April 26 and they were having symptoms of the infectious disease.

All three mpox patients were shifted to the isolation centre, according to Director Border and Health Services Dr Ghulam Murtaza Shah. Earlier, two cases of monkeypox have been detected in Islamabad, originating from Saudi Arabia. Sources within the health ministry told media that the Monkeypox patients belong to the twin cities, Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

After Monkeypox cases, hospitals across Sindh were put on high alert and the authorities issued directives to establish isolation areas for the suspected patients. The Director General Health Services Sindh issued directives to all government hospitals to establish 5 to 10-bed isolation areas for Monkeypox patients. After the detection of Monkeypox cases, the health department issued special guidelines to the airports across the country.



Keel laying ceremony of Pakistan Navy's 2nd OPV held at Romania

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Keel laying ceremony of second Off-shore Patrol Vessel (OPV) being constructed for Pakistan Navy was at DAMEN Shipyard Galati, Romania on Thursday. A Pakistan Navy news release received here said that Ambassador of Pakistan to Romania Dr Zafar Iqbal graced the ceremony as Chief Guest.

Owning to the satisfactory performance of 1st Batch of OPVs (PNS YARMOOK & PNS TABUK) in Pakistan Navy; the construction of

2nd Batch of OPVs was in progress at DAMEN Shipyard Romania.

The ship will be a multi-purpose and highly adaptive platform, equipped with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors to fight all domains of maritime warfare.

While addressing the ceremony, Dr Zafar Iqbal underscored the importance of OPVs by emphasizing that these platforms will act as force multipliers in enhancing PN capability of safeguarding maritime frontiers and will offer flexibility in conduct of Pakistan Navy's initiative of independent

Regional Maritime Security Patrols in the Indian Ocean Region. He added that Pakistan Navy has been successfully playing its role in providing a secure sea environment not only to Pakistan but also to the world seafarers.

He lauded the professional ship-building competence of M/s DAMEN and appreciated the timely delivery of ships to the Pakistan Navy.

The ceremony was attended by senior representatives of MoDP and Pakistan Navy besides officials of M/s DAMEN Netherlands and DAMEN Shipyard Galati, Romania.



GALATI: Ambassador of Pakistan to Romania Dr Zafar Iqbal along with officials from Pakistan Navy, Ministry of Defence Production and M/s DAMEN Shipyard in a group photo during Keel laying ceremony of second Off-shore Patrol Vessel (OPV-II) being constructed for Pakistan Navy at Galati, Romania.

Ehsan Bhutta visits under-construction PSIC office

LAHORE (APP): Secretary Industries & Commerce, Ehsan Bhutta visited the under-construction office of Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC) here on Thursday.

PSIC Managing Director Asim Javed and other officers concerned briefed the Secretary about the development works and told the secretary that construction of PSIC's six storey building with two car parking floors in its basement remained continue till 2019. However, during the course of construction, the contractor couldn't complete its structure and gone blacklisted. The construction process remained halted for 2 years.

Now the PSIC board has approved the construction of the remaining work. The Secretary Ehsan Bhutta directed the PSIC management to complete building within 3-4 months, so that PSIC headquarter, PSIC shop and Industries and Commerce Department may be shifted there. The Secretary further directed that quality of building material should be ensured as per approved PC-1.

PFA imposes fines on 1,107 food points

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) penalized 1,107 food points with hefty fines and served warning notices to 5,266 eateries for improvement while inspecting 6,347 food outlets during the Eid special inspection campaign. According to PFA spokesman, the food safety teams examined 2,542 sweets units and imposed fines on 671 units besides serving warning notices for improvement to 1,762 food business operators (FBOs). The authority also slapped 116 food points with hefty fines and issued improvement notices to 1,045 shopkeepers while inspecting 1,432 food points at Bus Stands and Railway Stations.

Moreover, the teams visited 170 food points at motorway rest areas to check the food quality and food safety standards for commuters.

Rain forecast in Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Administrator Karachi Dr. Syed Saifur Rahman has set up a Rain Emergency Cell at KMC Sports Complex in view of the forecast of expected rains. Senior Director Municipal Services will lead the Cell to work in collaboration with all relevant departments, said a spokesperson of the KMC on Thursday.

The Administrator Karachi has directed the heads of Engineering, Parks and Horticulture, Municipal Services, Medical and Health Services, Land, Anti-Encroachment, Fire Brigade and City Warden departments to send the relevant staffers to Rain Emergency Cell immediately. The Administrator Karachi said that according to the forecast of the Meteorological Department a rain generating weather system has entered the country and rain is predicted from April 28, so necessary precautionary measures are being taken to deal with any untoward incident.

All the concerned departments of KMC should make all the preparations on emergency basis and keep a complete watch on the situation during the rains, the leaves of the officers and other concerned staffers serving during the rain emergency has been cancelled.

Iranian Consul General meets CM Naqvi

LAHORE (APP): Consul General of Iran Mehran Mowahid Far called on Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi here and discussed matters of mutual interest including increase of trade of rice, meat, mangoes, and other goods.

The chief minister highlighted the strong cultural and religious ties that bind Pakistan and Iran together. He assured the Consul General that efforts would be made to increase exports in partnership with the federal government and that issues related to the Punjab Agriculture & Meat Company would be addressed soon. The CM also thanked the Consul General for sending trucks of dates and other fruits to Pakistan during Ramadan.

The Consul General invited the CM to attend the handicrafts exhibition in Isfahan, Iran. The CM expressed his gratitude and announced that a Punjab delegation will attend the exhibition.

Mehran Mowahid Far emphasized the importance of the brotherly relations between Pakistan and Iran and noted that

60% of rice in Iran is imported from Pakistan, indicating great potential for increased bilateral trade.

Commissioner Lahore and the CEO of PBIT were also present.

CM grieved over loss of lives: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has expressed a deep sense of sorrow and grief over the loss of human lives in the train fire incident near Sukkur. In a statement, the chief minister extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. The Punjab government shares the pain and grief of the bereaved heirs, he added.

CM for completing development projects timely: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has directed the authorities concerned to complete on-going development projects in the provincial metropolis on time.

A meeting was held on Thursday at the CM Office under the chairmanship of Mohsin Naqvi to review the progress on various development projects in the city.

Admin commits for provision of business-friendly environment

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Office Mardan has annoyed rumors against administration and Water and Sanitation Service Company for closing Mega Mart while claimed that concerned authorities are committed to ensure business friendly environment in the premises, on Thursday.

This stated by Information and Public Relation Officer DC Office in press statement issued in this regard. The press release that last day municipal commissioner/assistant commissioner and Deputy Manager WSSC sealed Mardan Mega Mart due to non-payment of bills while it is reopened on traders request within two hours. According to details,

the mart was reopened on directive of DC Mardan after his meeting with traders while assured that administration will provide business friendly environment. Moreover, WSSC is costing every business outfit for Rs2180 per month for provision of services while Mardan Mega Mart is default for two years.

COMBINED MILITARY HOSPITAL NOWSHERA BULK LOCAL PURCHASE & NA PVMS, TENDER NOTICE

- Sealed quotations for financial year 2023-24 for different medicines / disposable items (Including Lab Kits, X-Ray Films) under final NA of PVMS items, UN Mission and NIV / NIF Bulk Purchase Medicines are required from registered Firms / Distributors.
- Interested firms and distributors are required to deposit sealed envelope, clearly marked with "QUOTATIONS FOR BULK LP / PVMS NA FOR FY 2023-24" with MO / C Medical Stores office by 1030 hours on **08 May 2023**. Quotations will be opened the same day at 1100 hours in presence of bidders / authorized representatives of Pharmaceutical firms.
- Tender forms and list of Medical store items can be obtained from medical stores CMH Nowshera on any working day during office hours on cash payment of **Rs.3000/- (non-refundable)**.
- Firms registered with DGDP (Director General Defense Procurement) will be given preference

COMMANDANT Combined Military Hospital Nowshera



DISTRICT JUDICIARY KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA OFFICE OF THE CIVIL JUDGE/ JM-II, NORTH WAZIRISTAN AT BANNU
Ph: 0928-920006, Fax: 0928-662201 Email: scjnwj@gmail.com
No. 28/C-J-II North Waziristan at Bannu, Dated: 17-04-2023



CORRIGENDUM

In pursuance of the letter No. KPPRA/Discrepancies/12566/2022-23 dated: 10 April 2023 and with reference to the tender No. 22641 advertised on KPPRA website and published in daily "MASHRIQ" dated 08th April, 2023 No. INF(P) 871/23 the terms and conditions No. 5(c) is deleted hence, be considered as committed and the Serial No. 04 stationary items may be read as:

Description of Items	Specifications	Quantity
Stationary Items	> Printer Pages Rims 80 gram legal size	50 rims
	> Copier Machine Pages 70 gram legal size	50 rims
	> Gel-Pen (weight 12.963 gram, nib size 0.7 mm), Pen features capped, ink type: liquid, rubberized grip	10 packs

(Zahid Ali Khan CJ/JM-II) Chairman Purchase Committee, Civil Courts District Judiciary, North Waziristan at Bannu.

INF(P) 983/23

PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA) INVITATION TO BID

Sealed bids (in accordance with PPRA Rule No. 36(b) are invited by below mentioned office for the following requirements in Pak Rs.-:

S.#.	Description & Bid No.	Bid Fee (PKR)	Fixed Bid Security (PKR)	Bid Submission Date/Time	Bid Opening Date/Time/Place	Last date for issuance of Bidding Documents	Basis PKR (Price)
01	Procurement of Frequency spectrum analyzer 3GHz Handheld Model or Equivalent Qty.01 HQCAA/1992/193/XXLN	1,000/-	Rs.56,750/-	15-05-2023 1030 Hours	15-05-2023 1100 Hours Log. Center (S) (Log. ANS Branch)	12-05-2023	F.O.R
02	Procurement of Multimedia Projector Qty.01 HQCAA/1992/194/XXLN	500/-	Rs. 22,670/-	15-05-2023 1100 Hours	15-05-2023 1130 Hours Log. Center (S) (Log. ANS Branch)	12-05-2023	F.O.R
03	Procurement of Smart LED TVs HQCAA/1992/195/XXLN	1,000/-	As Mentioned in Bidding Documents	15-05-2023 1130 Hours	15-05-2023 1200 Hours Log. Center (S) (Log. ANS Branch)	12-05-2023	F.O.R
04	Procurement of Computer System, Scanners & Printers HQCAA/1992/196/XXLN	1,000/-	As Mentioned in Bidding Documents	16-05-2023 1030 Hours	16-05-2023 1100 Hours Log. Center (S) (Log. ANS Branch)	15-05-2023	F.O.R

Bids may be submitted as per conditions set out in Bidding documents downloadable from the website www.caapakistan.com.pk (visible / downloadable within two (02) working days after publication/uploading of invitation to bid notice) and obtainable physically from the address given below on any working day between 0900 Hrs to 1230 Hrs by paying Bid Fee (non-refundable) through deposit slip in Account No. 6-1-2-20614-714-115525 (Title of account "Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority") in Habib Metropolitan Bank Ltd. Star Gate Branch Karachi and submitting the request letter along with bank deposit slip, proof of Active Taxpayer, GST/NTN certificates of the bidder. No Bidding Documents would be issued on the Bid opening date. Bids must be dropped in Bid drop Box placed at under mentioned office by or before due date as per schedule.

Note: All bidders downloading the bidding document from website shall immediately inform PCAA through request letter (along with proof of active taxpayer list [ATL for sales tax and income tax] of FBR) at the address below for inclusion in subsequent communication. PCAA will not be responsible for any lack of communication or non-receipt of information by bidders due to ignorance / violation of this instruction.

Time period for performance of contract: Till the satisfactory completion of contract and warranty period. PCAA reserves the right to accept/reject any or all bids due to cogent reasons which will be communicated to bidders on request. This advertisement is also available on CAA website www.caapakistan.com.pk. **Warning:** Any financial instrument submitted by bidder, if found fake or got dishonored at any stage would result in blacklisting and legal action as per law.

ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR, LOGISTICS (ANS), LOGISTICS CENTER (SOUTH), HQS CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY, JIAP KARACHI PAKISTAN TEL: 021-9907-2265 FAX: 021-99242675

PID(K)3050/22

www.caapakistan.com.pk

Administrator Karachi lauds Rs28.5 lac aid

KARACHI (PPI): Administrator Karachi Dr. Syed Saifur Rahman has said that it is not an uncommon thing to sacrifice one's life while saving the life and property of citizens. Firefighters are considered heroes all over the world, we also consider them our heroes. Firefighters of KMC sacrificed their lives to brighten the name of their organization.

The financial assistance of 28.5 lakh rupees to the families of the martyred and injured fire fighters is a commendable act, he said this while speaking in a ceremony held by Federal B Area Association of Trade and Industry Chaudhry Sohail, Rehman Zeeshan, Babar Khan, DIG Central Fida Hussain, Director Fire Brigade Tariq Siddiqi, Chief Fire Officer Ishtiaq Ahmed, CEO Aghosh Naved Ali Baig, Qazi Sadruddin and other officers were also present.

www.ogdcl.com - www.ogdcl.com - www.ogdcl.com - www.ogdcl.com - www.ogdcl.com - www.ogdcl.com

INVITATION TO E-BID THROUGH SAP Ariba DISCOVERY

Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), the largest Exploration & Production listed Company of Pakistan, invites Sealed E-Bids through **SAP-Ariba Discovery** for the service/material given below under competitive bidding procedure as per Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) rules:

SR #	TENDER NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME	BID OPENING DATE & TIME
1	OGDCL-SCM-LH-PT-PNP-QADIRPUR PLANT-DOC207678375 -2023	SPARES FOR GAS CHROMATOGRAPH MODEL 500-DANIEL	15-05-2023 AT 11:30 HRS	15-05-2023 AT 12:00 HRS
2	OGDCL-SCM-LC-PT-PNP-DKN-207748494-2023	PROCUREMENT OF BLANKETS FOR DAKHNI PLANT TEHSIL JAND DISTRICT ATTOCK, PUNJAB PROVINCE	15-05-2023 AT 11:30 HRS	15-05-2023 AT 12:00 HRS
3	OGDCL-SCM-LH-MUD LOGGING-I9-DOC207470576-2023	PROCUREMENT OF SPARES FOR MUD LOGGING UNITS	16-05-2023 AT 11:30 HRS	16-05-2023 AT 12:00 HRS
4	OGDCL-SCM-LF-PT-SCM- PREQUALIFICATION-20811892/2023	PRE-QUALIFICATION OF SUPPLIERS FOR SUPPLY OF COVERALLS	24-05-2023 AT 11:30 HRS	24-05-2023 AT 12:00 HRS

- Vendors not having Ariba Network ID are requested to register themselves on SAP Ariba Portal by clicking on the link <https://supplier.ariba.com> to access and participate in OGDCL tenders.
- Complete Tender document(s) along with Scope of Work / TOR/ Clarifications can be viewed and downloaded from SAP-Ariba RFP by clicking on the link discovery.ariba.com/profile/AN01562899621
- Original Bid Bonds as per RFP/Tender Document shall be submitted at the reception of OGDCL House, Jinnah Avenue, Blue Area, Islamabad, Pakistan on or before bid submission date and time mentioned above.
- OGDCL reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all the bids as per Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) Rule-33".
- This Tender Notice is also available on PPRA website www.ppra.org.pk and OGDCL website www.ogdcl.com.

GENERAL MANAGER (SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT) OIL & GAS DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED
OGDCL HOUSE, JINNAH AVENUE, ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN.
Phone No. 92-51-920023540/3795
No.416/62
LARGEST TAX PAYER COMPANY OF THE NATION "SAY NO TO CORRUPTION" WE EXPLORE PROSPERITY

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DIVISION BUNER Tele/Fax # 0939-510017

NOTICE INVITING E/TENDERING/BIDDING

(SINGLE STAGE SINGLE ENVELOPE PROCEDURE E-BIDDING SYSTEM)
PHE Division Buner Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa invites Electronic Bids from Eligible Firms/ Contractors having specialization code CE-09 in accordance with KPPRA procurement rules 2014 on single stage Envelop procedure for the following works:-

S.No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs. in Million)	Bid entry fee @0.03% of the tender cost.	Earnest Money with Stamp Duly (Rs.)
Construction of Drinking Water Supply Schemes under "Construction of Water Supply and Sanitation Schemes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under ADP No 253/180616 (2022-23)				
1	WSS Beshonai UC Malakpur	15.992	4798	338590
2	WSS Kala Bat UC Pacha Kalay	15.641	4692	331570
3	WSS Janrya Kambokhel UC mali Khel	4.154	3457	249200
4	WSS Bhail Kalay UC Gadezai	4.276	1282	91770
5	WSS Kat Kala Bazar UC Mali Khel	5.650	1695	131750
6	WSS Dukada UC Malakpur	12.138	3641	261510
7	WSS Malakpur Maira	3.638	1091	79010
8	WSS Balo Khan dara	11.723	3517	253210
Construction Water Supply & Sanitation AT UCs Malakpur, Bacha Kalay, Batai, Abakhel, Malikhel Gadezi, Daggar, Gokand, Ellai Anghapur, Toorwarsak District Buner 276/200235				
1	WSS Ashizo Maira UC Ellai	6.700	2010	152750
2	WSS Chor Banda surrounding area UC Abakhel	2.906	872	64370
3	WSS Jowar No. 3 UC Malikhel	5.531	1660	129370
Rehabilitation /Augmentation of PHE Existing Water Supply Schemes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 303/180442				
1	WSS Payee Khan	3.747	1124	81190
2	WSS Shwober Khan	3.806	1142	82370
3	WSS Ghulo Tangai	4.655	1397	99350
4	WSS Toorwarsak	1.734	520	40930

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:-

- Bidding Documents including instructions to Bidder can be downloaded up to one day prior to the opening date from Public Health Engineering Department web site address www.phedkp.gov.pk.
- All firms/contractors must be registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (active Tax Payer).
- Last Date & Time for Submission of the bid is **11-05-2023 at 12:00 PM**, which will be opened on the same day at **12:30 PM** in presence of Contractor or their authorized representatives who opt to be present.
- The Bids shall be submitted electronically through E-bidding on or before the fixed date/time.
- The bidder shall submit the bids with requisite documents through courier including 2% Bid Security of the estimated cost+ stamp duty in the shape of call deposit (original) in sealed envelope before the closing date and time.
- The Bid Security and additional security is required to be deposited as per KPRA Notification No. SRO(14) Vol:1-24/2021-22 dated May 10 2022/6058-71.
- Tender will be opened on advertised date and time in the presence of bidders or their representative who may like to attend the session. In case of any unforeseen reasons, public holiday unrest or force majeure on the bid submission/opening date, the tender shall be opened on the next working day at same place and time.
- The Bid security of 1st, 2nd and 3rd shall be retained till the approval bids.
- The bid security shall be forfeited if a bidder withdraws his bid, with in the validity period there of or. in the case of a successful bidder, who repudiates the contract or fails to furnish performance security.
- All Federal and Provincial duties/stamp duty/taxes including sales tax will be recoverable as per directives of the government issued from time to time.
- Call deposits of Schedule Banks shall be acceptable. No blank cheque or pay order shall not be acceptable.
- Each bidder must attach Photocopies of CNIC, Pakistan Engineering Council Registration certificate, Renewal receipt, Enlistment certificate and active tax Payer certificate of FBR and KPRA with each envelope/work.
- The competent authority reserves the right to reject or all the bids as per provision contained in rules 47 of KPRA rules 2014.
- Non refundable bidding entry fee @0.03% of tender cost must also be submitted/furnished with bids in the shape of call deposit vide SO (Confidential Chief Minister Secretariat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar No. SO(C)/CMS/KPK/2021/2828-31 dated 05-04-2021.
- Incomplete conditional and bids without 2% of earnest money or without additional security (if applicable shall be considered as non responsive.
- All other bidding /tendering rules Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be applicable.

INF(P) 984/23

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER



Governor urges govt employees to work dedicatedly

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali has urged government employees to work with dedication and professionalism to facilitate people and address their problems. He was talking to a delegation of All Government Employees Grand Alliance (AGEGA) KP that was led by its Provincial Chairman, Nasiruddin. The delegation informed the governor about their problems relating to pension reforms, provision of service structure

to Lady Health Workers and up-gradation of teachers. Speaking on the occasion, KP Governor highlighted the importance of government employees and said that every individual should play its role and facilitate people to get timely service delivery. Governor listened to the problems of delegation and said that steps would be taken to provide them relief. He said that country is being faced with financial challenges adding that

government employees should also work to steer country out of crises. He said that government desires to address issues of people that are striving to get government jobs. He said that we should follow an amicable approach to inform authorities about our problems rather resorting to strikes and protest. Later, governor also met with provincial caretaker ministers including Haji Manzoor Afridi, Fazal Elahi and ANP leader, Sardar Hussain Babak.



PESHAWAR: Delegation of All Government Employees Grand Alliance KP with Governor KP Haji Ghulam Ali and Caretaker Minister Manzoor Afridi.

PHC orders NADRA to restore transgender's CNIC

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Musarat Hilali and Justice Shakeel Ahmad ordered National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) to restore transgender Shah Fahad alias Katrina Computerized National Identification Card (CNIC), on Thursday. The counsel Umair Iqbal Advocate argued that transgender is an equal citizen of

Pakistan and has right to possess domicile as well CNIC but unfortunately the petitioner identity was blocked because it is used wrongly at different time by unknown culprits. The counsel added that transgenders are most marginalized community in the society and the petitioner CNIC has been used wrongly in the court law for three times. He added that it is fact of the day witnesses are sold and purchasing in the premises of court.

The counsel further argued that blocked of petitioner's CNIC has deprived from obtaining Ehsas program and Sehat Card benefits. He further added that every citizen is equal before law under constitution and state has responsibility to protect fundamental rights. The divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Musarat Hilali and Justice Shakeel Ahmad allowed the petition while ordered NADRA to restore CNIC.

Rebuttal of news regarding 4 months budget by KP govt

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Based on the statement of the Secretary Finance KP Muhammad Ayaz Khan, it appears that the news regarding the presentation of a four months budget by the Caretaker government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in June 2023 is premature and not yet confirmed.

The decision to present a budget is solely at the discretion of the Caretaker Cabinet, and the Finance

Department will prepare the budget according to their instructions when they make a decision.

It is important to note that the previous provincial government had already issued the Integrated Budget Call Circular 2023-24 in December 2022, which started the new budget cycle for the financial year 2023-24.

However, given the current situation, it would be premature to make a decision on presenting a four

months budget or otherwise.

Therefore, it would be prudent to wait for an official announcement from the Caretaker Cabinet before making any conclusions about the presentation of a four months budget in June 2023.

It is always important to verify the accuracy of news before spreading it, and in this case, it appears that the news may have been premature or possibly even incorrect.

Two hospitals specified for Mpox cases in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Directorate General of Health Services Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has specified two hospitals in the provincial capital to deal with suspected monkeypox (Mpox) cases coming from abroad.

A notification issued here said that Landi Kotal Hospital at Pak-Afghan border would check the affected persons at Torkham border point while an isolation ward has also been set up at the hos-

pital for Mpox positive cases.

Similarly, Police Services Hospital Peshawar would manage Mpox cases to be reported from Bacha Khan International Airport here.

It is pertinent to mention here that Mpox is an infectious viral disease that can occur in humans and some other animals with symptoms include fever, swollen lymph nodes and rash that forms blister and then crusts over.

The duration of the symptoms is typically two to four weeks, said an Dr Farrah of Department of Zoology, adding that the disease may spread from infected animals by handling infected meat or via bites or scratches.

She said that human to human transmission can occur through exposure to infected body fluids or contaminated objects and possibly through the airborne routes.

Rain with thunder, hailstorm predicted in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on Thursday issued an advisory for farmers and persons affiliated with livestock business to take adequate precautionary measures to safeguard their crops and livestock from adverse effects of thunderstorms and hailstorms predicted by the Met Office across the province.

It warned that as per the Met Office forecast, a westerly wave has entered the country and would cause

rain with dust and thunderstorms and hailstorms at isolated places across the province from April 27 evening to first week of May.

It said that rain with dust and thunderstorms and hailstorms are expected in Chitral, Lower and Upper Dir, Malakand, Swat, Buner, Shangla, Kohistan, Battagram, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Swabi, Mardan, Nowshera, Peshawar, Charsadda, Khyber, Bajaur, Orakzai, Kurram, Kohat, Karak, Hangu, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, DI

Khan, Tank and Waziristan.

Met office warned that strong wind and hailstorms could cause damage to loose infrastructure and standing crops in the province while heavy rains could cause flash floods in Mansehra, Abbottabad, Chitral, Shangla, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Torgar, Battagram and Kurram from May 1 to 4.

Similarly landslides could occur in vulnerable areas of the province during the period while day temperature was likely to drop significantly.

Financial package for affectees approved

PESHAWAR (APP): The Federal government has approved a special financial package for the affectees of the CTD Police Station, Kabal tragedy, said dispatch issued from the Office of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to a press release issued by the Central Police Office here on Thursday, families of each martyred personnel of CTD Kabal Police Station tragedy will be given a financial package of Rs.2 million while each injured will get Rs.0.5 million to express sympathies with the affected families.

CS approves establishment of 21 checks post

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has approved setting up of 21 check posts in 10 districts of the province bordering the neighbouring country Afghanistan to curb smuggling of wheat, sugar and fertilisers.

Presiding over a meeting here the CS Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary directed intelligence based operations against hoarders and smugglers and strict surveillance of dealers and their stock.

CS was informed that during various operations the district administrations and food authority confiscated over 57 tonnes of sugar from Peshawar and 22 tonnes from district Khyber.

The CS directed to sell the confiscated sugar in the market after fulfilling the legal procedure and strict action against the culprits involved in hoarding and smuggling.

‘Quality education plays major role in uplift’

PESHAWAR (APP): KP Caretaker Minister for Law and Higher Education, Justice (Rtd) Irshad Qaiser has said that quality education plays a major role in the progress and development of the nation and country.

She was presiding over a performance review meeting of the Higher Education Department here on Thursday. During the meeting, the Secretary Higher Education and Director Higher Education gave a detailed briefing regarding the performance of the department especially on the implementation of the roadmap for promotion of higher education and future line of action in this regard.

She was also told about the newly established universities, colleges and other projects initiated under the auspices of the department.

She expressed satisfaction over the performance of the department and said that the government is making all out efforts for provision of economical and quality education to the people.

Fazal directs completion of ongoing schemes

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Minister for Irrigation, Haji Fazal Elhai Thursday directed concerned officials to complete ongoing projects within stipulated time and remove hurdles that are hindering completion of these projects.

He was talking to a delegation of Chital Federation of Chamber and Commerce. Additional Secretary Irrigation, Nasir Ali, Chief Engineer North, Ishaq Khan and Director Planning, Abid Noor were also present on the occasion.

Caretaker minister listened to problems of the delegation and assured them cooperation in resolution of their problems. The delegation also informed caretaker minister about unavailability of funds to compete ongoing uplift projects in Chitral.

He also directed officials of irrigation department to inform higher authorities about their issues and problems affecting pace of development work.



PESHAWAR: Federal Minister Sajid Hussain Turi meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan.

IAP hails resolution of EOBI-related issues

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Industrialists Association Peshawar (IAP) has welcomed the resolution of issues relating to EOBI – Employees' Old-Age Benefits in light of the directives of the Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resources Development

Sajid Hussain Turi, terming the move would provide relief to business community of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Chairing a meeting here at Industrial Estate Hayatabad Peshawar on Thursday, the IAP president Malik Imran Ishaq said that EOBI Chairman had issued directives that verification of books of Accounts of Employees under Regulation No06to 08 of EOBI (verification) 2007 shall be discontinued. In this regard,

directives have been issued to all divisions/regions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for full compliance with it, he added.

Group leader and former president FPCCI Ghazanfar Bilour, the IAP executive members, senior members and industrialists were present during the meeting.

Ishaq said it was a long-standing demand of the industrialists and business community, which has been fulfilled with concerted efforts of federal minister for overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Turi and former Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Engineer Shaukat Khan.

The IAP president furthermore elaborated EOBI in light of Federal Minister Sajid Turi directives had issued a circular

to all divisions / regions for strict compliance to discontinue verification of Books of Accounts (including but not limited to Pay roll / wage register; Wage payment Vouchers; Trial Balance; Profit and Loss account; Balance Sheet; General Ledger)_ with the approval of chairperson EOBI.

He, however, said the matter pertaining to rates/ contribution of EoBI funds are yet not been resolved.

In this regard, he informed the Supreme Court had passed a clear verdict which was fixed at Rs170, which should be implemented with letter and spirit across the board.

The IAP chief said rate is the most important issue which has caused difficulties for industrialists and the business community.

He went on to say that it was completely unjust to charge rates in variation in the country, which was unacceptable to them because it is illegal, demanding to charging rate equitable in light of verdict of the Apex Court so that all people should contribute to the EOBI fund, besides rates disparity issues would be solved.

In the last meeting that was chaired by Federal Minister Sajid Hussain Turi, in which he said after Eid ul Fitr a joint meeting of all stakeholders would be called to deliberate on the issue of rates.

The association chief hailed the shelving powers from divisions/ regions for collecting details of accounts which has blocked the way for black mailing and bargaining forever.

Hidayatullah Afridi favours simultaneous, same day polls

PESHAWAR (APP): Special Assistant to KP CM on Prisons, Hidayatullah Afridi has said that holding simultaneous polls on the same day in all four provinces will be a correct and better decision.

Talking to a representative delegation of the trading community and his native locality, here on Thursday, he said that

ground realities are not separate elections in the provinces while the recent incidents occurred in Swat and Lakki Marwat districts are also proving that the prevailing situation is not suitable for polls.

The Special Assistant to KP CM said that dialogue among the political parties could bring some better solution and urged all political parties to join hands for waging a joint struggle for maintenance of peace, control of terrorism and bringing improvement in the economy.

He said that the caretaker government wants the completion of all ongoing development schemes as soon as possible, so the benefits of their completion could be pass-on to the general public.

He said that taking positive steps for the welfare of the people is their top priority.

Hidayatullah Afridi said that official resources are the trust of the people and they are utilizing all available resources for bringing improvement in the standard of life of the general public.

CEO Cantt discussed various issues during meeting with PEC Secretary Education visits Provincial Election HQs office



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Peshawar Cantonment Board Ali Irfan Rizvi on Thursday met Provincial Election Commissioner (PEC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shamshad Khan at his office.

Additional Chief Executive Officer Peshawar Cantonment Board Naveed Nawaz and Director Local

Government Election Zulfiqar Ahmed were also present on this occasion.

CEO discussed various issues in the meeting with the Provincial Election Commissioner.

On this occasion, the Provincial Election Commissioner presented the magazine ECP News published by the Election Commission to the CEO Peshawar Cantt. At the end of meeting Chief Executive

Officer thanked the Provincial Election Commissioner.

Meanwhile, the Secretary Education Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mutasim Balla on Thursday visits the office of Provincial Election Commissioner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He met Provincial Election Commissioner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shamshad Khan.

During the meeting,

Secretary Education discussed various issues with the Provincial Election Commissioner.

On this occasion, the Provincial Election Commissioner presented the magazine ECP News published by the Election Commission to the Education Secretary.

At the end of meeting, the Secretary Education thanked the Provincial Election Commissioner.

JIP desires election in all provinces, centre on same day

PESHAWAR (APP): The leaders of Jumate Islami Pakistan (JIP) KP here Thursday met with Provincial Ameer Professor Ibrahim Khan in chair and said that the party desired election in all provinces and centre on the same day.

The meeting of JIP leadership of KP was held at Almarkaz e Islami and was attended by Provincial General Secretary

Abdul Waseh, Vice Ameer, Inayatullah

and Maulana Tasleem Iqbal besides others. The meeting expressed condolences with the victims families of Kabal Swat blast. Professor Ibrahim said separate elections in provinces would create problems.

He said that his party would participate in election in independent capacity. However, option of seats adjustment was open.

World Immunization week being observed in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Expanded Programme on Immunization Department of Health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was celebrating World Immunization Week from April 24 to April 30, with the main objective of promoting the importance of vaccination and creates awareness among people.

This year's theme, "The Big Catch-Up" was an opportunity to raise awareness of the urgent and critical need to find and

vaccinate children who missed vaccines that help to protect them from illness, disability, and death.

In addition, this week is to emphasize more and more activities on immunization at all levels so that people can be vaccinated simultaneously and at all levels and to improve health and welfare services for everyone, said KP Director EPI Dr Muhammad Arif Khan here on Thursday.

Teenage student killed

PESHAWAR (INP): Armed men gunned down a teenage student and injured his uncle over petty dispute of standing in street in Academy Town area, Pishtakara police station jurisdiction in Peshawar on Thursday.

Police said that three brothers Farhan, Adnan and Ibrahim s/o Niaz Muhammad were annoyed over presence of 14-year-old Hamza s/o Tariq Khan and his uncle Muhammad Sohail in street outside their residence.

The culprits after exchange of hot words shot dead Hamza, injured his uncle Sohail and fled the scene.

The body and injured were shifted to hospital for medico-legal formalities and police after registering a case against the culprits started raids for their arrest.



In brief

Supt Sukkur Jail suspended

SUKKUR (INP): Sindh government Superintendent Sukkur Jail Ishfaq Kalhoro for allegedly providing unnecessary facilities to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Ali Amin Gandapur. A notification issued by the home department on Thursday said that Superintendent Sukkur Jail Ishfaq Kalhoro and DIG Jail Department Sukkur region Munawar Ali Shah have been suspended over allegations of facilitating high profile prisoners. The suspension of the senior officers of the jails has been carried out on directives of Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah. It is worth mentioning here PTI leader Ali Amin Gandapur is imprisoned in Sukkur jail and the provincial government took action over usage of mobile phone and internet by high profile prisoner. Gandapur also met with various people during Eid holidays and unneeded facilities were provided to them by jail administration.

Man killed for resisting robbery

MALAKAND (INP): A retired dispenser was killed by robbers for resisting during a robbery in Jalala area of Malakand, Police told media on Thursday. According to the Police, the incident took place within the jurisdiction of the Jalala police station. Where some robbers broke into a house and looted cash and valuables. On showing resistance, the intruders stabbed and killed a retired dispenser with knives and iron rods. After the incident, the suspects successfully fled the scene. The family members and relatives of the deceased staged a protest by placing the dead body on the road and blocked the highway leading to Swat. The protesters strongly criticized the police performance and demanded swift arrest of the culprits who are still at large.

Police arrest robber

KASUR (PPI): A robber was arrested in injured condition after an alleged police encounter in Khadian police limits on Thursday. According to the Kasur police, the robber identified as Aamir alias Shahid Sakna of Farid Nagar Pakpattan was wanted by the police in more than 10 robbery cases. The Khadian police raided Rehman City Colony on the information about the presence of the suspect. The suspect started direct firing from different sides after seeing the police. Aamir was injured by the firing of his associates and a pistol was recovered from his possession. The police shifted the injured robber to a hospital for medical assistance. The police said three absconding suspects have also been traced and teams have been formed to arrest them.

Section 144 imposed

F.P. Report

BANNU: Deputy Commissioner Bannu under section 144 has imposed ban on assembly of public within 200 meters perimeter around examination centers to discourage unfair means and to ensure transparency. The ban has also been imposed on sale of pocket guides, micro photostat and use of mobile and communication devices within 300 meters around examination centers. Those found guilty of flouting orders would be dealt under section 188 of Criminal Procedure Code, said an official statement issued on Thursday.

Criminal databank to breakdown organized crimes: DPO

F.P. Report

MARDAN: District Police Officer (DPO) Mardan Najib ur Rehman said that behind the success of any institution is public power. The enormous sacrifices of the police force cannot bear fruit unless they get the support of the people. Because 95% of the personnel in the police force also belong to this area, everyone tries to make their area crime-free.

This he said while talking to the "The Frontier Post" in his office and added that the investigation department is paying special attention so that they can play their role in bringing the criminals to justice by conducting a fair investigation. In response to a question, he said that in wave of terrorism, police is always alert and is engaged in various operations with other security agencies.

DPO further said that the documents of various types of criminals are being collected and for this, the documents of the convicted accused, including those of a serious nature, are also being examined. He

claimed that the work is going on with the cooperation of the relevant institutions and the department to prevent unregistered motorcycles and people will see a positive change in this regard very soon because 80% of the motorcycles are unregistered which are used in one - Wheeling and other crimes. He said CCTV security cameras should be installed throughout the district so that the second largest city of the province is safe in collaboration of business community.

Revenue Darbar held: A one-day revenue darbar (court) was set up for immediate redressal of public grievances related to SDC under the direction of Deputy Commissioner Mardan Capt. (R) Abdur Rehman. Additional Deputy Commissioner Mardan (Revenue), Engineer Syed Shahzeb, Assistant Commissioner Takhtbhai Gul Nawaz Afridi, Additional Assistant Commissioner Abdul Ghaffar Tehsildar SDC Wisal Khan, besides the Finance Department, Patwaris and related government officials were

present in the court wherein orders were issued to solve the problems faced by dozens of needy men/women on the spot in the court.

Addressing the Darbar, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Mardan Engineer Syed Shahzeb said that SDC is fulfilling its responsibility to correct the property records and inform that needy should follow the prevailing rules and procedures.

This will not only make the record correct, but also avoid complications and problems in the future. The relevant government officials will provide all kinds of help and guidance in this regard and will resolve all complaints immediately and said that in the light of the following proposals, all centers will have separate counters for women and disabled persons. He emphasized to the people that these institutions are designed to serve them. No obstruction or negligence will be tolerated in solving the problems faced by taking into account the prevailing laws and procedures.

Elite force grants sacrifices in war against terrorism

F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: The recent terrorist incidents cannot discourage us, the terrorist is the common enemy of all of us, the men of the elite force have fought bravely against the terrorists, the police force is a family and the pain and suffering of all are the same.

These views were expressed by District Police Officer (DPO) Lower Tariq Iqbal while addressing the Elite Force and RRF Jawans in Police Lines Timergara. On this occasion, SP Elite Malakand Range Sajid Khan, SP Investigation Lower Dir Zahoor Ahmad, SP Headquarters Fakhr Alam Khan, DSP Elite Lower Dir, DSP Investigation Syed Zaman Shah Khan along with elite

force and RRF jawans were present, on this occasion DPO Lower Tariq Iqbal said that RRF and elite force The police department is a brave and well-trained police force while the elite force is the front line force in the police and in every field they have shown bravery and made the name of the police department bright.

SP Elite Sajid Khan while addressing said that I feel proud to be a part of a force whose endless sacrifices have made Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the cradle of peace and elite force along with other law enforcement agencies to establish peace in the homeland. He said that the Elite Force is a disciplined force. Apart from Durbur, if anyone has any kind of problem, they can

come to my office. Will try to provide immediate relief. But any kind of negligence, negligence or undisciplined behavior will not be tolerated during duty.

SP investigation assumes charge: The newly appointed SP Investigation Lower Dir Zahoor Ahmad formally assumed his charge, on Thursday, the Lower Dir police team saluted at the Investigation Headquarters.

On this occasion, DSP Headquarters Lower Dir Fakhr Alam Khan and DSP Investigation Syed Zaman Shah gave a briefing to the newly appointed SP Investigation. Later, SP Investigation visited all the investigation offices and met with the office staff.



QUETTA: Gypsy children searching valuable items from garbage.

Govt urged to release funds for repair of roads

MURREE (INP): People of rural and suburbs of Murree here have demanded of the government to allocate special funds for maintenance and repair of broken and damaged link roads connecting rural areas with the city.

In interaction with media on Thursday, they said that a remarkable increase in road mishaps has occurred due to these broken roads causing loss of lives and damage to vehicles. "Several people have lost their lives during the last few years in traffic accidents due to pathetic condition of link roads," they added.

The link road which connects more than five union councils of Murree besides suburbs was in dilapidated condition for almost three years. The link road was assembled in PML-N last tenure to connect multi UCS people of Murree. Beside connecting many UCS like Potha, Sehar Bhagla Phagwari, Charyan road lead

to Murree Expressway.

The local people said that they had lodged complaints on the citizen's complaint portal and a number of applications have also been submitted with the Punjab Highways department for the repair of the route, but of no avail.

The shabby condition of road had created hardships for the residents to take their serious patients, especially elderly persons, women to the hospitals in the nativity, a notable of society Zafar Javed told this scribe. "Large cracks appeared in the damaged portion of the road due to torrential rains few years back during Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government and public representatives were approached for funds to repair of road but of no use. Our school going children were suffering massively due to bad condition of road. In rainy season the patients have no option to abstain their little from school," he

said.

Many applications in this regard have been submitted with Punjab Highways department, however our all submissions were precluded at party-political dispute as the project was materialized during rule of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government, he revealed.

Another notable of the society Rafiq Mahmood said that after continuous refusal of their applications, local people raised funds on self-help basis and started repair of damaged road at their own. However, due to heavy land sliding, huge funds were required and government needs to contribute, he stressed.

Chairman Rifah Development Forum, Suffyan Abbasi said that the residents of five UCS were adversely affected due to damaged portion of the road causing nuisance for women, children and elderly people.



QUETTA: Children sitting on backside of a car travelling on road, which may cause any incident, needs attention of authorities concerned.

Bizenjo orders setup of isolation wards to tackle virus

QUETTA (PPI): Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo, has issued directives to the Medical Superintendents of all government run hospitals of the capital for setting up 5-10-bedded isolation wards (male/female) in their respective healthcare facilities to cope up with the challenge of monkeypox virus, said a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Secretariat here on Thursday.

"All preventative and precautionary measures and standard operating procedures (SOP) be prepared to face the challenge of monkeypox virus besides establishing 5-to-10-bedded isolation wards for men and women in Bolan Medical Complex Hospital, Quetta Sandeman Provincial Hospital, Quetta, Mufti Mehmood Hospital, Kuchlak, Benazir Hospital, Quetta and Fatima Chest and General Hospital, Quetta, said the Chief Minister Balochistan.

Chief Minister Balochistan also directed the provincial health department to provide the essential items required to Bolan Medical Complex Hospital, Quetta Sandeman Provincial Hospital, Quetta, Mufti Mehmood Hospital, Kuchlak, Benazir Hospital, Quetta and Fatima Chest and General Hospital, Quetta for combating monkeypox virus and ensure maintaining hygiene in those healthcare facilities.

2600 kg sugar seizes in Torkham

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: To discourage smuggling of the banned item to Afghanistan, 2600 kg of sugar was seized in godown, located in Bacha Mena village of Torkham border last day. It is to be mentioned here that last week, 22050 kg of sugar was recovered in raids on four stalk rooms in Torkham.

Following the imposition of a ban on export of sugar via Torkham border by the federal government, the district administration launched a massive operation against the hoarders of the commodity in Torkham. Previous day, led by Assistant Commissioner, Landi Kotal Irshad Ali, the local administration team on tip off raided one of godowns and seized 2600 kg of sugar, concealed in 52 bags that was stated to be smuggled to Afghanistan.

The contraband item was confiscated and a legal process was initiated against the hoarders. The administrative official vowed that to ensure easy supply of the necessary edible i.e. sugar in the market, no one would be permitted to hoard or smuggle sugar. It is to be stated here that since last month, smuggling of sugar to Afghanistan through Torkham crossing was on the rise that feared to create scarcity of the commodity in the county.

'Pukhtun no longer to tolerate terrorism'

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Hundreds of youth and elders from different parts of the district poured into the streets at Timergara to protest the Kabal Swat police lines' blasts that killed 16 and injured about 70 people on Monday. The incident has sparked anguish among locals as they have witnessed the worst similar situation in 2009 and 2010 in the district. The charged protesters blocked the road at a busy square for some time.

The traffic authorities diverted the routine traffic on the alternate routes. The protesters also burnt tyres on the road and shouted full throat slogans against the government for its failure to protect the lives of general public and police officials. The popu-

lar slogan was 'Mong pa khpala khawra amn ghawaro' (we want peace on our soil).

The protest rally was addressed by the PTI activists Ali Shah Mishwani and Kashif Kamal, JI activist Shuiab Ahmad, PPP's advocate Alam Zeb Khan, former district councilor Hujaj Khan, Malik Rahatullah and others. They raised questions on the government and police stand about the incident and demanded immediate judicial inquiry against the blasts. The speakers strongly condemned the incident and announced the people would no longer afford such sabotage acts. They were of the view that durable peace was essential for prosperity and development.

"We cannot tolerate ter-

rorism on our land," Ali Shah said, adding that Pukhtun could no longer be deceived in the name of terrorism that had always been carried out for US Dollars. The speakers said that Pukhtun were peaceful citizens but yet their regions witnessed the worst kind of bloodshed unfortunately. They said the people had lost trust in government agencies and this time the people would maintain peace on their land to curb militancy.

They said the government should initiate an independent inquiry against the Kabal incident to find out the reality. The speakers said that more such massive protests would be held in parts of the district if the current wave of militancy was not curbed by the government soon.

Isolation wards setup at THQs for monkeypox

F.P. Report

MARDAN: District Health Administration designated all Tehsil Headquarter Hospitals (THQ) for possible monkeypox cases in Mardan. District health officials directed all THQs hospital administrations to stipulate special isolation five beds in each hospital for monkeypox patients.

While talking to media the District Health Officer (DHO) Mardan, Dr Javid Iqbal has claimed that there is no case of monkeypox reported till now in the district. We are fully prepared to beat the monkey pox and able to provide medical assistance to affected people in the early stages properly, said DHO.

Dr Javid Iqbal said that we have informed all the hospital administration to take special steps for screening of monkeypox patients and all compulsory measurements have been fulfilled already in this regard. All hospitals are directed to report the data of screened patients to the DHO office timely, said Dr

Javid.

DHO said that in view of the possible spread of monkeypox and notification of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department, the District Health Administration Mardan has taken early steps so that the epidemic can be prevented in the province. All hospitals are well equipped for possible treatment of the disease, said Dr Javid.

According to health reports, after exposure to the monkeypox virus, the average incubation period is 1 to 2 weeks before symptoms appear. Early signs of monkeypox include Chills, Exhaustion, Fever, Headache, Muscle aches and backache. Dr Javid said that people shouldn't panic because it can be treated easily. He said that monkey pox can be spread to others through physical contact with the affected person.

The health report mentioned that these flu-like symptoms are then typically followed by the development of a rash. The rash can look like pimples or blisters

and can be painful. Lesions can appear on the face, in the mouth, and on the hands, feet, chest and other parts of the body. Some people get the rash first, followed by other, flu-like symptoms, while some experience only a rash. The rash goes through different stages, including pimple-like bumps and blisters that crust and fall off before healing completely. The illness caused by monkeypox typically lasts 2 to 4 weeks.

Dr. Javed Iqbal said that monkeypox virus spreads through physical contact, so mothers who get this virus cannot breastfeed their children until they are cured of this disease. This disease is not as dangerous as a pandemic, its treatment is very easy and the patient recovers in a few days, said Dr Javid. Dr Javid appealed to the people that those who are experiencing the symptoms of this disease can refer to the tehsil hospital in time so that they can be properly treated and the rest of the people are not affected.

HPC new cabinet commits to expose corruption

F.P. Report

HARIPUR: For eight or nine years, the government employees of the district, including teachers, along with the political revenge and political interference of the former powerful figures, as well as the special lobby appointed in the education office, have kept the market of irregularities and corruption warm, instead of the officers with character.

All these atrocities and irregularities are due to the inactivity of the press club. It is hoped that the newly elected cabinet of the press club will uphold the supremacy of law in all government departments, including teachers and civil servants. Therefore, the voice of the oppressed will be made, in which the all Government Employees Coordination Council, together with the Press Club, will continue to play its full role for the redressal of oppression and injustice.

Malik Muhammad Hafeez, Chairman of the All Government Employees Coordination Council of Haripur District, expressed these views. After congratulating the newly elected cabinet of Haripur Press

Club along with the office bearers of All Teachers Association district Haripur during his address, on this occasion District President of ATA Mufti Mehmood Qureshi, General Secretary Malik Umar, Senior Vice President Rustam Khan, Vice Presidents Qari Shahid Khalid, Timur Khan, Mumtaz Khan, Syed Sadaqat Hussain and others also congratulated the Press Club Cabinet.

They said that the doors of the Press Club were opened by the restoration of the democratic process in the Press Club elections. Help will be given to the oppressed classes while President Press Club Zakir Hussain Tanoli, General Secretary Malik Muhammad Iqbal, Senior Vice President Musharraf Hazarvi in their address to the officials of All Government Employees and All Teachers Association, addressed the problems faced by government employees and teachers. They assured of their full support for the protection of legitimate rights and said that the doors of the press club are open to all classes and every oppressed without discrimination, on which the ATA and all employees officials expressed special thanks to the press club cabinet.



Friday, April 28, 2023

San Francisco to repeal boycott of anti-LGBT states

SAN FRANCISCO (AP): San Francisco is repealing a ban on city-funded travel to 30 states that it says restrict abortion, voting and LGBTQ rights after determining the boycott is doing more harm than good. The Board of Supervisors voted 7-4 to repeal a section of the city's administrative code that prohibits staff from visiting and city departments from contracting with companies headquartered in the states, which include Texas, Florida and Ohio. California, meanwhile, is considering the repeal of a similar law.

City supervisors will hold a second and final vote. Mayor London Breed is expected to sign the measure. The progressive city passed the boycott in 2016, after the US Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage nationwide. At first, the boycott applied only to states that it considered restricted the rights of LGBTQ people. Later, the list was expanded to include states that limit access to voting and abortion.

The idea was to exert economic pressure on those conservative states. Instead, a report released last month by the city administrator concluded that the policy was raising costs and administrative burdens for the city. Because of restrictions, there were fewer bidders for city work and that ending the boycott might

reduce contracting costs by 20% annually, the report concluded. In addition, the city had approved hundreds of exemptions and waivers for some \$800 million worth of contracts, the report said.

Meanwhile, "no states with restrictive LGBTQ rights, voting rights, or abortion policies have cited the city's travel and contract bans as motivation for reforming their law," the review concluded. The measure "was a well-intentioned effort at values-based contracting but ultimately did not accomplish the social change it sought to effect," Board President Aaron Peskin, who co-sponsored the repeal, said in a statement. "Instead, this onerous restriction has led to an uncompetitive bidding climate and created serious obstructions to everything from accessing emergency housing to being able to cost-effectively purchase the best products and contracts for the City."

Scott Wiener, a former supervisor-turned-state senator who authored the original ban, agreed that the measure hadn't produced the intended results. "We believed a coalition of cities and states would form to create true consequences for states that pass these despicable, hateful laws," the San Francisco Democrat said in a statement. "Yet, as it turned out, that coalition never formed, and the full

potential impact of this policy never materialized. Instead, San Francisco is now penalizing businesses in other states - including LGBTQ-owned, women-owned, and people of color-owned businesses - for the sins of their radical right wing governments." In addition, city staff have been unable to fly to many states for cooperative work on issues ranging from HIV prevention to transportation, Wiener said. Similar problems have led California to consider mothballing its own 2016 ban on state travel to states it deems discriminate against LGBTQ people.

California now bans state-funded travel to nearly half of the country following a surge of anti-LGBTQ legislation in mostly Republican-led states. The prohibition means sports teams at public colleges and universities have had to find other ways to pay for road games in states like Arizona and Utah. And it has complicated some of the state's other policy goals, like using state money to pay for people who live in other states to travel to California for abortions.

Last month, state Senate leader Toni Atkins announced legislation that would end the ban and replace it with an advertising campaign in those states that promotes acceptance and inclusion for the LGBTQ community.

Chinese police question staff of US firm

SHANGHAI (Agencies): Chinese law enforcement officials have questioned staff of Bain & Company at the United States consulting giant's Shanghai office. "We can confirm that the Chinese authorities have questioned staff in our Shanghai office," a company spokesperson said on Thursday. "We are cooperating as appropriate with the Chinese authorities. At this time, we have no further comment."

The roles and identities of the staff who were questioned or the reason for the police operation are not clear. Criminal investigations are typically shrouded in secrecy in China and the outcome of proceedings can often take years to become known. The Financial Times first reported that police had made a surprise visit to the office two weeks ago and taken away phones and computers, without detaining any staff. The incident is likely to heighten foreign firms' concerns about the safety of operating in China after authorities last month raided the Beijing office of US due diligence firm Mintz Group and detained five staff.

Chinese authorities later said the firm was being probed for "illegal" activities. China's cybersecurity watchdog last month announced a probe into the security of products made by US memory chipmaker Micron Technology. China's new Premier Li Qiang has sought to reassure businesses that China is open for business after nearly three years of strict pandemic clubs and repeated crackdowns on private industry. Chinese President Xi Jinping, who is widely viewed to prioritize political control over the economy, last month told a gathering of the ruling Communist Party that security is "the bedrock of development" and stability is "a prerequisite for prosperity".

US sanctions Sri Lankan governor

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The United States says it will refuse visas on human rights grounds to a Sri Lankan provincial governor who has been charged with killings during the island nation's long civil war. A Sri Lankan investigation accused Wasantha Karannagoda, a former navy chief, among others, of abducting teenage children of wealthy families and killing them after extorting money.

Authorities in 2021 dropped the charges, prompting an outcry from human rights groups, and he was soon named governor of North Western Province by then President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who served as defence chief when Sri Lanka defeated the Tamil Tiger rebels in 2009. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that "the allegation that Wasantha Karannagoda committed a gross human rights violation, documented by NGOs and independent investigations, is serious and credible". Neither the governor nor his wife, Srimalathi Ashoka Karannagoda, would be allowed to visit the US, Blinken said in a statement. "The United States reaffirms its commitment to upholding human rights, ending impunity for human rights violators, acknowledging the suffering of victims and survivors and promoting accountability for perpetrators in Sri Lanka." The action on human rights grounds comes as the US and India voice alarm over inroads in Sri Lanka by China, the island's biggest creditor. Sri Lanka last year defaulted on its external debt and saw angry protests that toppled Rajapaksa over economic mismanagement that brought acute food, fuel and medicine shortages.

"Negotiation is the only viable way out," state TV said in a report on Xi's comments to Zelenskyy. "There is no winner in a nuclear war," the report said. "All parties concerned should remain calm and restrained in dealing with the nuclear issue and truly look at the future and destiny of themselves and humanity as a whole and work together to manage the crisis."

World powers pull their citizens as violence roils Sudan

PARIS (AP): Leila Oulkebous' research for her doctorate from one of France's top universities was going well when the explosions started. Oulkebous had stopped work on Ethiopia because of that country's civil war and her research in Sudan was going to be more straightforward, she thought.

Then Sudan exploded into violence. The chiefs of the country's army and its rival Rapid Support Forces rose to power after a popular uprising in 2019 prompted them to remove longtime autocratic ruler Omar al-Bashir. They started fighting this month amid tensions over a new plan to re-introduce civilian rule. The bombing shook the house where Oulkebous was living in the capital, Khartoum, investigating the effects of dams on rivers that cross borders.

"We were hiding all the time under the bed," she said at Paris' Charles de Gaulle airport as hundreds of people arrived in harrowing evacuations. World powers were rescuing people from Sudan on planes and warships in operations prompted by the eruption of the fighting that sent thousands of foreigners and many more Sudanese people fleeing for safety. A French frigate carrying hundreds of evacuees docked in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia as part of broader efforts involving several warships, in addition to airlifts. French military spokesman Col. Pierre Gaudilliere said France evacuated more than 500 civilians from 40 nations by plane over the weekend after securing the airbase north of Khartoum, using its airbase in neighbouring Djibouti for the airlift.

Gaudilliere said the French military was the first to land, and organized the flow of its own and other nations' planes. "You still had airstrikes as the operation was going on, crossfire in the streets, artillery fire, so it was and still is very intense fighting," Gaudilliere said. The French military had personnel on the ground to assess the situation during the operation, he said. Several nations, including Japan, thanked France for rescuing their citizens. Some other countries quickly joined evacuation efforts. Czech Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky said three nationals have been evacuated with help from Germany, and his country is now working with Turkey to help evacuate two other citizens. Greek national Christos Dedes, who was in Sudan for work, said he and his colleagues managed to leave their Khartoum hotel via the Portuguese embassy, which sent a car to drive



them to the airbase where there were Italian, French and German soldiers. "We just happened to leave with the Italians, on a transport plane," he said on Greek TV channel Mega, after he arrived in Athens.

From their Khartoum hotel, he said, they could see that "every day the battles were heavier. Both (sides) were using heavy weapons." He said they would hear explosions at night, and see bodies in the street. More than 1,000 people from 58 countries were to arrive by ship to the port of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, including many on the French warship Lorraine. Saudi Arabia organized the first evacuation convoy by land, via cars and buses bringing people to Port Sudan, where a navy ship took them to Jeddah. The French foreign affairs ministry said a flight carrying 184 French nationals and their families and about 20 other nationals returned from Djibouti and landed in Paris. Among them was Oulkebous, a Moroccan PhD student at Bordeaux Montaigne University. "The feeling I had since the first day of fighting was I felt really paralysed, I didn't know what to do, I didn't know how to get out, the airport was closed, we could not leave," she said, describing "the explosions, the smoke, so really, I didn't have the time to fully realise what was going on." A Royal Air Maroc plane arrived at Casablanca's Mohammed V airport, carrying 136 Moroccan nationals evacuated from Sudan. In contrast with France and some other nations, the US and Britain didn't evacuate non-diplomats at first. The British government has come under growing criticism for its failure to airlift civilians. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak defended the government's approach, saying diplomats had been evacuated first

"because they were being targeted."

The British government since said that 301 people have been evacuated on four U.K. flights from Sudan over the past 24 hours, and four more are scheduled. Britain intends to keep running the flights for as long as possible. In addition, "rapid deployment teams" of U.K. officials are in Port Sudan assessing potential for a seaborne evacuation. The Foreign Office says U.K. passport-holders are eligible, "and priority is given to family groups with children and/or the elderly or individuals with medical conditions." Officials have said there are as many as 4,000 British citizens in Sudan, 2,000 of whom have registered for potential evacuation. The White House said the US is helping from afar as thousands of Americans left behind in Sudan seek to escape fighting in the east African nation, after the US Embassy evacuated all of its diplomatic personnel over the weekend and shut down. The Biden administration is considering several options for assisting private American citizens in getting out of Sudan.

Two US officials said one option being considered would be to send US Navy vessels in, or en route to, the Red Sea to dock at Port Sudan and take Americans to Jeddah or another location. The officials said this would depend on the security situation and whether it was deemed safe for the ships to dock. A US official said the military has developed other options for getting Americans, including using an airfield that some European countries have used to fly out citizens. To date, it has not been told to do that, the official said. The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity in order to discuss sensitive matters.

US envoy to head to Brazil next week

UNITED NATIONS (AP): US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield is heading to Brazil next week, following up on recent high-level meetings between the presidents and top diplomats of the two countries. The US Mission to the United Nations said that she will visit the capital, Brasilia, and then travel to Salvador, one of the oldest cities in the Americas and a center of Afro-Brazilian culture, from May 2-4.

Thomas-Greenfield's visit follows February's White House meeting where President Joe Biden and Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva stressed the importance of defending democracy and preserving the Amazon rain forest - and talks on the margin of the Group of 20 ministerial meeting in New Delhi in early March between US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Brazilian

Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira. Lula has also reached out to China and Russia, traveling to Beijing earlier this month to meet with China's President Xi Jinping in Beijing and holding talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Brasilia last week. The Brazilian president sparked criticism from the US and the European Union for suggesting recently that Kyiv and the West share some responsibility for the conflict in Ukraine, which began with Russia's invasion on Feb. 24, 2022.

The US mission said Thomas-Greenfield, a member of Biden's Cabinet, will focus on promoting democracy and multilateral cooperation on the trip, as well as on combating climate change, safeguarding food security, continuing cooperation on regional migration, "and ensuring equity for marginalized racial, ethnic, and

Indigenous communities." Brazil, Latin America's largest country and a major global exporter, is currently serving a two-year term on the UN Security Council. The mission said that in Brasilia, the ambassador will meet with government officials "to discuss our partnership in the region and at the United Nations." She will also meet Brazilians dealing with the more than 250,000 Venezuelan migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the country and speak at the University of Brasilia, the mission said. In Salvador, the mission said, Thomas-Greenfield will underscore the US commitment to reinvigorate the 2008 US-Brazil Joint Action Plan to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality and will engage with Afro-Brazilian civil society and young people.

Uighur refugee dies after nine years in detention

BANGKOK (Agencies): An ethnic Uighur man who was detained by Thailand in 2014 after fleeing China has died in immigration detention, the second Uighur refugee to die in Thai custody this year. Mattohti Mattursun died of suspected liver failure in the Suan Phlu Immigration Detention Centre in Bangkok on April 21, according to an April 24 statement from the World Uyghur Congress and the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP). He was 40 years old.

Mattohti, who was also known as Muhammad Tursun, was one of 350 Uighurs, including children, who were detained as they headed towards Malaysia in the hope of making it to safety in a third country in March 2014. The following year, at least 170 of them were transferred to Turkey while more than 100 were

sent back to China, which the United Nations has said may have committed potential "crimes against humanity" in its mass internment of mostly Muslim Uighurs. "How many more deaths will take place before Thai authorities act with humanity to release these innocent people who are merely seeking safe haven," UHRP Executive Director Omer Kanat said in the statement. "Uyghurs around the world are filled with anguish that these refugees have been left in misery for nine years and the world has not lifted a finger to rescue them." World Uyghur Congress President Dolkun Isa said there were concerns about the "harsh conditions of detention, which we fear can only lead to the death of all remaining detainees". Like many countries in Southeast Asia, Thailand is not a party to the 1951 UN

Refugee Convention, leaving asylum seekers vulnerable to arrest and detention as "illegal migrants".

The Uighur groups' said Mattohti was sent to hospital after weeks of severe stomach pain and vomiting as well as developing jaundice. He died shortly after he was admitted. Thailand has yet to officially confirm his death. In February, 49-year-old Aziz Abdullah died of pneumonia after also spending nine years in detention. "Thai authorities are putting people at risk by keeping them for years in awful conditions in immigration detention centers," Human Rights Watch's Asia Director Elaine Pearson said in a statement. "Mattohti Mattursun's death should sound the alarm to end this abusive policy of incarcerating asylum seekers and refugees for prolonged periods."

China says it will send peace envoy to Ukraine

BEIJING (AP): Chinese leader Xi Jinping told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a phone call that his government will send a peace envoy to Ukraine and other nations, state media said, after Beijing said it wants to act as mediator in Russia's war with the country. A government statement reported by state TV gave no indication whether the Chinese

envoy would visit Russia. "China will send a special representative of the Chinese government on Eurasian affairs to Ukraine and other countries to conduct in-depth communication with all parties on the political settlement of the Ukrainian crisis," the statement said. It made no mention of Russia or President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine last year. "There is

no winner in a nuclear war," the statement warned. China has tried to appear neutral in the war but has refused to criticize Moscow's invasion. Xi and Putin issued a joint statement before the February 2020 attack saying their governments had a "no limits friendship." Xi's government released a peace proposal in February and called for a cease-fire and talks.

Delaying help to combat Haiti's gangs may impact region: UN

UNITED NATIONS (AP): The UN special envoy for Haiti urged the immediate deployment of a specialized international force to counter escalating gang violence and develop the Caribbean nation's understaffed and ill-equipped police force. But the United States and Canada again showed no interest in leading a force and neither did any member of the UN Security Council. Maria Isabel Salvador, who took over the UN job this month, warned that delays could lead to a spillover of insecurity in the Caribbean and Latin America. She told the council that gang violence in the Western Hemisphere's poorest country is expanding at an alarming rate in areas previously considered safe in and outside the capital, Port-au-Prince. She cited police and UN figures to illustrate "the shocking increase in criminality in Haiti": Criminal incidents -- which comprise homicides, rapes, kidnappings and lynchings -- more than doubled to 1,647 in the first quarter of 2023 from 692 in the same period in 2022.

Salvador stressed that without restoring a minimum level of security, it is impossible to move forward toward elections. She told reporters afterward that she was disappointed that no country has offered to lead a force since UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres issued an urgent appeal last October for international help at the request of Haiti's Prime Minister Ariel Henry and the country's Council of Ministers. At council meeting, neither the United States, which has been criticized for previous interventions in Haiti, nor Canada, which the US tried to convince to head the force, showed interest in taking the lead. The international community has instead opted to impose sanctions and send military equipment and other resources. US deputy ambassador Jeffrey DeLaurentis said the Biden administration is "deeply concerned about the rise in violent gang activity" and noted Haiti's request for international support to address violence and insecurity. "The United States continues to work with a grow-

ing number of international partners to support the urgent security needs in the country," he said, adding that the Security Council needs to do its part by imposing additional sanctions against Haitians financing and fomenting violence. Canada's UN Ambassador Robert Rae also cited sanctions as "one important tool to break the power of armed gangs." He said Canada is convinced that it's vital to take action and told the council his government has decided to increase support for training and new equipment for Haiti's National Police Force this year. Neither DeLaurentis nor Rae mentioned contributing to an international stabilization force. Salvador, a former Ecuadorian government official and business executive, told the council "we need to find innovative ways to define the force to support the Haitian National Police." Expanding on this idea to reporters later, the UN envoy said the international force, comprising police personnel, should help Haitian officers sepa-

rate gangs and little by little restore security in the country. She said she would like to see countries in Latin America and the Caribbean get more involved and lead the force, noting that some have past experience. "Regional crises require regional reactions and actions," she stressed. Salvador lamented that this takes time, "and the Haitian people cannot wait." The spillover from the escalating violence is already having an impact in the neighboring Dominican Republic and the region including Colombia, Ecuador and Peru where Haitians fleeing the country have arrived, she said, adding that increasing gang violence will worsen the impact. In a report to the Security Council this week, the secretary-general urged the immediate deployment of an international armed force in Haiti to stem escalating gang violence and the country's worst human rights crisis in decades, warning that insecurity in the capital "has reached levels comparable to countries in armed conflict."

Thai party hopes protesters will become pro-reform voters

BANGKOK (AP): Three years ago, tens of thousands of mostly young people in Thailand took to the streets in heated demonstrations seeking democratic reforms. Now, with a general election coming in three weeks, leaders of the country's progressive movement are hoping to channel the same radical spirit for change through the ballot box.

One of those activists, Chonthicha Jangrew, is a candidate for the Move Forward Party. On the campaign trail on a recent morning at a market on the outskirts of Bangkok, she politely touted her party's pro-reform agenda. It covers much of the same ground that riled Thailand's traditional conservative establishment and triggered violent street confrontations between militant demonstrators and the authorities in a series of protests that gained

traction in 2020. An activist since her days in college almost 10 years ago, Chonthicha became a high-profile figure in the youth-dominated movement by fearlessly confronting the police during the mass street protests. Their demands included the resignation of the military-aligned government, a new more democratic constitution and, most controversially, reform of the powerful, untouchable monarchy.

Chonthicha's protest activities have left her facing 28 criminal charges, she said, including sedition and lese majeste - insulting the monarchy - with potential penalties totaling dozens of years in prison. The 30-year-old activist, better known by her nickname Lookkate, said moving into Parliament would ensure that those voices from the street will be heard in the corridors of

power.

"I might be useful to push some laws through Parliament, particularly those relating to human rights. I think I might be able to fulfill in Parliament those demands I once called for on the street," she said. Move Forward, led by businessman Pita Limjaroenrat, is the only major party offering a progressive, left-leaning agenda, and its relatively youthful slate of candidates holds particular appeal to the same constituency that powered the street protests. It grew out of the Future Forward Party, which came from nowhere to take 81 out of 500 seats in the last election. A year later, a court dissolved it over a funding irregularity. Many saw it as an effort by Thailand's political establishment to remove a troublesome upstart.

That ruling was the initial spark for the street protests,

which then snowballed into a broader airing of grievances. The government eventually stifled the demonstrations with riot police and water cannons and the aggressive use of the justice system to arrest and prosecute leaders. According to party chief Pita, who is his party's prime ministerial candidate, the repression reflected in the crushing of the street protests and dissolution of the Future Forward Party has left a legacy of anger that will propel the Move Forward vote on May 14. "I'm sure the frustration is there and it will be shown in the balloting. For sure. Thais will prove that the bullet is stronger than the bullet, back like how President Abraham Lincoln said, 200 years ago, will happen in Thailand this year," Pita, who holds degrees from Harvard and MIT, told The Associated Press.

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Army Chief’s visit and Pak-China ties

CHIEF of Army Staff (COAS) Gen Asim Munir is currently on a four-day official visit to the People's Republic of China (PRC). During the trip, the COAS visited the headquarters of the People’s Liberation Army and held an in-depth discussion with the Commander of the PLA. According to the official press release of the Pakistan Army media wing, the two military leaders reaffirmed the need to promote military-to-military cooperation and maintain peace and stability in the region. Later, the Army Chief visited field formations of the Peoples' Liberation Army and witnessed an operational demonstration of the Chinese troops and appreciated the high standards of training and professionalism of the soldiers.

Pakistan and China are first-door neighbors, economic partners, iron brothers, and longstanding allies. Pakistan and China have a multifaceted and cordial relationship. Both nations have enjoyed extensive bilateral cooperation in all sectors including trade and investment, defense and security, health and science, education, nuclear and renewable energy, space and technology, etc. Both Beijing and Islamabad have a historic consensus and coordination over regional and global affairs and both nations enjoyed each other's support at the UN, the FATF, and other multilateral global forums. Historically, rapidly changing regional and global geometrics have further cemented the all-weather Pak-China friendship, which proved its worth against all odds over the past seven and a half decades.

The Army Chief's current visit to China marks a traditional link between the two militaries and signifies the importance of Pak-China ties and bilateral cooperation amid elevated risks in the region and growing competition at the global level. Although, the magnificent China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has provided a basis for a robust Pak-China collaboration in the 21st century, whilst internal political and economic crises and an evolving geopolitical situation in South Asia merit a fresh consultation and enhanced economic and security cooperation between the two nations.

Amid ongoing tussle with the United States and allies in the Indo-Pacific region, the Strait of Taiwan, and multiple domestic frustrating issues, the People's Republic of China has emerged as a global economic power, diplomatic fashionist, and peace broker. After having mediated a successful peace deal between Saudi Arabia and Iran, Beijing is now eyeing achieving a truce between the combatant Russian Federation and the Republic of Ukraine. During this heightened global rivalry and bloc politics, a stable Pakistan and strong China-Pakistan bonds are vital for Beijing, while, continued economic, political, and military support from China is also vital for a politically shaken and economically fragile Pakistan.

Realistically, several bilateral and domestic issues have seriously hurt the core sentiment of the China-Pakistan economic collaboration, while Pakistan's persistent economic frailty and a recent unfortunate incident with the Chinese engineer working on a CPEC project had also caused grave damage to Islamabad's relationship with Beijing. The Chinese side has also expressed its willingness to boost its economic and military ties with Pakistan, while the Chinese Central Military Commission has said that China's military was ready to work with Pakistan's military to deepen and expand its cooperation and jointly safeguard peace and stability in the region. The current visit by the Army Chief to China is very crucial to reinforce Pak-China brotherly ties and reinvigorating fraternal relations between the two nations. The Chief of Army Staff must work to broaden this relationship which encompasses all domains and lay foundations of a sustainable, comprehensive, and long-term strategic partnership between the two countries in the future.

US determined to return Sudan to civilian rule

Dr. Amal Mudallali

SUDAN'S ceasefire is the thread of hope on which the international community is hanging as it seeks to help avert the unthinkable - a civil war in a country that has witnessed 35 coups since its independence, 17 of them successful. This is in addition to two civil wars and conflicts that have led to divisions and battered the country and its economy. The most recent coup in 2021 "weakened domestic activity, slowing down progress toward debt relief," according to the World Bank. This is at a time when "growth is projected at 0.4 percent in 2023 following five years of recession. Inflation remains in double digits. The population living on less than \$2.15 per day is estimated to have risen from 30.6 percent in 2021 to 32.3 percent in 2022."

This is all on the minds of the neighbors of Sudan and the international community as they look at the fires burning in Khartoum, forcing millions to flee. The last thing Sudan needs is a conflict. But it seems this is not the thinking of the two generals who are fighting it out on the streets: Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, the head of the Sudanese Armed Forces, and Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, known as Hemedti, the head of the paramilitary Rapid

Support Forces. These two generals, who cooperated and led the coup of October 2021, are in a fight for power until the death.

The US has been blunt in its messaging to the two generals in phone calls made by Secretary of State Antony Blinken. The Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Molly Phee said Blinken "really impressed upon them that nearly the entire world is united in shock at their conduct, and united in their demand to cease this fighting, which is so threatening to the people and to the nation and frankly to the region."

Washington, which has "temporarily" closed its embassy and evacuated its diplomats, has been in contact with all its allies in the region and with Sudan's neighbors, which have influence on the two feuding generals, to try to stop the country's descent into the abyss. The secretary's message showed that Washington is still hoping for a transition to civilian rule. Phee insisted that the "Sudanese people are not giving up, and neither will we. The goal is to bring an end to this fighting and to start a civilian government."

Although some doubt that Washington has the influence needed to force this transition to civilian rule, or the wherewithal to stand with the Sudanese people to win this fight,

there is great expectation of the US to build a coalition of regional and international partners to put Sudan back on a peaceful, civilian-led path.

After speaking about the "critical role played by our Saudi and Emirati partners," Phee said the US is exploring how "to contribute our influence and our relationships with partners and allies, particularly in Africa and the Arab world, those that have influence in Sudan, as well as our partners in the international community," to achieve the goal of ending the fighting and moving to a civilian government.

Critics blame the US and the West for what is happening in Sudan today, accusing them of contributing to Sudan's collapse. In Foreign Policy magazine, Justin Lynch described Blinken's talk of the "real opportunity to finally carry forward the civilian-led transition" in Sudan as "US delusions."

He criticized the US for calling Sudan's transition "civilian-led," when "there was nothing about Sudan's transition that was civilian-led." Lynch added that the US continued to use the term even after the military delayed the transition to civilian rule. The author said that US officials told him the term was "more aspirational than descriptive."

Former US officials point to the fact that these two generals were united in their 2021 effort to overthrow the government and prevent the transition to civilian rule. One former official told me they agree that maybe the US "should have come down harder on them" and that there was a legitimate debate in the US government about it. They added that Al-Burhan and Dagalo "were a reality and they were not simply going to vanish because the international community was annoyed by them." The administration is now focused on stopping the fighting. The US is talking about moving from a ceasefire to a cessation of hostilities - a confusing distinction, especially as the State Department did not explain the difference between the two.

A statement released by Blinken on Monday pointed out that the US wants to move beyond the ceasefire commitments and achieve "a durable end to the fighting." He said the US will "coordinate with regional and international partners, and civilian Sudanese stakeholders, to assist in the creation of a committee to oversee the negotiation, conclusion, and implementation of a permanent cessation of hostilities." The American priority was to use all the leverage it had with its allies to stop the fighting. Its efforts led to

the "shaky" 72-hour ceasefire that it hopes will expand and last.

Former US Special Envoy for the Horn of Africa Jeff Feltman told me he agrees with the US administration that the immediate task is to have this ceasefire hold for two reasons. First, he said, it is important because there are 46 million people who have effectively been taken hostage and there is a need to give them their humanitarian needs, like food, water and safety. Second, he said, "you saw this in Syria, in Libya and elsewhere. If the fighting continues ... it will be tempting for outside actors to get involved to support one general against the other," and this will "hypercharge" the fighting. "So you need to get a ceasefire to ease the civilian situation ... and to prevent a local fight from becoming a regional proxy fight," he added.

If there is any consensus on Sudan it is that everyone agrees that the country's stability is essential. Feltman said no one in the region or in the wider international community wants to see Sudan destabilized. But the question is what is the end game? What comes after the ceasefire? How will a peace process be started? Feltman pointed to the current divisions within the security services and noted that, "relatively speaking, the civilians will be in a

stronger position than they were in before, when the security services were united. But we are left with the dilemma of what to do with one or two generals, neither of whom can be trusted with a democratic civilian transition. I do not know what the answer is."

But he said that it is now "abundantly clear" that "neither of these generals can be trusted. They have broken commitments to the international community, they have broken commitments to each other and, most importantly, they have broken commitments to the Sudanese civilians. It is out of the question we should trust these guys." Feltman said the "challenge for us is how to take our collective shared interest in a stable Sudan, and there is a unity behind a stable Sudan, and translate that shared interest into supporting a political process that achieves for the Sudanese people what they want to achieve, which is a democratic future."

No one knows which general will win this fight, if there is to be a winner. But the problem for the Sudanese civilians is that, if the international community commits the same mistake and forces them to sit down with the same generals (or general) to discuss a peaceful transition to a civilian, democratic Sudan, it will be the definition of insanity.

Arab News

EU hindering Italy’s attempts to help Tunisia

Max Ferrari

A stable and prosperous Tunisia is Italy's dream, but is it also the dream of the EU? There are reasons to doubt this. After the terrible experience of the so-called Arab Spring and the disastrous international operation in Libya, what Rome fears most is the opening of new fronts of instability on the North African shores of the Mediterranean.

Notoriously, Rome is beyond the limits of its capacities and possibilities for welcoming migrants arriving by sea and, for this reason, the imprudent way in which Brussels has handled the Tunisian dossier seems incredible. Instead of rejecting at the arrival of a democratically legitimized president who has embarked on a path of reform and has marginalized the Muslim Brotherhood, the global left, which has always maneuvered with the latter, has begun work to delegitimize Kais Saied, presenting him as a sort of xenophobic dictator. The measures to combat illegal immigration conceived by the leaders of Tunis before the phenomenon becomes uncontrollable have been presented by Europe's leftist media as violent and

racist, whose only motivation is not security but a hatred of those who arrive from sub-Saharan Africa.

This defamatory narrative has been used to question the International Monetary Fund's proposed loans to the Tunisian government. This is a maneuver motivated by political reasons, not financial ones. The EU should have every interest, even if only out of pure selfishness, to help Tunis. Incredibly, however, the EU's "foreign minister," Josep Borrell, explained that, yes, Europe could autonomously lend a hand to the Tunisian government, but it would not do so until it has implemented the reforms requested by the IMF.

In Italy, which is accustomed to this type of "warning" from Brussels, everyone understands that it is a matter of blackmail that the leaders of a sovereign country can hardly accept. All the Italian government's parties have expressed themselves so that Rome does everything possible to convince Brussels to help Tunis without being influenced by the IMF. Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said: "Let's not make the mistake of leaving Tunisia in the hands of the Muslim Brotherhood. We have to

help Tunis with funding from the IMF and the World Bank. It is not up to us to decide who governs in Tunisia, there is a legitimate government, we must respect our interlocutors, not replace them; we are not colonizers."

On the difference of views with Northern Europe and the Americans, he added: "We support a compromise solution. We must immediately give at least initial support because, without money, no reform is possible and the financial emergency fuels that of migrants." After a meeting in Rome with his Tunisian counterpart Nabil Ammar this month, Tajani reinforced his thoughts, saying: "I would not like that, behind a few rows of liberals, there are legions of fundamentalists who would not do good for democracy and human rights, as in the Arab Spring."

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has launched an ambitious plan, known as "Piano Mattei," for Italy's rapprochement with Africa. It is based on cooperation and synergies, and one of the main pivots of this project in North Africa is Algeria, which has a special bond with Tunis. Can

we think of building something so ambitious and letting others make the ground slip beneath the feet of our partners? We have already experienced this type of "democratic" interventionism in Libya, for which Rome is still suffering the consequences. And, at the time of the Giuseppe Conte-Democratic Party government in 2021, we saw how another outburst of so-called democratic zeal damaged the historically excellent relations between Rome and the UAE and between Rome and Saudi Arabia, with vague pretexts regarding the war in Yemen.

These damaged relations have been dramatically improved by Meloni. However, Brussels has appointed as EU envoy to the Gulf precisely the same Luigi Di Maio who, as Italian foreign minister, was the architect of these disagreements. The Italian government took this appointment as an affront, while Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini's League party declared that "the EU has made a shameful choice, which does not take into account the will expressed by the vote of the Italian people and which is an insult to

Italy." It should be known that the Italian government is under special surveillance from within the EU, which is dominated (for now) by the left. From the outset of Meloni's term, in addition to the inevitable accusations of fascism, xenophobia and the like, there was also the accusation of siding with Russia.

The facts have shown that, on the Ukraine issue, Italy has followed its NATO allies and European partners at every juncture, at the cost of enormous sacrifices from an economic point of view - lost exports, skyrocketing energy costs, etc. - and knowing that it is not from Siberia that the vital dangers to Rome come. Italy understands the reasons for Warsaw's and Riga's actions, but Italy is not Poland and it is not on the Baltic Sea. Our vital center of interest is the Mediterranean and it was assumed that our great engagement in the Ukrainian question would be "rewarded" with the granting of more room for maneuver in this arena. In fact, Rome has all the credentials to act as a leader - or, at the least, not as a follower of Berlin - in designing cooperation and security strategies in the Mediterranean, particularly its western portion.

Apparently, however, this new Italian role is not liked by some and every occasion is used to create large waves on what the Romans called Mare Nostrum. But the game is so open that everyone notices it.

On April 21, for example, the Libero newspaper reported: "The fact that (US President) Joe Biden sided with the Muslim Brotherhood after the arrest of their leader Rached Ghannouchi could jeopardize the anti-migrant agreement that was about to be signed between Europe and Tunisia to avoid illegal departures." Three days later, La Verita stated: "The European left is rooting against Saied but this will throw Tunisia into the abyss ... The Party of European Socialists stands with the party close to the Muslim Brotherhood and the risk of an Arab Spring with a migratory bomb is real." Will the Italians protest? And will the actions of our government influence this intricate dossier in any way? We hope so, because if this were not to be the case, it would be a demonstration that, in terms of democracy and respect for the will of the people, the EU has absolutely nothing to teach Tunis.

Yoon, Biden to celebrate alliance as they navigate challenges

William Gallo

WHEN US President Joe Biden hosts South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol at the White House this week for a state visit, the tone will likely be celebratory, as the two countries mark the 70th anniversary of an alliance that both sides say is stronger than ever. But beneath the surface, the US-South Korea relationship faces unprecedented challenges - from North Korea's growing nuclear threat, changing US attitudes toward free trade, and questions about how closely South Korea will align itself with the West.

Yoon departed Monday for Washington, the first stop of a six-day visit. On Wednesday, Yoon and Biden will hold a state dinner at the White House - just the second time Biden has granted a foreign leader such an honor. A day later, Yoon will address a joint session of US Congress. The latter half of Yoon's visit will highlight the ways the US-South Korea relationship has expanded beyond just a security alliance. Yoon on Thursday will participate in a meeting meant to deepen collaboration between the South Korean and US film industries. Later in the week, he will give a speech at Harvard University and

meet biotech and digital scholars at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The conservative Yoon has more explicitly aligned his country with the United States, allowing the alliance in many ways to "probably reach its highest point," according to Scott Snyder, a Korea specialist at the Council of Foreign Relations.

But Snyder, who previewed Yoon's visit in a livestream hosted by the Center for Strategic & International Studies, said the relationship also must deal with several underlying issues that "ultimately revolve around questions of trust." Perhaps the biggest question is whether South Koreans trust US promises to defend their country. The United States has long vowed to use the full range of its firepower, including nuclear weapons, to defeat North Korea. But with the nuclear-armed North now able to threaten the US mainland, some South Koreans question whether Washington would really intervene in a conflict.

According to a poll released Friday by the Seoul-based Asan Institute for Policy Studies, 64% of South Koreans support their country developing its own nuclear weapons to deal with the North. The finding is consistent with numerous polls taken in recent years.

The anxiety is so serious that Yoon himself recently acknowledged South Korea could eventually acquire its own nuclear weapons if its security concerns are not addressed. To reassure South Koreans, the US military has sent its biggest weapons - including long-range bombers and nuclear-powered aircraft carriers - to participate in highly visible exercises with South Korea. The two sides have also increased high-level defense coordination, including by holding a discussion-based exercise meant to give South Korean officials a better idea of US thinking on the hypothetical usage of nuclear weapons. "I think there has been a real recognition in Washington that this isn't business as usual," said Jenny Town, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Stimson Center.

"But is it enough? You know, it is ever really enough? And I'm sure as North Korea continues to focus especially on ICBM development, these demands will continue to grow," Town added. Another source of tension is South Korea's reluctance to arm Ukraine, which is fighting a Russian invasion. Although South Korea is among the world's largest weapons exporters, it has not approved the sale or

donation of weapons to Ukraine, citing domestic laws that regulate sending arms to war zones. Instead, South Korea has approved the sale of massive quantities of South Korean-made weapons to countries such as Poland and the United States, which are arming Ukraine. Ahead of his US visit, Yoon appeared to soften his stance on the issue. Yoon told Reuters last week that South Korea could provide more than just humanitarian and economic aid if Ukraine suffered a large-scale civilian attack.

However, in an interview with The Washington Post published Monday, Yoon appeared to walk back that statement, suggesting Seoul must also consider its relationship with Russia. The issue is controversial at home. According to an opinion poll released Monday, 65% of South Koreans oppose sending military aid to Ukraine. US-South Korea tensions over Ukraine were exposed by the recent leak of secret US documents, which appeared to describe private discussions about Ukraine between senior South Korean officials. Although the leak revealed little if any surprising information about Seoul's position, the documents appeared to indicate

Washington was spying on Seoul - one of its closest allies. Yoon's office has downplayed the spying incident, insisting it will not hurt US-South Korea ties. But many Koreans remain upset.

"Personally, I'm still very surprised and in some sense frustrated," said Park Won-gon, a professor at Seoul's Ewha University. "Because South Korea and the United States - we are allies." "Everybody knows if the United States is really interested in this issue, just give us a phone call ... the South Korean [officials] are happy to answer," he said. South Korea's left-leaning opposition is especially upset about the issue, accusing Yoon of overseeing lax security policies and demanding an investigation. Yoon also faces significant domestic pressure to push back on a new US law that makes South Korean electric vehicles less competitive in the US market. The rule, passed last year as part of Biden's signature Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), offers tax credits of up to \$7,500 to buyers of electric vehicles assembled in North America. Although the move is meant to exclude China from supply chains and boost US production of electric cars, it also wiped out tax credits for dozens of electric vehicles manufac-

tured overseas, including in South Korea. Some South Korean officials have also expressed concerns about the US Chips and Science Act, which provides incentives to and sets other requirements on semiconductor makers that set up production facilities in the United States.

The legislation has prompted some Seoul commentators to conclude that the United States no longer espouses its traditional free trade views. "Many people are surprised and disappointed," said Park, the Seoul professor. "It reminds us of the Trump era, the 'America First' policy." Yoon's position on all these issues is complicated by his low approval rating at home, which is in the low 30% range, according to several recent polls. Analysts say that may give Yoon limited foreign policy flexibility as he attempts to align his country more closely with the West. "If he's treading water domestically, it actually inhibits his value as a partner, potentially, if he can't deliver on some of the things he's promising," said Snyder at the CSIS event. But in Washington, Yoon hopes to encounter a friendlier audience, as he celebrates seven decades of an alliance that is broadly popular in both countries.

VOA

How Putin's 'cat's paw' sunk into Sudan

Frida Ghitis

ON the day before Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year, a top general from Sudan was visiting Moscow. Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo - known as Hemedti - had already made a name for himself leading one of the so-called Janjaweed militias that helped carry out a genocide in Sudan's Darfur region decades earlier.

Until last week, Dagalo was also one of the two military men leading a Sudanese government that was meant to be working its way to a democratic transition. By the time he went to Russia last year, Dagalo and his militia, Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF), were already the primary beneficiaries of involvement in Sudan by the Wagner Group, the Kremlin-linked mercenary army that has been fighting in Ukraine recently, but also has a wide footprint in Africa and other parts of the world. Wagner, under the leadership of oligarch and ex-convict Yevgeny Prigozhin, has been helping Russian President Vladimir Putin achieve his goals outside Russia's borders, while providing a thin veneer of deniability. Now, according to CNN's investigation, the Wagner Group is helping arm Dagalo's RSF with surface-to-air missiles as they battle the Sudanese National Army, led by Dagalo's former ally, Gen. Abdel Fattal al-Burhan.

The RSF denies receiving help from Russia. And Wagner similarly denied being involved in the conflict. The two generals have been linked to brutal human rights abuses and have a history of launching coups together. Vying for power and for wealth, they have now thrown the lives of millions of Sudanese civilians into fresh chaos, and threaten to bring havoc to a key region even beyond Sudan's territory. Many countries have played a

role in the catastrophe that is unfolding in Sudan. But Russia's - and the Wagner Group's - role is particularly egregious. It helps to highlight just how destabilizing Russia has become across the globe. Using Wagner, Putin's intervention is not only worsening the conflict, it is helping to crush what was left of the Sudanese people's dreams of democracy. In 2019, an almost unbelievable revolution led mainly by Sudan's women of extraordinary courage helped topple the dictator Omar al-Bashir, who had ruled the country for more than three decades.

Bashir has been charged with genocide by the International Criminal Court for his conduct of a war where massacres and worse were almost routine, in which Dagalo led a brutal militia and Burhan led the army. To protect himself from the army's power, Bashir formalized Dagalo's Janjaweed militia as the RSF. But when the pressure from pro-democracy protesters became unstoppable, the two generals joined forces to push Bashir out. They agreed to a democratic transition. Instead, some four years later, the country is in the grip of some of the worst violence seen in decades, the prospects for democracy looking remote, at best. But Russia's Wagner was already in Sudan even before the pro-democracy uprising. A CNN investigation last year revealed the growing ties between Moscow and Khartoum's generals. According to US officials, the military was pretending to be helping usher the country to democracy, but military leaders were growing stronger by making deals that traded the wealth of impoverished Sudan for weapons.

The deals, CNN discovered, had started in 2015, just after Russia captured and annexed Ukraine's

Crimean peninsula. International sanctions complicated Russia's finances, so the Kremlin used the Wagner Group to get its hands on Sudan's gold mines. In exchange for the gold, which a company owned by Wagner's leader helped extract, the generals would get Russian arms and political support. It wasn't the first time Wagner, Putin's cat's paw, had moved deep into mineral-rich Africa. CNN and others have documented Wagner's often brutal and enormously profitable tactics across the continent.

Wagner is helping Putin achieve three objectives in Sudan. In addition to the gold, Putin wants to expand his sway as he - and his Chinese allies - seek to replace the US and the West's influence. Just as importantly, Putin wants to secure a military base on the strategically vital Red Sea, a route to the Suez Canal navigated by much of the world's commerce, including oil tankers from the Persian Gulf. Two months ago, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov traveled to Khartoum. At the time, Reuters reported that Lavrov said an agreement had been reached on a naval base at Port Sudan on the Red Sea, but Sudanese legislation was needed to seal the deal. The recent document leak by a National Guard member included a document, reviewed by the Washington Post, that reports Lavrov and the Sudanese military leaders discussed completing that Russian base by the end of this year. Russia has always aspired to expanding its naval bases. It wanted one on the Mediterranean, which was one of the reasons it intervened - with a strong Wagner Group presence - in the Syrian civil war. Now Russia's base in Syria's Latakia port has apparently become a transshipment port for Russian

weapons for Sudan's RSF, coordinated by the Wagner Group and its allies.

A couple of days before the fighting exploded in crowded Khartoum, a Russian Ilyushin-76 transport plane flew from a military base in Libya to Latakia, and then back to Libya, according to satellite images and Netherlands-based open-source specialist Gerjon. Conceivably, arms shipments coming via neighbouring Libya, where Wagner backs a rogue general, were accelerating in preparation for what has become the world's newest civil war. While Burhan and Dagalo bear the overwhelming responsibility for the growing humanitarian disaster in Sudan, several countries have played a role. The United States - alongside Europe and the UK - is being blamed for taking the two generals at their word when they claimed they would respect the transition to democracy. (The US is urging an end to the fighting and a return to civilian rule).

Other countries in the region and beyond have been dealing with the generals. United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia developed links with Dagalo, even deploying RSF fighters into their Yemen war. But most are now seeking to stabilize the situation, Russia is arguably playing a nefarious role. The Wagner Group's Prigozhin claims he wants peace. But his credibility is in tatters (asked about Wagner's massacres in Mali a few years ago, he answered "the Wagner Group does not exist"). Barring a diplomatic miracle, the Sudanese people could be entering a new hellish civil war. We could see huge numbers of refugees and possibly an expanding multi-country conflict. And all for the sake of two men's quest for power, aided by the machinations of the Kremlin and the maneuvers of its Wagner Group.

CNN



Fear, guilt and hope in Sudan

Khalid Albaih

AS Muslims all around the world celebrated Eid with their families, I had a hard time getting into a festive mood. I was thousands of kilometres away from where I should have been: in our family home in Omdurman, the Sudanese capital Khartoum's twin city. Instead of celebrating Eid with my family, I - like millions of other Sudanese people inside and outside Sudan - spent the last few days of the holy month hunched over my phone, watching on social media my people being killed and my home city being destroyed by an army and a militia.

Instead of going to visit relatives, eating out with friends, taking my children to our extended family, enjoying the overcrowded streets, the smell of delicious food and the joyful sounds of Sudanese music blasting from every passing tik-tok, I was watching these places full of childhood memories turn into a war zone in real time. I would jump from one video to another of Sudanese soldiers shouting Allahu Akbar, celebrating the capture of other Sudanese soldiers wearing a slightly different camouflage uniform, all boasting the Sudanese flag on their chests.

When I was not on social media, I would switch between news channels trying to see if they would say anything new. I would see the same videos replayed, but with the added commentary of foreign military analysts who said nothing of substance. Other talking heads would affirm the need for negotiations and peace but would fail to mention who or what could make the two warring sides sit down and talk. Meanwhile, spokespeople for the army and the militia would trade blame for yet another broken truce.

No one could say when this nightmare would be over. The only thing that was clear was that the Sudanese people who had been protesting for four years now, demanding a democratic civilian government, have been right all along and everyone forcing them to compromise with the army and the militia has been wrong. Now these same brave people are held hostage by the army and the militia and their vicious war.

And this was not the first Eid in recent years that the Sudanese people spent mourning the dead instead of celebrating with the living. In 2019, the army and the militia targeted a sit-in in front of the army headquarters in Khartoum, killing more than 120 people, raping dozens and injuring hundreds. Justice is yet to be served for the crimes committed that Eid. And perhaps to avoid facing accountability for this and other crimes, the leadership of the army and the militia decided to derail the democratic transition in Sudan and capture power. Only they were so greedy that they could not agree on how to share it.

As the fighting intensified, my family - spread across Khartoum and Omdurman - decided to come together to our family house. Amid the horror and chaos, we received some good news - they had all made it safely home, while dodging rocket fire. They found our 100-year-old house scarred by the fighting. My cousin sent a video

to the family WhatsApp group showing the outside walls riddled with bullet holes and an unexploded rocket that had landed in the backyard next to our lemon tree. It was hard to believe that this was the same house where I had spent all Eids together with my big family; this was the same tree that we would climb as children and pick lemons to make juice for our guests; this was that they haven't been able to find a vehicle big enough to take all of them and a route safe enough to get them to El Matama, which is about a four-hour drive north of Omdurman. The internet blackouts have not helped. As the days passed, I felt double guilt. On the one hand, I felt bad that I could not bring myself to celebrate with my children, who love Eid and its traditions. On the other, I felt guilty for sitting in the safety of my home in Norway,

And this was not the first Eid in recent years that the Sudanese people spent mourning the dead instead of celebrating with the living. In 2019, the army and the militia targeted a sit-in in front of the army headquarters in Khartoum, killing more than 120 people, raping dozens and injuring hundreds. Justice is yet to be served for the crimes committed that Eid. And perhaps to avoid facing accountability for this and other crimes, the leadership of the army and the militia decided to derail the democratic transition in Sudan and capture power. Only they were so greedy that they could not agree on how to share it. As the fighting intensified, my family - spread across Khartoum and Omdurman - decided to come together to our family house. Amid the horror and chaos, we received some good news - they had all made it safely home, while dodging rocket fire. They found our 100-year-old house scarred by the fighting. My cousin sent a video to the family WhatsApp group showing the outside walls riddled with bullet holes and an unexploded rocket that had landed in the backyard next to our lemon tree.

same backyard that most of our neighbours used as a venue for their weddings and funerals. In that backyard - our elders had told us - a great-grandmother had buried her gold in 1897, when she and her family fled their hometown of El Matama to Omdurman. They escaped a massacre by the Mahdist forces, which ruled over Sudan at that time and which had attacked the town, targeting a dissenting local emir and his supporters. Still feeling insecure, my great-grandmother decided to hide her valuables, just in case she had to flee again. Ironically, more than 100 years later, my family decided to go back to El Matama, as Omdurman - once a haven - has turned into a war zone. We all participated in the preparations for the trip. All of us got on WhatsApp groups and social media, gathering information about the safety of the roads, the location of checkpoints run by the army and the militia, the best times to move to avoid shelling or crossfire, the numbers of microbus drivers and their ever-growing rates, etc.

As we discussed the best way to do the evacuation, I suggested to my aunts that they bury their gold in the backyard, just like our great-grandmother. No one replied. Although many of our acquaintances made it out of Khartoum and Omdurman, my family is still stuck there. Until now,

while my friends and family were trapped in their homes, offices and even schools in Sudan, praying that they survive this devastating war. Yet, I have also felt pride in how my people have mobilised yet again in the face of a calamity. As the Sudanese state crumbled and international aid organisations suspended operations, the Sudanese resistance committees took over their vital functions. They maintained the provision of medical assistance, kept some hospitals and clinics open, scrambled to supply staff and medication, coordinated food deliveries and evacuations, did the impossible to find fuel for much-needed transport vehicles and spread information about safe routes out of combat hot spots. Before the conflict broke out, these loosely organised grassroots committees kept the pro-democracy movement in Sudan going. Despite the coup, despite the repression and the threats, they held weekly protests demanding civilian rule.

In this dark moment of fear and despair, these people give me hope that Sudan can and will have a better, brighter future. They give me hope that soon, my family and I will celebrate Eid in our home in Omdurman, in the safety and security of a prosperous new Sudan, led by a democratically elected civilian government.

Aljazeera

Biden's presidency has been a catastrophe for America

Nile Gardiner

COULD America survive a second Joe Biden presidency and potentially another five and a half years of the furthest Left administration in US history? The stakes are incredibly high, and the American people are increasingly worried about what the future holds. On every front, the world's superpower is in disarray. Many Americans I have spoken to across this great country in recent weeks, especially those from outside the Washington Beltway, believe the United States is becoming unrecognizable, and is taking an incredibly dangerous path. This is reflected in the latest RealClearPolitics poll of polls. Over 64 percent of Americans believe the country is heading down the "wrong track," with just one in four Americans saying the US is moving in the "right direction."

Cultural issues are a growing part of this disillusionment, and Republican governors such as Ron DeSantis of Florida, Glenn Youngkin of Virginia and Greg Abbott of Texas have championed the fightback against the woke left's agenda with growing success. They have declared war on the left's attempts to introduce Critical Race Theory and extremist transgender ideology into public schools and have fought to defend women's sports. American parents are increasingly concerned over what is widely perceived to be outright political indoctrination in large numbers of US school districts administered by "progressives" who are strongly backed by the Biden White House. Americans are also deeply concerned by the mounting violence and lawlessness in Democrat-run big

cities, from New York to Los Angeles. This is the direct result of far-left "defund the police" campaigns, and the soft-on-crime approach taken by liberal mayors and district attorneys. Recent scenes of anarchy and vicious beatings by mobs of youths on the streets of downtown Chicago, as well as the seemingly endless looting of stores in California, have horrified the American people.

San Francisco, once a thriving entrepreneurial powerhouse, is now rapidly losing residents fearful of stunning levels of violent crime, homelessness and outright Democrat misrule. Ultra-liberal Portland, once one of America's safest cities, is facing an exodus of stores and businesses amidst a wave of public disorder following sharp reductions in police numbers and widespread attacks carried out by left-wing groups. Joe Biden's response to America's crime crisis has been practically non-existent: the reaction of a deeply out-of-touch president, who seems to care little about the concerns of ordinary Americans. Similarly, his refusal to take any effective action on the vast illegal migrant crisis on America's southern border has been a shocking abdication of responsibility, showing a callous disregard for the rule of law and the defence of US sovereignty.

Biden seemingly lives in a bubble, inside which everyone believes that his agenda is hugely popular and his destructive path the right one for America. He is trapped in a bunker-like mindset, surrounded by sycophantic aides who are unwilling or afraid to challenge his reckless decisions. The administration's big-gov-

ernment, high-tax economic agenda is clearly failing to deliver results. Inflation remains stubbornly high, with the Federal Reserve continuing to implement punishing rate increases every month. Biden's absurdly named "Inflation Reduction Act" will add a huge additional burden to US taxpayers, up to \$2,400 for an average middle income household according to my colleagues at The Heritage Foundation.

The United States still faces the significant threat of recession and is incapable under Biden of generating the kind of economic growth the country badly needs. Economic freedom is declining rapidly; the United States is now ranked 25th in the world according to the 2023 Index of Economic Freedom. This places America behind 16 countries in Europe, including Germany. On the world stage, Biden is widely viewed as buffoonish, gaffe-prone and increasingly senile. In my role running a foreign policy think tank centre on Capitol Hill, I frequently host delegations of officials from across Europe. The disillusionment with Biden's international leadership is palpable. Many continental European politicians, especially from eastern and central Europe, feel America is definitely losing its way.

These views are widely shared in the UK as well. On a recent trip to London during a series of meetings with British MPs, policymakers and journalists, I was struck by the degree to which Biden was viewed by America's closest friend and ally as a genuine threat to the US/UK Special Relationship and America's standing in the world. Biden's recent visit to

Ireland was panned in much of the British media and was widely mocked in the US as well. The President's foreign policy has been an incoherent mess. Genuine, trustworthy allies including the UK and Israel have been treated with disdain and contempt, while the President has grovelled to Germany, France and the EU. Biden was extremely slow to act when Russia invaded Ukraine and has failed to come up with an overall strategy for combating the rise of Communist China. And it is impossible to overestimate the immense damage Biden's disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan inflicted on America's standing across the world, leaving a legacy of mistrust and a lasting perception of US weakness. The antithesis of Ronald Reagan, Biden is driving the US down a path towards destruction and ruin. It is hard to imagine a time when there has been less hope in America than now, with Joe Biden at the helm. The US desperately needs a conservative revolution and a return to the principles, ideals and vision of its Founding Fathers, a world away from the increasingly dark vision of Biden's America.

Joe Biden's presidency has been a catastrophe for the United States and the free world. Americans feel less safe, poorer and weaker at home and abroad than they did three years ago. A clearly delusional and strikingly arrogant president has become the puppet of the far left of his own party, and the architect of America's decline. With good reason, Biden should be viewed as one of the worst presidents in this great nation's nearly 250-year history, if not the worst.

The Telegraph

Sudan's generals should serve the people, not endanger their lives

Mohamed Chebaro

THE scramble by foreign diplomats and citizens to flee Sudan's violence is a bad omen for the country. It points to worse days to come for a nation that managed to end its 30 years of dictatorship in a popular uprising in 2019, only to fall victim once again to military generals vying for power and putting the country's fate and the future of its people on the line.

The rapid flight of foreign missions and their staff has heightened fears among Sudanese that their country will be abandoned to its fate, with the two generals and their proxies fighting it out and therefore sidelining any chance of emergency mediation by Western, Arab or even African powers. There must have been enough information - and maybe some security intelligence - at the hands of international decision-makers that made clear the need to rush to evacuate their embassies and nationals. They must have concluded that the situation had become untenable, curtailing any efforts to preserve lines of contact with both warring parties and persuade them to agree to a lasting humanitarian ceasefire and maybe a framework to end the hostilities permanently. All indicators point to the fact that, after 10 days of violence, Sudan has been abandoned to its fate, meaning its people will have to depend only on themselves to seek safety either inside the

country or abroad, while the military and the military continue to try to eliminate each other.

If the coup of October 2021 showed how fragile the civilian rule was in Sudan, the fighting that broke out between the forces loyal to army chief Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan and the powerful paramilitary Rapid Support Forces of his deputy-turned-rival Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo demonstrate the end of dual military control. It also signals the end of the new Framework Agreement to transition the country to civilian rule, which was due to be signed in early April. Two sticking points have plagued that process since the start and led to its doom. The first was about how to integrate the RSF into the armed forces and the second was no less thorny, as it sought to find the mechanism necessary to make the army answerable to the civilian leadership. The Sudanese have watched anxiously as the US, UK, France, Germany, Japan and China, as well as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, among others, rushed to extract their diplomats and some of their citizens. Meanwhile, the fighting has claimed hundreds of lives and injured thousands - and, most importantly, it seems to have dashed the democratic aspirations of the Sudanese people.

Once again, Sudan is in the grip of the military, which has controlled the country for 52 of its 67

years of independence. The military is deeply entrenched in key aspects of the Sudanese economy, such as agriculture, industry and mining. Since the uprising against Bashir's rule, the army has played the role of mediator between the country's various forces, which have been looking for a transition formula that would return civilian rule. Over the past four years, the people have remained suspicious of both of the military leaders who claim to speak in their name. Al-Burhan has been reproached for his former closeness to Bashir, for his Islamist ties, for the fact he did not do enough to dispel the lack of faith in the military, and for his poor approach to empowering civilian rulers. Many have been concerned about the release of some of his Islamist allies and the reappointment of officials from the Bashir era.

Dagalo, on the other hand, is no less dangerous to the country's future. The head of the RSF has progressed from his humble origins as a camel herder to a commander of the notorious Janjaweed militia in the Darfur region and ultimately to a general who claims to be trying to preserve the will of the Sudanese people after the toppling of Bashir. His access to the country's gold and other natural resources, in addition to his links to mercenary actors like the Russian Wagner Group and eastern Libyan

strongman Khalifa Haftar, are no secret and have all served to embolden him. Like Al-Burhan, Dagalo's fate will be sealed by the outcome of the fight for control of the capital Khartoum. Compromise and realism seem to have been in short supply in Sudan, just as in other conflicts around the world. Reforming the country's institutions after decades of Bashir rule was never going to be easy, as the deep state, the bureaucracy and the armed forces would challenge any reforms aimed at strengthening the rule of law and weeding out corruption, while implementing oversight and accountability.

The joint civilian-military formula is unlikely to return as an option to get Sudan back on the path toward a more stable future. It seems that both parties to the conflict, their regional allies and the international community need to go back to the drawing board once the hostilities have subsided to try to produce a new roadmap that might curb the power of the armed forces and the RSF and allow a stronger constitutionally backed civilian body to emerge. Then, the people might finally be able to drag the country back to stability using a formula whereby the military is no longer fragmented among rival groups or strongmen. Instead, the military's key task must be to preserve the unity and sovereignty of the country and to serve the people, not endanger their lives and livelihoods.

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PSX gains 364 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 364.33 points, with a positive change of 0.89 per cent, closing at 41,463.91 against 41,099.58 points on the previous day.

A total of 169,105,056 shares were traded during the day as compared to 186,900,702 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 6.248 billion against Rs 5.781 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 353 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 178 of them recorded gains and 148 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 27 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Bank Al-Falah with 14,264,424 shares at Rs 29.46 per

share, Maple Leaf with 7,275,458 shares at Rs 27.61 per share, and Pak Refinery with 6,884,986 shares at Rs13.91 per share.

Nestle Pakistan XD witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 133.98 per share price, closing at Rs 5333.98, whereas the runner-up was Sapphire Fiber with a Rs 72.78 rise in its per share price to Rs 1043.29.

Premium Tex witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 31.46 per share closing at Rs 443.53, followed by Towellers Ltd. with a Rs 16.75 decline to close at Rs 206.66.

Gold prices climb to Rs218,800 per tola

INP adds: Gold prices in Pakistan continued to gain upward trajectory on Thursday as economic turmoil persisted due to delay in an agreement with International Monetary

Fund (IMF).

The data provided by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association (APSGJA) stated that the price of gold (24 carats) increased by Rs150 per tola and Rs129 per 10 grams to reach Rs218,800 and Rs187,586, respectively.

It is worth mentioning here that the gold rate has been on a steady uptrend in Pakistan, as economic fundamentals weakened, the rupee depreciated and inflation soared to record highs. During such times, people prefer to buy the precious metal to protect themselves against inflation and currency depreciation.

The rupee had fallen to an all-time low of Rs288.43 against the US dollar in the interbank market on April 11. While it has recovered since then, the US dollar continues to trade above Rs280.

On Thursday, the rupee lost Re0.53 or 0.19% against the US dollar to close at Rs283.92 in the interbank market.

Another reason for the increased gold demand is the delay in an agreement with the IMF for a desperately needed economic bailout, without which the country risks default.

The delay in the revival of the IMF programme negatively impacts the currency market which, in turn, bolsters the demand for gold. The price of gold in the international market gained \$1 to settle at \$2,001 per ounce.

According to the association's data, the price of silver in the domestic market, which also reached a record high yesterday, remained unchanged. The rate of silver was Rs2,570 per tola and Rs2,203.36 per 10 grams, respectively.



MULTAN: Shopkeepers participating in auction of bananas displayed by vendors at Fruit Market.

FFC announces results

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC) has announced its financial results for the period ended March 31, 2023 in its Board of Directors' meeting held on Thursday. Urea production by the Company stood at 633 thousand tonnes whereas sales were recorded at 631 thousand tonnes, same as last year.

The Company continued to face economic challenges including very high level inflation, escalating GST rates, increased interest rates, besides continued devaluation of the Pak rupee, negatively impacting the operating and financing costs of the Company. Shortage of foreign currency reserves have also caused delay in procurement of essential spares and machinery.

The increase in interest rates enabled the Company to earn income on deposits of Rs 3.5 billion. This income also included an unrealized exchange gain of Rs 930 million earned on the foreign exchange deposits of the Company due to devaluation of Pak rupee. The net profitability of the Company thus stood at Rs 7.7 billion with earnings per share of Rs. 6.08 per share compared to Rs 4.90 per share for 2022. The profitability in dollar terms however declined to USD 30 million compared to USD 35 million last year. The Board of Directors of FFC have announced first interim dividend of Rs 4.26 per share, for the first quarter of 2023.

Rupee sheds 52 paisas

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee weakened by 52 paisas against the Dollar in the interbank trading on Thursday as it closed at Rs 283.91 against the previous day's closing of Rs 283.39.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of Dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs 288 and Rs 290.3, respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs1.36 to close at Rs 313.60 against the last day's closing of Rs 312.24, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

OGDCL announces financial results

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Board of Directors of Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) in its meeting held on Thursday at Islamabad approved the financial results for nine months ended March 31, 2023 of financial year 2022-23. The Company's net sales clocked at Rs 309.148 billion translating to a profit after tax of Rs 159.638 billion and earnings per share of Rs 37.12 for the nine months ended March 31, 2023.

The Board of Directors also approved the third interim cash dividend @ Rs 1.80 per share i.e.18 per cent in addition to earlier interim dividends of Rs 4.00 per share i.e. 40 per cent. The Company paid Rs 36.128 billion as royalty which will be ultimately be transferred to the Provinces besides Rs 92.980 billion in the form of taxes during the nine month period.

The above entitlement will be paid to the shareholders whose names will appear in the register of members on May 09, 2023. The share transfer books of the company will be closed from May 10, 2023 to May 12, 2023 (both days inclusive). Transfers received at the CDC Share Registrar Services Limited, CDC House, 99-B, Block 'B', S.C.H.S., Main Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi-74400 at the close of business on May 09, 2023 will be treated in time for the purpose of above entitlement to the transferees.

OGDCL continues to be the market leader in the E&P sector and plans to accelerate its exploratory activities, as seismic work in newly awarded blocks will be undertaken in the future. Board of Directors underscored the importance of aggressive exploratory efforts to achieve optimum reserve replacement ratio for long term sustainability.

SCP delivered strong performance

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Standard Chartered Bank (Pakistan) Limited delivered a strong profit before tax of PKR 16.1 billion for Q1'23, registering an increase of 37 per cent year on year. Performance was driven by strong income growth, as well as continued cost and risk discipline.

Overall revenue grew by 43 per cent to deliver highest ever quarterly top-line of PKR 20.4 billion, with positive contributions from all segments. Operating expenses were well managed through efficiencies and disciplined spending with an increase of 25 per cent from comparative period, in line with inflation. Moreover, prudent risk approach coupled with recoveries of bad debts led to a low net charge of PKR 0.2 billion in Q1'23.

With a diversified product base, the Bank stands well positioned to cater for the needs of its clients. On

the liabilities side, the Bank's total deposits stand at PKR 729 billion, up by PKR 10.3 billion, whereas current and saving accounts grew by PKR 28 billion (up 4 per cent) since the start of 2023 and comprise 98 per cent of the deposit base. On assets side, net advances increased by 6% and the Bank continues to follow a prudent lending approach. With a strong Return on Equity (ROE) of 42.3% for the period and a Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) of 16.8%, the Bank remains well positioned for future growth.

Standard Chartered continues to make good progress against its strategic priorities. The global network differentiates the Bank for its clients, bringing forth innovative solutions, product specialisation and structured offshore offerings. At all times the Bank strives to maximise the contribution to State Bank's initiatives. In line with the State Bank's efforts on financial inclusion, with enhanced digital

offering, Standard Chartered is now able to reach more clients across the country and provide them with convenience of opening accounts as well as subscribing to products and banking services online. Overall, the Bank's transformation journey stands well-curated, closely aligned with the Pakistan's landscape and helping lift participation through digitization. Sustainable finance along with digital solutions for clients and their ecosystem stay as areas of keen focus. The Bank continues with its efforts under the initiative 'Futuremakers by Standard Chartered' to tackle inequality and promote greater economic inclusion for young people in the community.

Commenting on the results, Mr. Rehan Shaikh, Chief Executive Officer, Standard Chartered Bank (Pakistan) Limited said, "Our results for the first quarter of 2023 amid a tough external environment have set a strong and opti-

mistic tone for the year and we plan to build on this momentum going forward. The results demonstrate solid foundations and a clear path towards delivering on our strategic priorities. They are also reflective of our commitment to the country and our desire to capture opportunities in the market whilst providing best in class banking services to our clients. We continue to become more efficient and innovative operationally while investing in technologies and capabilities of the future. Our pivot to digital continues based on adopting best practices, leveraging the network's expertise and incorporating feedback of our clients in our offerings.

We are thankful to our clients and business partners for their ongoing trust in our capabilities and to our associates and colleagues for their commitment, passion and hard work in supporting the Bank in its journey."

MCB posts Profit Before Tax of Rs.23.02b (+54%) for Q1-2023

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Board of Directors of MCB Bank Limited (MCB) in its meeting held under the Chairmanship of Mian Mohammad Mansha on April 27, 2023, reviewed the performance of the Bank and approved the condensed interim financial statements for the first quarter ended March 31, 2023. The Board of Directors has declared first interim cash dividend of Rs. 6.0 per share i.e. 60% for the quarter ended March 31, 2023.

With a strong build up in core earnings, MCB's Profit Before Tax (PBT) for the first quarter of 2023 increased to Rs. 23 billion

with an impressive growth of 54%. Profit After Tax (PAT) posted a growth of 46% to reach Rs. 13 billion; translating into an Earning Per Share (EPS) of Rs. 11.02 compared to EPS of Rs. 7.52 reported in corresponding period last year.

On the back of strong volumetric growth in current account and timely repositioning within the asset book, net interest income for 1Q'23 increased by 66% over corresponding period last year. YoY average current deposits of the Bank registered a remarkable growth of Rs. 178 billion (+31%).

Non-markup income increased to Rs. 5.9 billion (+3%) against Rs. 5.7 billion in the corresponding

period last year with major contributions coming in from fee commission income. The Bank registered a growth of 27% in fee commission with income from trade and guarantee business up by 59%, cards related income up by 42% and income from home remittances up by 39%.

The Bank continues to manage an efficient operating expense base and manage costs prudently. Amidst an exceptionally persistent high-inflation, impact of sharp currency devaluation and rapidly escalating fuel and utility costs, the operating expenses of the Bank reported at Rs. 11.8 billion (+25%). The cost to income ratio of the Bank improved significantly to 32.77% from

39.65% reported in corresponding period last year. Proactive monitoring and recovery efforts led to a net provision reversal of Rs. 293 million against non-performing loans (NPLs) for the period under review. Persistent focus on maintaining a robust risk management framework encompassing structured assessment models, effective pre-disbursement evaluation tools and an array of post disbursement monitoring systems has enabled MCB to effectively manage its credit risk. The Non-performing loan (NPLs) base of the Bank was reported at Rs. 55.3 billion. The Bank has not taken FSV benefit in calculation of specific provision against its non-

performing loans (NPLs) base. The coverage and infection ratios of the Bank were reported at 81.88% and 7.87%, respectively.

On the financial position side, the total asset base of the Bank grew by 1.39% to Rs. 2.11 trillion. Analysis of the assets mix highlights that net investments and gross advances have decreased by Rs. 33 billion (-3%) and Rs. 95 billion (-12%) over December 31, 2022 respectively, whereas Lending to Financial Institutions increased by Rs. 71 billion (+140%).

The Bank continued its focus on building no cost deposits, leading to a robust growth of Rs. 178 billion (YoY: +31%) in average current deposits. The aver-

age current to total deposits ratio improved to 51.2% in Q1-2023 from 40.1% in Q1-2022. The domestic cost of deposits was 7.15% as compared to 4.91% in the corresponding period of last year due to the exceptional increase in interest rates during the period.

Return on Assets and Return on Equity significantly improved to 2.49% and 29.63% respectively, whereas the book value per share was reported at Rs. 153.29.

During the period under review, MCB attracted home remittance inflows of USD 786 million to further consolidate its position as an active participant in SBP's cause for improving flow of remittances into the

country through banking channels; with market share improving to 12.3% compared to 11.4% in the corresponding period of last year.

While complying with the regulatory capital requirements, the Bank's total Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) is 18.01% against the requirement of 11.5% (including capital conservation buffer of 1.50% as reduced under the BPRD Circular Letter No. 12 of 2020). Quality of the capital is evident from Bank's Common Equity Tier-1 (CET1) to total risk weighted assets ratio which comes to 15.94% against the requirement of 6%. Bank's capitalization also resulted in a Leverage Ratio of

6.15% which is well above the regulatory limit of 3.0%. The Bank reported Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR) of 245.14% and Net Stable Funding Ratio (NSFR) of 138.35% against requirement of 100%.

Pakistan Credit Rating Agency re-affirmed credit ratings of MCB at "AAA" and "A1+" for long term and short term respectively, through its notification dated June 23, 2022.

The Bank, on a consolidated basis, is operating the 2nd largest network of more than 1,600 branches in Pakistan. The Bank remains one of the prime stocks traded in the Pakistani equity market with 2nd highest market capitalization in the industry.

Revolutionizing the struggling economy of Pakistan through Islamic fintech



Mufti Asad Gul

Islam is the universal system and order of commitment to Allah. It is a manifestation of submission to Almighty Allah in all facets of life. This is the very blueprint which every Prophet has encouraged mankind to adopt and conform to. It contains the living, societal, economic, spiritual, and psychological norms which bring out the most optimal results for all of humanity in the immediate and long-term. After the knowledge of Sharia - which is the best of all knowledge and the most praiseworthy - Ibn Abi Hatim al-Razi reports how Imam al-Shafi'i (Rahimahullah) praised medical knowledge as the second best knowledge to learn after Sharia. In another report, Imam al-Shafi'i discouraged residing in a city where there is an absence of a Mufti and a doctor. Have stated how studying and practicing medicine is praiseworthy as it benefits people. Any study which is of benefit is praiseworthy.

Fintech is a term that combines the words "financial" and "technology" and refers to the use of innovative technologies to provide or improve financial services. Fintech is a broad and dynamic field that encompasses various products, applications, processes, and business models that aim to make financial services more accessible, efficient, and customer-oriented. Some examples of fintech products and services include mobile banking, peer-to-peer lending, crowd funding, robo-advisors, crypto currency, block chain, artificial intelligence, biometrics, cloud computing, big data analytics, and more. Fintech has transformed various aspects of the financial sector such as payments, lending, investing, insurance, wealth management, capital markets, regulatory compliance, and cyber security. Fintech also enables financial inclusion and empowerment for millions of people around the world who lack access to traditional banking services. Fintech comprises two words: Finance and Technology. Finance is a broad term that encompasses various aspects of money and how it is used in different contexts. Finance can refer to the study of how individuals, businesses, and governments manage and allocate their financial resources. Finance can also refer to the activities and services related to money, such as banking, investing,

lending, borrowing, saving, budgeting, accounting, auditing, and taxation. Broadly, finance refers to the management of money and includes all activities involved with money, such as investments, lending, savings, borrowing, structuring, recording, forecasting, and more. Technology is a word that we use very often in our daily lives, but what does it actually mean? The word technology comes from the Greek words "technē" and "logos", which mean "art" and "word" respectively. In ancient times, technology referred to any skill or craft that humans used to create something useful or beautiful. For example, pottery, weaving, carpentry, and metalworking were all considered technologies. However, over time, the meaning of technology changed and expanded. As humans developed new ways of solving problems and improving their lives, they also created new kinds of technologies. For example, the invention of the printing press in the 15th century enabled mass production of books and spread of knowledge. The invention of the steam engine in the 18th century enabled industrialization and transportation. The invention of the telephone in the 19th century enabled communication across long distances. The invention of the computer in the 20th century enabled computation and information processing.

Therefore, technology is not limited by time or place. It is a universal concept that applies to any human endeavour that involves making something better or easier. Whether it is a clay pot or a smartphone, a wheel or a rocket, a painting or a video game, technology is what humans do to shape their world. Considering all of the above, fintech refers to activities of money management through enabling and empowering digital applications and processes. The goal of Fintech is to enhance the delivery, accessibility, and efficiency of financial services while reducing costs and improving the customer experience. Fintech can help companies, business owners, and consumers better manage their financial operations, processes, and lives. Fintech has caused a change in the dynamics and ways people interact. In the context of businesses, it has added another dimension of business interaction and engagement. Fintech allows businesses to operate solely online; it allows the leveraging of cloud-based services as opposed to physically storing all data in each delivery point. This has created a new level of efficiency and accessibility of financial services. Many existing financial institutions are implementing Fintech solutions and technologies in order to improve and develop their services, as well as gaining a competitive advantage.

Taking these additional angles regarding Fintech into consideration, some have described Fintech as "new applications, processes, products, or business models in the financial services industry, composed of one or more complementary financial services and provided as an end-to-end process via the Internet".

Financial technology-fintech for short- describes the evolving intersection of financial services and technology. Thus, "Fintech" is simply a combination of the words "financial" and "technology". Fintech is focused on using technology to deliver financial services and products to consumers. These services and products can be from across the spectrum of finance, including banking, equity financing, debt financing, retail and institutional investments, insurance, investing, wealth management, savings, personal finance, and even charity. Anything that relates to finance has a potential place in the Fintech ecosystem. Although the term "fintech" has only come to the fore in the last decade, it is not a new phenomenon. Technology has continuously improved finance throughout the centuries, which we will touch upon in the next chapter. However, what has made this decade of fintech exciting is the nexus of the internet, smartphones, and smart wear, which has rapidly changed the landscape of technology-driven

finance. It has led to an acceleration in innovation, unlike previous times, and allowed developers to test unique ideas.

Islamic Fintech is a further development of the Islamic Finance sector. Just like Islamic Finance refers to financing methods aligned with principles of Islam and a paradigm reflecting the values embedded in Islam, Islamic Fintech refers to the use of financial technologies with a modus operandi and worldview stemming from Islam. Islamic Fintech is the amalgamation of technology and Islamic Finance, which means that any product or service that spawns from fintech must abide by the Sharia principles in terms of ethos, vision, mission, form, structure, contracts, processes, marketing, delivery, and communications.

Further, the adjective 'Islamic' defines the essence of the product or service; it belongs to a distinct worldview and philosophy. Hence, the practices and operations are structured and developed in a manner to realise those ideals and values engendered by this worldview and belief. True to its fintech label, Islamic Fintech facilitates the digital distribution of Sharia-compliant financial products and services. Islamic Fintech platforms tend to adopt revolutionary technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), blockchain, big data, exten-

sive cloud computing, and the Internet of Things (IoT) devices in providing Islamic financial services in a more sophisticated and transparent way.

Its activities will involve deploying new tech-based business models to promote economic, environmental, financial, and social goals, including the betterment of all Islamic financial services, product performance, and broader benefits like financial inclusion, poverty alleviation, and social justice. Islamic Fintech is the delivery of Islamic Finance through emerging and enabling technology, is an extension of Islamic Finance. Islamic Fintech has the ability to enable greater access to Islamic financial services with cost efficiency, thereby providing more opportunities for financing, payments, and investments aligned with Sharia objectives and principles. We are all Fintech consumers and beneficiaries. Fintech is changing the world of finance for consumers in a myriad of ways. For example, you can now open a bank account over the Internet without physically visiting a bank. You can link the account to your smartphone and use it to monitor your transactions. You can even turn your smartphone into a "digital wallet" and use it to pay for things using money in your account.

Fintech is increasingly changing the insurance and investment industries. Car

insurance providers now sell "telematics-based" insurance where your driving is monitored using data collected via your smartphone or a "black box" fitted in your car. This data can then be used to determine how much you pay for your insurance policy. In the future, it may be possible to buy insurance on a short-term or "pay as you go" basis. Fintech means that customers and investors can now invest over the Internet on an "execution only" basis; without any face-to-face interaction and without having to call a broker every five minutes. Robo-advisory services have removed almost all human interaction when it comes to investing, allowing Fintech firms to scale massively without the need of human resources and empowering customers with more choice and products on a user-friendly digital platform. In summary, Fintech is replacing everything we were accustomed to and giving us access to the same services and products through the click of a button or a much more convenient intermediary. The need for every educated Pakistan especially youth to learn all these skills and provide services online in the area of their own expertise to help the grappling Economy of Pakistan and playing their role in stability of the country.

(The writer is a PHD Scholar Islamic Finance)



In brief

Azerbaijan Grand Prix

BAKU (BBC): Max Verstappen says the new sprint-race format will make the Azerbaijan Grand Prix "a little more chaotic". Formula 1 has introduced a second qualifying session on Saturday to set the grid for the 'sprint' race. The Red Bull driver said: "This track is normally quite chaotic and this will only make it more chaotic." Fernando Alonso said it was "more challenging and stressful". And Lewis Hamilton feels it is "the most exciting weekend so far this year". The new format, confirmed only two days ago, will be used at all six of F1's 'sprint' events this year, starting in Baku this weekend. The key change is that it separates out the 'sprint' race on Saturday from the main grand prix. In the last two years, the sprint - a shorter race run to about one-third of the distance of a grand prix - set the grid for the main event on Sunday. Now, a Friday qualifying session sets the grid for the grand prix, while Saturday starts with a qualifying session - called the 'sprint shoot-out' - which sets the grid for the 'sprint' later that afternoon. The changes also remove a practice session on Saturday in which teams ran only with race fuel loads and which had little value as a spectacle.

Bryce favourite to be first overall pick

NEW YORK (BBC): It's that time of year again when NFL dreams are made and broken. Thousands of youngsters are hoping for their name to be called out at the NFL draft over the next three days, but only 259 will be chosen. The NFL's 32 teams will take it in turns to select from the best college players in the US, with the picks announced on a giant stage in Kansas City, Missouri. A crowd of 300,000 is expected and there is extra intrigue around the early picks of this year's draft, which begins on Thursday (01:00 BST, Friday). That is because the Carolina Panthers have traded up to gain the first pick while one of the top prospects has described himself as an "alien" of a player. After months of speculation, NFL fans will now discover which young stars will, hopefully, become the futures of their franchise. The draft system is one of the key methods by which the NFL remains arguably the most competitive league in world sport.

Premier League title in our hands

MANCHESTER (BBC): Pep Guardiola says his Manchester City side have proved they can deliver when there is "no option but to win" after beating Arsenal to put the Premier League title race in their hands. Guardiola's team beat leaders Arsenal 4-1 at Etihad Stadium, and are now two points behind with two games in hand. City have seven matches left, starting with Sunday's trip to Fulham before home games against West Ham and Leeds. "We cannot lose our focus. Now it's in our hands," said Guardiola. "These next three games will dictate if we can do what we want to do. The reality is we're still behind Arsenal. It will not be easy for us, but it is game by game and we see what happens." "When it's in our hands, we have to use it." City remain on course for a Treble of the Premier League, Champions League and FA Cup, with Guardiola saying the experience of his players knowing what it takes to win in the final stages of the season is proving crucial.

Madrid Open

Kyle Edmund loses to Dominic Thiem in first round

MADRID (BBC): Britain's Kyle Edmund is still waiting for his first ATP win this year after losing to Dominic Thiem in straight sets at the Madrid Open. Edmund, 28, has now lost all six games on tour in 2023 after Austria's Thiem enjoyed a 6-4 6-1 first-round win.

The Briton forced two break points in each set but failed to take advantage and was beaten

inside 82 minutes. Former world number 14 Edmund is recovering from three knee operations and is now ranked 498th in the world. Thiem won the US Open in 2020 but the former world number three is also coming back from injury and has dropped to 93rd in the rankings. "[Edmund] is a very tough and dangerous opponent," said Thiem, a two-time runner-up in

Madrid. "I love this court. I have some unbelievable memories here, and that helped me release a bit and do better and better. "It's time to work again on that reputation. Once I was a tough guy to beat on clay. It's not the case now but I'm feeling that I'm getting better and back to shape." Thiem will face world number five Stefanos Tsitsipas in the second round.



Saim replaces Farhan in Shaheens squad for 50-over matches in Zimbabwe

LAHORE (PPI): Pakistan Shaheens' top-order batter Sahibzada Farhan has been ruled out of the upcoming Zimbabwe tour due to a right thumb injury. The 27-year-old Sahibzada had fractured his right thumb in a practice game during the 11-day training camp at the Hanif Muhammad High Performance Centre in Karachi.

He has been replaced by left-handed batter Saim Ayub for the six 50-over matches to be played from 17 to 27 May. Saim, along with Team Consultant Abdul Rehman, will arrive in Harare after the second four-day match, which will finish on 13 May. The 20-year old Saim has featured for Pakistan in eight T20Is and was part of the Pakistan men's team in the recently concluded five-match T20I series against New Zealand.

Meanwhile, Pakistan

Shaheens will undergo a two-day camp in Lahore on 28 and 29 April, before their departure for Harare from Lahore on 30 April. Under Imran Butt's leadership, Pakistan Shaheens will feature in two four-dayers and six one-day matches.

Pakistan Shaheens: Imran Butt (captain) (Lahore), Hussain Talat (vice-captain) (Lahore), Aamir Jamal (Islamabad), Abdul Wahid Bangalzai (Quetta), Haseebullah (Quetta), Kamran Gulam (Peshawar), Mehran Mumtaz (Rawalpindi), Mir Hamza (Karachi), Mohammad Ali (Sialkot), Mohammad Huraira (Sialkot), Mubasir Khan (Islamabad), Omair Bin Yousuf (Karachi), Qasim Akram (Lahore), Rohail Nazir (wicketkeeper) (Islamabad) and Shah Nawaz Dahani (Larkana). Saim Ayub (Karachi, 50-over matches only). Asif Mehmood

(Hyderabad), Athar Mehmood (Gujranwala), Saad Khan (Hyderabad) and Waqar Ahmad (Peshawar) (all reserves) Player Support Personnel - Aizaz Cheema (coach), Imran Abbas (manager), Saboor Ahmed (trainer), Muhammad Asad (physiotherapist) and Faisal Rai (team analyst). Abdul Rehman (Team Consultant, for 50-over matches only)

Tour schedule: 3-6 May - 1st Four-day match; KSC, Kwekwe 10-13 May - 2nd Four-day match; MSC, Mutare 17 May - 1st 50-over match; TSC, Harare 19 May - 2nd 50-over match; HSC, Harare 21 May - 3rd 50-over match; HSC, Harare 23 May - 4th 50-over match; OH, Harare 25 May - 5th 50-over match; HSC, Harare 27 May - 6th 50-over match; HSC, Harare

Jofra: 'I want to make the most of all the cricket that is available to me'

LONDON (Agencies): Four years have passed since Jofra Archer flew from India to the UK ahead of the summer that has defined his career so far. After months of speculation, he made his first appearances in international cricket against Ireland and Pakistan, in which he made a bright enough impression to be drafted into England's World Cup squad.

Archer would achieve more in his first summer as an England cricketer than most players do in a lifetime. He took 20 wickets in the World Cup, the most of any England bowler, and became a world champion when his nerveless Super Over clinched England's triumph in an unforgettable final against New Zealand at Lord's.

He took to Test cricket just as easily, with 22 wickets in his four Ashes Tests - including six or more each in England's victories at Headingley and The Oval. Archer bowled with immense skill, but the abiding memory was his pace: at Lord's, on debut, he reached 154kph during an enthralling spell to Steven Smith, which ended with Smith taking a vicious blow to the helmet.

For all his struggles with injury over the last two years, Archer has the chance to add to his legacy

over the next seven months. There is a bigger gap between the Ashes and the World Cup this year than there was in the gruelling 2019 summer, but they are close enough together that success in the former can only bode well for the latter - as Archer well knows, based on his experiences four years ago.

"It's a huge year," Archer said just before his return to the Mumbai Indians playing XI last weekend. "I think everything is intertwined; everything bounces off everything else. If I can get through [the IPL] then I'll be in a good position to play in the Ashes, and then everything else will follow with it."

Having last played a first-class match nearly two years ago, Archer is realistic about his likely role in the Ashes. He said earlier this year that he would be happy to feature in a single match of the five-Test series, and said during last weekend's conversation that "nothing has changed" in that regard.

Ben Stokes, England's captain, has made clear that he wants a pool of at least eight fit seam bowlers to choose from in every Test, and that he would ideally like to have at least one genuine quick at his disposal. "I think having the option to have someone who can bowl above

90mph is what any captain wants," Stokes said earlier this month.

Archer had hoped to build up his workload with some "extra work" during the IPL, but his recent niggle has made that difficult. He travelled to Belgium to see a specialist earlier this month after reporting some discomfort following his Mumbai Indians debut. The ECB has been monitoring his progress closely, even briefly sending physio Steve Griffin out to India.

But Archer sees himself as an all-format cricketer, one who can contribute to England's success in Test cricket: "I still want to play as much red-ball [cricket] as possible," he said. "I've never really had a thought of trying to give up on any of the formats as yet."

"Let me get through this year and see how the body's feeling, but I don't plan to give up any of the three. I may have to manage my workloads for at least a year, and that's absolutely fine with me. But I want to make the most of all the cricket that is available to me."

Archer made his full England comeback in South Africa earlier this year, taking 6 for 40 in his second game back. He then travelled to Bangladesh in March, where he bowled with good pace throughout and finished the tour with nine wickets in five appearances.



RAWALPINDI: A New Zealand batter loses wicket against Pakistan during the first One Day International (ODI) match at the Pindi Cricket Stadium.

Mendis, Madushka double-tons give Sri Lanka a chance to push for victory

GALLE (Agencies): Day four was the day in which Sri Lanka put themselves in a position to push hard for victory, in a match in which Ireland might have hoped they'd made themselves safe, with a first-innings score of 492. On day five, Ireland will start two wickets down, with 159 still to get to make Sri Lanka bat again.

As the hosts racked up a gargantuan 704 for 3 declared, giving themselves a lead of 212, major batting milestones were reached, obviously. Here are the most salient among them: - Nishan Madushka completed a maiden double-century in just his fourth Test innings. His high score in his previous three knocks was 39.

- Kusal Mendis hit his own maiden double-hundred, progressing to 245 off 291 balls. He'd been out twice in the 190s before.

- Through the course of this rapid innings, Mendis also struck 11 sixes - a record for Sri Lanka, beating the eight sixes Kumar Sangakkara had hit against Bangladesh in 2014.

- Angelo Mathews also completed a 15th Test century, off 114 balls.

No batters were out before completing a hundred, though Dinesh Chandimal did retire hurt on 13 after seemingly dislocating his shoulder after diving into his crease.

This was a monumental score, but not quite a historic one - Sri Lanka have once scored more for just the loss of three wickets, against Zimbabwe. And West Indies had once put on 790 for 3 against Pakistan, way back in 1958.

Having delayed the declaration to allow Mathews to get his hundred, Sri Lanka bowled 22 overs at Ireland, and claimed two wickets within them.



Ramesh Mendis spun his second delivery hard, pitched it well outside off, turned it more than James McCollum expected, took the glove, and had it deflect into off stump - almost a dream offbreak to start.

Mathews then took an outstanding catch at short cover to send Peter Moor back, diving forward and to his right to pluck a leading edge up, centimetres before it hit the turf. This was off the bowling of Prabath Jayasuriya, who was spinning plenty past the bat late in the day.

At the crease at stumps were captain Andy Balbirnie, who had hit a tone-setting 95 in the first innings, and Harry Tector, who had batted nicely in the first Test.

Ireland's middle order had been excellent in the first innings. But can they do it on a fifth day surface, having toiled 151 overs in the field in the first innings? Either way, they were 54 for 2 by stumps.

All up, Sri Lanka maintained a run

rate of 4.68 across the 74 overs they faced on day four. Madushka got to his 150 off the third ball of the day, then cut his next ball for four - one of his favourite scoring strokes. He and Mendis warmed up for a few overs, but by midway through the morning, Mendis had brought his ninth Test hundred up off 131 deliveries (he'd started the day on 83), and Madushka was marching towards a double.

Knowing a declaration was probably coming, even while Sri Lanka were still in arrears, Mendis warmed up for a six-hitting spree with a strike over deep midwicket, off a Ben White half-tracker. The pair largely relied on frequent runs into the outfield to keep the run-rate brisk, however. Madushka reached his double-hundred off the penultimate over of the morning session, indulging in only measured celebrations. Soon after lunch, he was lbw to Andy McBrine, who reviewed a not out decision successfully.

'Australia trying 'Bazball' will help England'

LONDON (BBC): Stuart Broad says "it would be great" if Australia tried to mirror England's 'Bazball' tactics during this summer's Ashes series.

Under coach Brendon McCullum and captain Ben Stokes, England have adopted an ultra-attacking approach, winning 10 out of 12 Tests.

They will look to regain the Ashes in a five-Test series starting on 16 June.

"I think it would be great for us if Australia try to take us on at our own game," Broad, 36, told the Daily Mail.

"If we can get them playing in a slightly different style they could make mistakes and that would be brilliant for us." Australia batter Steve Smith scored 774 runs at an average of 110.57 in the last Ashes series in England, a 2-2 draw in 2019. Australia have held the Ashes since 2018 but have not won a series in England since 2001, although they swept England aside in the most recent series Down Under.

"Nothing was harsher than the last Ashes series," said Broad. "But in my mind I don't class that as a real Ashes. The definition of Ashes cricket is elite sport with lots of passion and players at the top of their game."

"Nothing about that series was high-level performance because of the Covid restrictions. "The training facilities, the travel, not being able to socialise. I've written it off as a void series." Before McCullum and Stokes took over, England had won just one of their previous 17 Tests - including a 4-0 series loss in Australia in 2021/22. But under the new regime they chased 299 in just 50 overs to beat New Zealand in June 2022 at Trent Bridge and followed up by pursuing 378 - an England record - to defeat India at Edgbaston.

A year ago Si wasn't

New Zealand provide key update on Kane Williamson's fitness ahead of World Cup

DUBAI (INP): New Zealand coach Gary Stead is refusing to completely rule out experienced batter Kane Williamson from making a full recovery in time to make an appearance at this year's ICC Men's Cricket World Cup.

Williamson ruptured the anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee while fielding for Gujarat Titans in the Indian Premier League earlier this month and the injury was expected to keep the veteran right-hander on the sidelines for the 50-over showcase that is scheduled to be held later this year. But Stead said Williamson's recent surgery had gone well and he wants to give the 32-year-old every chance to recover in time to feature in another New Zealand World Cup campaign.

"Look, it's still far too

early to know," Stead said of Williamson. "He's had the operation and, to date, what we know, that's been successful. So he is in the very, very early stages of his rehab programme. "It's obviously pretty non-weight-bearing at this stage, and he's in a brace. So, it's really just meeting milestones as we go."

"Our line around Kane, at the moment, is still it's unlikely that he will be available, but we certainly don't want to rule out a person of his class and calibre, and the things he brings to this team, too early in case there is that chance still." Stead said he would consider taking Williamson to the World Cup in a mentoring role to the team's younger players should his injury not recover in time as the Kiwis look to

go one step better than their runners-up finish behind England in a thrilling final at Lord's in 2019. Williamson captained New Zealand in that memorable Super Over decider, but it will be a much different Kiwis' outfit this time around following a recent spate of retirements and contract decisions.

The likes of Ross Taylor, Martin Gupthill and Trent Boult have either retired from cricket or no longer hold a central playing contract with the Kiwis and the make-up of New Zealand's squad for this year's World Cup is sure to include a few fresh faces. One of those players likely to be in the mix is Mark Chapman, after the 28-year-old impressed with a match-winning century in the fifth and final T20I against Pakistan earlier this month.

World Snooker Championship 2023

Si Jiahui opens up a 5-3 lead over Luca Brecel in Sheffield

LONDON (BBC): Si Jiahui opened up a 5-3 lead over Luca Brecel in an enthralling start to their World Championship semi-final. Brecel took the opener with a break of 50 but Si then took control with two century clearances and a run of 97 as he reeled off four frames in a row.

Belgium's Brecel countered with runs of 72 and 69 but saw China's Si pinch the final frame on the black. Four-time world champion Mark Selby gets his last-four meeting with Mark Allen under way at 19:00 BST.

A year ago Si wasn't

even on the professional tour and as a debutant he had to win three qualifying matches to reach the Crucible - playing 113 frames to Brecel's 66 on his way to the last four.

The world number 80 is also the lowest ranked player to ever reach this stage of the tournament, although Welshman Terry Griffiths won it as an unranked qualifier at the first attempt in 1979. Yet the 20-year-old still made a formidable start, showing no trace of nerves or fatigue despite only clinching his last-four berth in a tense final-frame decider against Scotland's

Anthony McGill late on Wednesday evening. After watching Brecel rattle through the first frame, Si went to work, producing three superbly composed breaks of 125, 102 and 97 before showcasing his already impressive match-play to go 4-1 ahead.

Brecel, who infuriatingly for his supporters failed to capitalise on several early chances to turn those frames in his favour, responded excellently and looked poised to draw level but he failed to knock in a difficult long pink after a stunning pot on the blue, allowing his opponent to tidy up.



In brief

Police arrest 19 anti-social elements

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi district police on the directives of Senior Superintendent of Police, Operations Rawalpindi Capt. (Retd.) Muhammad Amir Khan Niazi conducted raids in different areas and netted 19 anti-social elements, including two proclaimed offenders (POs), four wanted in two separate murder cases and three for possessing illegal weapons. They also recovered over five kg charras, 21 liters of liquor, three 30-bore pistols and ammunition from their possession. According to a police spokesman on Thursday, Waris Khan, Sadiqabad, Westridge, Race Course, Dhamial, Gungmandi and R.A. Bazaar police managed to net Danial, Afzal, Zeeshan, Mazhar Hussain, Shayan, Babar, Yasir, Fakhar and Yaqoob and recovered 5035 grams charras, 21 liters liquor.

Police arrest 3 flour smugglers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Naseerabad police along with the Food Department Rawalpindi team here on Thursday arrested three flour smugglers and recovered 1100 bags and 49 tonnes from their possession. According to a police spokesman, three drivers namely Wajid, Abdul Rehman and Usama were rounded up during the operation while three vehicles were also impounded with 49 tonnes and 1100 flour bags. He informed that the accused were trying to smuggle wheat flour out of the Rawalpindi division. The Food Department Rawalpindi and district police on the directives of the authorities concerned were strictly monitoring all the exit points of Rawalpindi district to foil wheat and flour smuggling bids, he added.

IRSA releases 111,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 111,900 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 110,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1444.17 feet and was 46.17 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 28,700 cusecs while the outflow as 35,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1119.55 feet, 69.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 39,800 cusecs and 35,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 38,700, 43,700, 34,900 and 7,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 23,500 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 10,200 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

Two members of snatcher gang held

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Islamabad capital police Koral police team apprehended two wanted members of a snatcher gang involved in snatching and recovered arm with ammunition used in crime from their possession, a police public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad capital police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city and protect the lives and property of citizens.



ISLAMABAD: MQM delegation led by Convener Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Asian Ombudsman Association prepares for its annual moot

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Wafaqi Mohtasib Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi who is also the current President of the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) today held a video meeting with his counterpart Ms. Sariya Saburskaya, Commissioner for Human Rights, Republic of Tatarstan to discuss matters pertaining to the forthcoming annual moot of the Asian Ombudsman fraternity.

The upcoming meetings of the Board of Directors and the General Assembly of the Association are being hosted by the Republic of Tatarstan in September this year. In addition to the election to various positions in the Association, the General Assembly will consider steps for strengthening mutual cooperation, promoting professionalism and exchange of best practices among its member institutions.

The Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) is a major non-political, independent, democratic and professional body of international

character representing more than two thirds of the world population.

Its Board of Directors meets once every year and the General Assembly meetings are held within two calendar years. The last meeting of the AOA Board of Directors was held at Baku (Republic of Azerbaijan) in October 2022 whereas the General Assembly meeting took place in Istanbul (Republic of Turkey) in 2019. The General Assembly meeting is being held after a gap of three years due to COVID-19 pandemic.

Pakistan has played a vital role in promoting ombudsmanship at the national as well as international levels. Currently, 14 ombudsman institutions are functioning in the country in different areas of competence. These institutions are coordinating their activities to advance good governance and improve service delivery of the agencies from the platform of the Forum of Pakistan Ombudsman (FPO).

Besides FPO, Wafaqi Mohtasib (Pakistan) is member of International Ombudsman Institute (IOI) and the OIC Ombudsman Association

(OICOA). Established in 1996 at Islamabad, the AOA with 44 members from the Asian region is the second largest professional body of ombudsman fraternity. The permanent Secretariat of the AOA is hosted by Pakistan within the Wafaqi Mohtasib Building Complex, Islamabad.

The upcoming meetings of the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) will be followed by an international conference in Kazan city which will discuss best practices of ombudsmanship and national perspectives. The AOA meetings will deliberate on measures to promote international cooperation in achieving the ultimate goals of good governance, rule of law and expeditious relief to the aggrieved citizens.

In this regard, Wafaqi Mohtasib Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi assured the Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Sariya Saburskaya of his full support and cooperation for the success of the major meetings of the Asian Ombudsman fraternity and the international conference due at Kazan (Tatarstan) in September this year.

PEMRA raids cable networks relaying Indian channels illegally

ISLAMABAD (APP): Different regional offices of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) have carried out an enforcement drive during the holidays of Eid-ul-Fitr to take action against those cable operators who were involved in airing illegal Indian channels and content in defiance of the apex court directions.

The drive was conducted on the directives of the PEMRA chairman, said a news release. In Karachi, Hyderabad, Sanghar, Thatta and Sujawal, PEMRA enforcement team seized all the equipments being used for illegal activity which included 14 Satellite Receivers, 11 modulators, 5 transmitters and 2 digital boxes. The show cause notices were duly issued to the violators and the fine were also

imposed on the violations conducted earlier.

In Multan, enforcement team conducted surprise inspections in various localities of Bahawalnagar, D.G. Khan City, Rajanpur, Muzaffargarh, Bahawalpur and Rahim Yar Khan and raided 34 Cable. Among them 20 were found airing illegal Indian channels as well as Indian content and imposed fine as well.

Field staff in PEMRA Regional Office Lahore also initiated drive against illegal/Indian content and conducted 89 surprise inspections in all 7 districts. Total number of violations found was 3 in Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib and Kasur. All three operators have been strictly warned and issued show cause notices and called for personal hearing. During these raids, the enforcement teams confiscated

illegal equipments. Moreover, Regional Office Sargodha conducted surprise inspections of 15 Cable Operators in Khushab and Sargodha and seized equipment being used for airing illegal Indian Channels and excessive in-house channels.

Moreover, PEMRA Regional Office Gujranwala field staff conducted 14 surprise inspections in different cable networks in Gujranwala City, Wazirabad, Sambrial, Lalamsa, Kharian, Ladhewala warriach, Mandi Bahuddin, Gujrat, Narowal & Hafizabad and confiscated their Receivers deployed for illegal transmissions. During a surprised drive in Faisalabad City, Jaranwala, Chak Jhumra, Tandlian Wala and Samundri receivers for illegal transmissions were confiscated from two loop holders of M/s Media Com CATV(Pvt.) Ltd. i.e. M/s Jutt Cable

TV actor Syed Kamal remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Renowned film and television actor, producer and director Syed Kamal was remembered on the occasion of his birth anniversary on Thursday.

Born in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh on April 27, 1937, he performed in a few Indian movies before migrating to Pakistan.

He emerged as a popular film star in the 1960s and the 1970s as his film 'Taubu' (1963) proved to be a hit at the box office. Having a striking resemblance to the Indian film star Raj Kapoor, Kamal's first appearance in his Pakistani movie by producer Shabbab Keranvi was in 'Thandi Sarak' (1957).

Some of his major films included Sawera, Apna Paraya, Banjaran, Zamana Kya Kahega, Ashiana, Aisa Bhi Hota Hai, Behan Bhai, Shehnai, Nai Laila Naya Majnu, Road To Swat, Honeymoon, Insaan Aur Gadha, Jat Kuryan Tau Darda, Aj Diyan Kurrian, Kal De Munday, Jat Kamala Gaya Dubai and Siyasat. He also directed a number of films, including Shehnai, Yahan Say Wahan Tak, Doosri Maan, Meray Bacchay Meri Aankhein, Dard-i-Dil and Aaliya and Insaan Aur Gadha.

Khaqan call for 'national unity' to bring political stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): PMLN Senior leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on Thursday stressed 'national unity' within the ranks of the nation to thwart the evil designs of the country's enemies and to fight against the current political challenges facing the country.

Talking to a private news channel, he urged all political parties to unite on a minimum agenda for the restoration of true democracy in the country.

He said that political differences should be limited to elections and that if all political parties fix a day for elections, it would be better for the public.

Abbasi said PML-N was trying its best to resolve issues through mutual

diplomacy and dialogue to save the country from massive damage.

Replying to a question, he said negotiations with the opposition party of PTI through Speaker National Assembly or the Parliamentary Committee to reach a consensus over holding elections simultaneously on the same day.

To another query, he said that the coalition government under the leadership of Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif has taken several bold steps to bring the country out of the crisis.

He reiterated the government's commitment to take the country out of the current challenges and take it on the path of development and prosperity.

Strict action being taken against the e-challan defaulters

ISLAMABAD (NNI): Keeping in view the vision of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the e-challan tickets were issued from Safe City Islamabad to all vehicle owners who violated traffic rules with the help of Safe City automatic number plate reader (ANPR) cameras.

Several repeat challans were issued to the drivers for repeatedly violating the traffic rules. In case of non-submission of challan, the vehicles were traced and impounded in the police stations with

the help of modern technology brief cam alerts and safe city cameras in Safe City.

Due to these measures e-challan defaulters submitted 20 challan. The remaining defaulters are being informed through phone calls and on the official website of Islamabad Police.

Citizens can check their challan on the official website of Islamabad capital police official website URL www.islamabadpolice.gov.pk or by entering the vehicle registration number at the link

https://ict.islamabadpolice.gov.pk:8081/verify/verify_e_challan.php.

Vehicle owners can also submit their challan through Jazz Cash mobile app or JS Bank wallet. CPO Safe City said that strict legal action will be taken against defaulters in case of non-submission of challan. He added that the modern system of e-challan made through Safe City Islamabad modern cameras is continually being improved to ensure compliance with traffic rules and to prevent accidents through the use of modern technology.

CTO directs traffic wardens to ensure smooth flow of traffic during Pak-NZ matches

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi, Tamoor Khan here on Thursday directed the Traffic Wardens to ensure a smooth flow of traffic particularly during Pak-New Zealand matches in Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

During a visit to different routes including Stadium Road (Double Road) and other areas, he inspected the traffic arrangements and instructed the City Traffic Police (CTP) officers to make all-out efforts during the movement of the cricket teams and matches to avoid gridlock on city roads.

He informed that 350 CTP personnel including Traffic Wardens, Traffic Assistants, Inspectors and DSPs were performing duties to regulate traffic in the circle. The CTP had issued a comprehensive traffic plan for the convenience of citizens regarding the Pak-New Zealand cricket matches being played in Rawalpindi Stadium, he added.

The CTP had made special arrangements to ensure smooth flow of traffic particularly on alternative routes during matches, he said.

During the movement of the cricket

teams, additional personnel were deployed with special arrangements to keep traffic flowing on alternate routes, he said adding, for the convenience of cricket fans, parking facilities had also been provided at three places, including Civil Aviation Ground Shaheen Chowk, Shabbaz Sharif Park near Shaheen Chowk and Degree College Satellite Town.

A special shuttle service from the Parking area to the Stadium had also been provided to the cricket fans, he said and informed that Murree Road especially from Faizabad to Double Road remained closed during the movement of the teams and the traffic coming from Islamabad was diverted from Faizabad to Expressway.

He informed that traffic going towards Islamabad was allowed to use 6th Road and Saidpur Road while traffic coming from Ghousia Chowk was diverted to Farooq Azam Road and Kurri Road.

During the cricket match, both sides of the Stadium Road from 9th Avenue Chowk to Double Road remained closed for all kinds of vehicular traffic, he said.

DC reviews Gujar Khan's land revenue records

RAWALPINDI (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema during a visit to Tehsil Gujar Khan on Thursday reviewed the land revenue records.

Chairing a meeting held in Gujar Khan tehsil, he checked the land revenue records including distribution of the land, jamabandi, Girdawari and other administrative issues.

Assistant Commissioner Gujar Khan Mian Murad Hussain and

other administrative officers attended the meeting. The DC directed the authorities concerned to finalize the manual inventory of the land records as soon as possible.

All the 'khasrajats and khewat' block cases should be resolved on a priority basis, he added.

The DC further directed for utilising all available resources should to achieve the set revenue targets, adding negligence on the part of the officials

concerned would not be tolerated. Later, he also visited Tehsil Headquarters Hospital, Primary Health Center Gujar Khan and inspected the health facilities and cleanliness arrangements.

By ensuring the cleanliness of the hospitals, the administration could eliminate many diseases, he said.

The authorities concerned could be contacted in case of any difficulty or complaint, the DC added.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin ul Haque in a meeting with delegation of Chinese Software Company Easyway Innovation.

Afghans citizens evacuated

KABUL (Agencies): The country's Foreign Ministry, in a statement said that the first group of Afghans trapped in war in Sudan were evacuated. Following Consecutive efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and the cooperation of Saudi Arabia, they were able to evacuate the first group of Afghans trapped in Sudan's war, the Afghanistan ministry of foreign affairs said in a statement.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Shawwal 07, 1444 — Friday, April 28, 2023

Fugitive killer arrested

TAKHAR (Agencies): A fugitive killer who was wanted by the police arrested by police in Takhar after one and half year. The detainee had killed a person named Masoud in the center of this province about a year and six months back and then escaped, said Mobeen Safi the police spokesperson of Takhar. Safi said that the accused person was wanted by the police and was arrested based on the discovery information at Wardawi Gate in Talaqhan.

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

11 killed in traffic accident in Balkh

BALKH (Khaama Press): According to a provincial police spokesperson, 11 people were killed, and nine others were injured in a traffic accident in Balkh province.

The incident occurred in the vicinity of Shadian village in Nahri Shahi district, Balkh province, according to Mohammad Asif Waziri, the police department's spokesman.

Women and children are among the victims, according to Waziri.

Meanwhile, the injured people were transported to the nearby hospital for medical treatment.

A similar incident happened in the western Badghis province of Afghanistan, resulting in the lives of at least five passengers and injuring nine others.

The number of traffic accidents has increased, particularly during the Eid days in the country.

Experts believed that the lack of safety precautions while travelling, negligent driving, failure to obey traffic rules and regulations, and traffic jams could all contribute to the incidents.

Road accident kills 5, injures 9 in western Afghanistan: According to

a statement issued by the provincial police office, an automobile accident in the western Badghis province of Afghanistan claimed the lives of at least five passengers and injured nine others.

On Tuesday evening, a car toppled in the Bala Murghab area due to irresponsible driving, killing five people—including a child—on the scene and wounding nine others, some of whom were in serious condition, the statement said.

Women and children were injured, and all were delivered to the hospital for

medical treatment.

On Monday, in the eastern province of Parwan, six persons were killed in a similar traffic accident.

During the three days of Eid-ul-Fitr in western Herat Province, at least 220 people were injured due to road accidents.

Among accidents, motorcycle accidents were the leading cause of injury during the three days of Eid.

The accidents could be due to speed driving, road congestion, lack of safety precautions when travelling, careless driving on dusty roads, and not following traffic rules.

Swedish Committee to conduct projects

BAMYAN (Agencies): A representative of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, Dr. Abdul Ghani, called for the cooperation of Martyrs and Disabled department of Bamyan.

The representative of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan expressed his appreciation for the services provided by the Directorate of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs in Bamyan in a meeting with head of the department Ali Ahmed Khan.

The representative of Swedish Committee for Afghanistan said the they are striving to conduct its projects in Bamyan for the disabled people and in this regard wants cooperation of the Directorate of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs, according to BNA correspondent.

For his part, the head of Martyrs and Disabled Affairs of Bamyan, called on the the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan in this province to provide better services for the disabled, adding that the department spares no effort in serving the disabled and vowed cooperations with the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan in this province.

Afghanistan exports up by 7%: WB

KABUL (Agencies): Exports from Afghanistan increased by seven percent in the first quarter of 2023, the World Bank said in a new report released.

Based on unofficial Afghanistan customs data, exports in the first quarter of 2023 reached US\$ 0.5 billion, with a 7 percent growth compared to Q1-2022, the report said.

As food exports remain stable, the increase can be attributed primarily to coal (by 26 percent) and textiles by 28 percent.

During Q1-2023, Pakistan remained Afghanistan's largest export market (accounting for 60 percent of total exports), followed by India (24 percent).

Exports to Pakistan are mainly food and coal, contributing around 72 percent of total exports in Q1-2023. Coal exports to Pakistan reached US\$ 111.6 million in Q1-2023 (compared to US\$ 476 million in 2022 and US\$ 88 million in Q1-2022).

The report also said that during the first quarter of 2023, imports stood at \$1.8 billion, reflecting 32 percent growth.

The trade deficit reached \$1.3 billion in the first quarter of 2023, a 45 percent growth. However, the UN cash shipments for the period cover only less than half of the merchandise trade deficit, the report said.

The inflationary pressures eased substantially from year-on-year, with inflation recorded at 3.5 percent in February. The Afghan currency appreciated against all currencies. Between February 4 – April 18, 2023, the Afghan currency appreciated by 5.4% against the US dollar.

Japan pledges \$1m for healthcare in Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): Japan has pledged \$1 million to the World Health Organization (WHO) for a project to strengthen Afghanistan's capacity for preparedness, detection and response to infectious diseases following natural disasters.

The funds will strengthen and expand the capacity of the national disease surveillance and response to rapidly detect and timely respond to potential outbreaks of emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, an official statement said.

"Afghanistan is prone to outbreaks of infectious diseases and this project will support WHO and its partners provide timely, appropriate and equitable assistance to affected communities, especially women and children, and reduce avoidable mortality and morbidity", Luo Dapeng, WHO Representative in Afghanistan, said.

"WHO appreciates the Government of Japan's continued support to enhance local capacities to fight infectious diseases in Afghanistan".

Takashi Okada, Japan's ambassador to Afghanistan, added, "Japan's partnership with WHO to strengthen Afghanistan's response capacity for infectious diseases emphasizes our commitment towards improving health and well-being of the vulnerable populations in Afghanistan".

WHO said it will continue working with its health partners to identify the priority health needs in the disaster-affected regions and provide the necessary emergency health support. Japan has been supporting WHO's healthcare improvement efforts in Afghanistan, including elimination of tuberculosis, and expanding immunization coverage.

IEA must fulfill recognized obligations



KABUL (TOLONews): The Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that Moscow "will not recognize the Taliban government de-jure unless it fulfills its internationally recognized obligations," namely "inclusivity of governing bodies, not just in the ethnic sense, but also in the political one."

Lavrov made the remarks on Tuesday at a news conference to sum up the results of his visit to the United States within the framework of Russia's presidency in the UN Security Council. However, he said that the "Taliban is a reality" and that "talks with them on the ground are necessary."

"The formation of an inclusive government and ensuring the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan are the main wishes of the people of Afghanistan that the international community and the regional countries understand completely," said Nematullah Bizhan, international relations analyst.

This comes as the US special envoy for Afghanistan's women and human rights, Rina Amiri, said on Twitter that "there will be no normalization of relations with the Taliban without respect for the rights of all Afghans, especially women."

Speaking at a press conference, the US State

Department deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel, referring to a gathering of Afghan leaders in Vienna and an upcoming conference in Doha, said that "any kind of recognition of the Taliban is completely off the table."

But the Islamic Emirate said that the formation of the government is the internal affair of the country.

"The format of the government, definition of the government, and the rights of the people are the issues belonging to the people of Afghanistan. It is better that a country does not interfere in the issues that belong to Afghanistan," said Zabiullah Mujahid, the Islamic Emirate's Spokesman.

DABS restores some power to Kabul



KABUL (Agencies): Da Afghanistan Breshna Shekat (DABS), Afghanistan's power utility company, said Thursday that one of two electrical circuits feeding Kabul and other provinces with imported electricity has been repaired.

According to DABS officials, technical staff from

Afghanistan Electricity Company are working to restore the second circuit.

Kabul was plunged into darkness on Wednesday night due to the power outage caused by circuit faults.

DABS said technicians have reconnected the 220 KV line between Pule-Khumri and Kabul. "Serious

work is going on to connect the second circuit, the second circuit will be connected as soon as possible and the process of imported electricity will return to normal," DABS said.

DABS said that its COO Safiullah has been with the technical teams to help reconnect the power.

More than 30,000 visit Kabul Zoo during Eid festival

KABUL (Pajhwok): Visitors have expressed happiness with the security of the Kabul Zoo and amusement parks, urging the caretaker government to create similar recreational sites in all provinces.

Located close Deh Mazang Circle, the Kabul Zoo is the only place in the country that hosts around 100 types of wild and trained animals.

A large number of people visit the zoo during holidays. More than 30,000 individuals thronged the facility this Eid-ul-Fitr.

Pajhwok Afghan News interviewed several individuals who visited the zoo along with family members. They voiced happiness with the security of the site.

They asked the caretaker government to establish more recreational places and thereby create enjoyment and entertainment sources for the masses.

Hafiz Amir Mohammad, who had come from Helmand province to Kabul along with his friends, said he felt elated while visiting such places.

He added it felt good to

go round entertainment sites in free time. He caked for the government to set up such facilities in other provinces of the country as well.

Najibullah, who had come along with his daughter and son, also suggested the creation of such places to enable the citizens to enjoy themselves during holidays.

Dil Agha, who had come to the zoo with friends, regretted some tourists hurled different things at animals and thus bothered them unnecessarily.

He advised the visitor to

respect urban principles, help ensure its cleanliness and avoid disturbing animals at the zoo.

Mohammad Kabir, another visitor, also urged the people to observe order at public places.

Photographers happy Mukhtar Ahmad and Ali Agha both photographers, confirmed the number of visitors had surged during Eid. They earned good amounts of money on the occasion.

Aziz Gull Saqib, in charge of the zoo, said the staff of the zoo sacrificed their Eid holidays for serving the visitors to be happy, as the weather was quite suitable for visiting the zoo and welcomed more than 30,000 visitors during Eid festival.

The process of acquiring 21 hectares of land is underway, located at the back of the zoo, so underway. The municipality planned to expand the zoo to international standards, Saqib said.

Businesswoman in Herat offer girls chance to work



HERAT (TOLONews): A businesswoman in the province of Herat created an embroidery center for girls, as they are not allowed to attend school.

In recent years, the craft of embroidery has flourished by women in Herat, and most of these handicrafts are used to decorate homes. "Now I receive orders, I have nine students including one painter. This is very good for the girls," Razia Ahrari told TOLONews.

The girls who are denied an access to education sew various flowers on cotton sacks and produce unique

handmade creations.

Following the closure of girl's schools, female students have come to the center to learn the arts. "If the schools are opened, we can continue this profession and also we can continue our studies," said Raihana, a student. "I started this task when the schools were closed to girls. The art is great. I hope that schools will resume so that I can pursue this art alongside my studies," said Husna, another student.

Naeemulhaq Haqqani, the director of Herat's information and cultural department, said the depart-

ment supports the activities and work of girls and women in business.

"There hasn't been any obstacle from any organization, and it has been supported. God willing, there is an effort to promote women's business in accordance with Islamic Sharia," he said. Women's and girls' handicrafts have flourished once again in Herat during the past two years, during which time dozens of handicraft centers have been established throughout the city and hundreds of women and girls have been employed there.



Sound of air strikes echoes in Khartoum as US pushes for longer truce

KHARTOUM (Agencies): The United States and African nations were racing to secure an extension of a ceasefire in Sudan on Thursday, with the Sudanese army saying it had given an initial nod to an African proposal calling for talks even as heavy fighting continued.

Hundreds of people have been killed in nearly two weeks of conflict between the army and a rival paramilitary force — the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) — which are locked in a power struggle that threatens to destabilise the wider region. An RSF statement accused the army of attacking its forces on Thursday and spreading “false rumours”, making no reference to the proposal which the army said came from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), an African regional bloc.

The sound of airstrikes and anti-aircraft fire could be heard in Khartoum and the nearby cities of Omdurman and Bahri, witnesses and Reuters journalists said. The existing three-day ceasefire brought about a lull in fighting, without completely halting it, but is due to expire at midnight (2200 GMT). Many foreign nationals remain stuck in Sudan despite an exodus marking one of the largest such evacuations since the withdrawal of US-led forces from Afghanistan in 2021.

Sudanese civilians, who have been struggling to find food, water and fuel, continued to flee Khartoum on Thursday. The army late on Wednesday said its leader, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, had given initial approval to the plan to extend the truce for another 72 hours and to

send an army envoy to the South Sudan capital, Juba, for talks. The military said the presidents of South Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti worked on a proposal that includes extending the truce and talks between the two forces.

“Burhan thanked the IGAD and expressed an initial approval to that,” the army statement said. Reuters could not immediately reach an IGAD spokesperson for comment. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat discussed working together to create a sustainable end to the fighting, the State Department said on Wednesday. At least 512 people have been killed and close to 4,200 wounded by the fighting since April 15.

The crisis has sent growing numbers of refugees across Sudan’s borders. The UN refugee agency has estimated 270,000 people could flee into South Sudan and Chad alone. Thousands of people, mainly Sudanese, have been waiting at the border to cross into Egypt, Sudan’s neighbour to the north. France said on Thursday it had evacuated more people from Sudan, including not only French nationals but also Britons, Americans, Canadians, Ethiopians, Dutch, Italians and Swedes. Britain said it may not be able to continue evacuating its nationals when the ceasefire ends, and they should try to reach British flights out of Sudan immediately.

Mohammad Al Samman, a Syrian evacuated to Jordan by plane, expressed shock at how the violence had begun suddenly and with such intensity. “I didn’t witness this in

Syria. With all the war and destruction in Syria, it didn’t happen just suddenly,” Al Samman told Reuters after landing in Jordan. With air strikes and artillery unleashed during the fighting, the conflict has destroyed hospitals and limited food distribution in the vast nation where a third of the 46 million people were already reliant on humanitarian aid.

An estimated 50,000 acutely malnourished children have had treatment disrupted due to the conflict, and those hospitals still functioning are facing shortages of medical supplies, power and water, according to a UN update. Sudan Doctors’ Union said 60 out of 86 hospitals in conflict zones had stopped operating. Much of the fighting has been focused in Khartoum, where RSF fighters have embedded themselves in residential areas, and the western province of Darfur, where conflict has simmered ever since civil war erupted there two decades ago.

Deadly clashes broke out in Geneina in West Darfur on Tuesday and Wednesday, resulting in looting and civilian deaths and raising concerns about an escalation of ethnic tensions, the update said. Tension had been building for months between Sudan’s army and the RSF, which together toppled a civilian government in an October 2021 coup. The friction was brought to a head by an internationally-backed plan to launch a new transition towards elections and a government led by civilian parties. A final deal was due to be signed earlier in April, on the fourth anniversary of the overthrow of long-ruling Islamist autocrat Omar al-Bashir in a popular uprising.



ISLAMABAD: Outgoing Ambassador of Iran, Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini called on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

SBP releases \$50m for Hajj scheme

KARACHI (INP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has released the first tranche of \$50 million to the Pakistani Hajj Mission in Saudi Arabia for the Govt Hajj scheme 2023, well-informed sources said. As per sources within the Ministry of religious affairs, the government was asked to provide \$213 million for the Hajj scheme.

The SBP sources said that the amount of \$213 million will be given to the Ministry of religious affairs in four installments within three to four days. The finance ministry has also released a second tranche of \$40 million to the State Bank of Pakistan. The amount of \$213 million is being given to the ministry for the fares of airlines, residence, transport and other taxes of the pilgrims performing Hajj this year under govt scheme.

The quota of 89,605 pilgrims willing to perform Hajj under govt quota was fixed by the incumbent government for this year but the ministry received around 80,000 applications. On Wednesday, Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Senator Muhammad Talha Mahmood was briefed that the first Hajj flight would take off on May 20, from Pakistan.

Verdict on Elahi’s bail plea today

LAHORE (INP): A special Anti-Corruption Court of Lahore will announce its reserved verdict on former Punjab chief minister Parvez Elahi’s bail plea in a billion-rupee bribery and corruption case today. Anti-Corruption Court Judge Ali Raza will deliver the verdict.

The anti-corruption court reserved its decision on Elahi’s bail application as he appeared in court over expiry of his interim bail. The court had granted interim bail to Parvez Elahi till today. During the proceedings, PTI President Elahi’s lawyer Amjad Pervaiz said a case of payment of Rs120 million was made against his client, adding the amount was paid by the Punjab cabinet and not the then chief minister.

There is no specific charge in the case against Parvez Elahi, the lawyer contended. The court has discharged the main suspect in the case, he added. The anti-corruption department probed Parvez Elahi without sending a notice, the lawyer maintained, adding the Rs120 million was released as per law and regulation.

Later, speaking to the media outside the anti-corruption court, Elahi said when he was in power, he did not file a single case against the current rulers.

PTI leader shot dead in Kotli Sattian

MURREE (INP): Unidentified armed men gunned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) local leader Raja Ahsan Satti here on Thursday.

Police said that unknown miscreants sprayed bullets on vehicle of Raja Ahsan near village Santh Sarola in tehsil Kotli Sattian of Murree leaving him critically injured and fled the scene. The injured PTI leader was rushed was rushed to Tehsil Headquarter (THQ) Hospital where he succumbed to his wounds. The police registered a case against unidentified attackers and started an investigation.

Success of talks on polls Siraj urges politicians to show flexibility

E.P. Report

LAHORE: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Sirajul Haq has said that the politicians have to show flexibility for the success of negotiations on election.

Addressing a press conference at Mansoorah on Thursday, he said the Prime Minister has taken a vote of confidence from the parliament, but it would be better if the latter sought direct confidence of the masses through polls.

Sirajul Haq said that the Chief Justice himself put the ball in his court and the suo motu on election become controversial from the beginning, judges were divided and parliament rejected it, unfortunately. Therefore, he added, he already requested the top judge let the politicians make decision on election matter. If the period of 90 days to hold polls in case of dissolution of assembly had already gone beyond

the constitutionally required time, then could it be further delayed if the stakeholders developed consensus on holding the national vote simultaneously, he said, adding ultimately they would be the people of Pakistan who had to decide as neither the establishment or judiciary nor the political parties had the final say. “The legislature and the judiciary are still at odds with each other and everyone is giving their interpretation to the constitution while the people are suffering losses amid the prevailing crises.”

He said the Jamaat-e-Islami is talking about negotiations as an election stakeholder and is sincerely trying to bring political parties together on one table in the interest of the people and the country. “We want a decision to be made by the nation. We do not want a rigged election like held

in the past.”

The JI, he said, wanted the institutions should show complete impartiality and the people should freely choose a leadership that can make the country a clean and green Pakistan. Sirajul Haq said that at present, caretaker governments are in place in two provinces, who instead of focusing on their real mandate which was preparation for election, were doing all other work.

“People are burning in the fire of inflation but the parliament is not paying attention on public issue.” The fight between the PDM and PTI, he said, has pushed the country into closed alley. He said he made it clear upon the prime minister and the PTI chairman during the meetings with them that some other would ultimately take benefit if the politicians failed to develop consensus.

PHC: MTI’s BOG hearing shouldn’t adjourn further

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan and Justice Abdul Shakoor annulled Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker government attitude while granted last chance submit reply in dissolution of Medical Teaching Institutions (MTI) Board of Governors (BOG), on Thursday.

Assistant Advocate General Saqib Raza along with counsel for petitioner Shumail Ahmad Butt and Ali Gohar Durrani advocates while Hafiz Zain Rashid and Hussam Rawan appeared on behalf of Young Doctors Association before the court.

The counsel Shumail Ahmad Advocate argued that respondents didn’t submitted reply while Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan remarked that its last chance and court shouldn’t adjourn hearing further, however, Assistant Advocate General Saqib Raza requested for 10 days for submission of comments in this regard.

It is worthy to mention that Ali Gohar and Sumail Ahmad advocates had filed separate petitions against dissolution of BOG of several MTIs across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by caretaker

cabinet on 16th March.

BOG members of Ayub Teaching Hospital including Dr. Asim Yousaf and Major General (retired) Amjad Faheem along with others in which Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Secretary Administration, health and Election Commission Pakistan were respondents in the petition.

The petition stated that BOG members were recommended by Search and Nomination Committee under section-5 of MTI Act 2015 but Secretary health has initiated summary for its dissolution which is approved in caretaker cabinet meeting held on 16th March.

The divisional bench of PHC comprising of Justice Muhammad Ibrahim Khan and Justice Abdul Shakoor granted last chance for submission reply to respondents while adjourned further hearing till 9th May.

PHC stays transfer of Director Finance Capital Metropolitan Peshawar: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) here Thursday stayed the transfer of Director Finance Capital Metropolitan Peshawar Nasimullah Kundi. A division bench of Peshawar High Court comprised of Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Wiqar Ahmad heard a writ petition filed by Nasimullah Kundi,

Director Finance, Capital Metropolitan Peshawar who was transferred by the Chairman Local Council Board by strength of a permission from the Election Commission of Pakistan.

Senior Advocate Mian Muhibullah Kakakhel assisted by advocate Nouman Muhib Kakakhel appeared on behalf of the petitioner. The counsels argued that the petitioner has been transferred and directed to report to the Local Council Board which is indirectly making him Officer on Special Duty (OSD) which is only done to punish employees.

The counsels argued that normal tenure over each posting was three years. The counsels argued that petitioner is due to retire in September 2023 and one year before age of superannuation, employees of Local Council Board are to be kept posted at a station on their option.

The counsels argued that the petitioner has no alternate and efficacious remedy, therefore a writ petition is competent instead of going to the service tribunal. The bench after hearing arguments of the counsels for petitioner issued a restraining order and stopped the Government and Local Council Board from acting on the transfer order.

Iran seizes oil tanker ‘trying to flee’ in Gulf waters

DUBAI (Agencies): Iran’s army has said it seized a Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman after it collided with an Iranian boat, injuring several crewmen, state media reported. “A Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker was seized by the Iranian army’s naval force in the Persian Gulf after it collided with an Iranian boat and tried to flee,” the army statement said on Thursday.

“Two members of the boat’s crew are missing and several were injured due to the collision of the ship with the boat.” Earlier, the US Navy said Iranian forces seized a tanker in the Gulf of Oman in international waters. Satellite tracking data for the vessel from MarineTraffic.com showed the tanker in the Gulf of Oman just north of Oman’s capital, Muscat, on Thursday afternoon.

It had just come from Kuwait and listed its destination as Houston, Texas in the United States. The waters where the US-bound ship was seized, near the Strait of Hormuz, are a chokepoint for at least a third of the world’s seaborne oil. In a statement issued earlier, the US Navy had said Iranian naval forces had seized the Advantage Sweet oil tanker while it had been “transiting international waters” in the Gulf of Oman.

“The Iranian government should immediately release the oil tanker,” the Bahrain-based US Fifth Fleet added, denouncing Iran’s “continued harassment of vessels and interference with navigational rights in regional waters”. Iran and the US have traded barbs in recent years over a spate of incidents in the sensitive waters of the Gulf.

The seizure on Thursday is the latest incident in the Strait of Hormuz where ships have been mysteriously

attacked, drones downed and oil tankers seized. “In the past two years, Iran has unlawfully seized at least five commercial vessels sailing in the Middle East”, the US Navy said. The seizure comes after the US, United Kingdom and European Union toughened sanctions against Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps on Monday, citing alleged human rights violations by Tehran.

The Western measures added to those already taken for Tehran’s headline response to protests that rocked Iran since the September death in custody of Mahsa Amini, 22, after her arrest for an alleged breach of strict dress rules for women. Iran later announced countermeasures, including financial sanctions and entry bans, targeting EU and UK individuals and entities for “imposing and exacerbating cruel sanctions”.

Stomach bug issue: Erdogan cancels public appearances

ANKARA (Agencies): President Recep Tayyip Erdogan cancelled his planned appearances due to a stomach bug, clearing Thursday’s calendar a few hours later, less than three weeks before Turkey’s crunch election.

The 69-year-old leader’s announcement came in the heat of a hard-fought campaign in what is widely viewed as Turkey’s most important election of its post-Ottoman era. Erdogan had three appearances in the central Anatolian provinces planned for Wednesday. “Today I will rest at home under the advice of our doctors,” Erdogan said on his official Twitter account.

“With God’s permission, we will continue our program from tomorrow,” he said. “On this occasion, I wish all my citizens health, peace and enjoyment.” Hours later, Erkan Kandemir, vice-president of the ruling AKP party, announced that Erdogan had also cancelled his programme for Thursday. He had been due to inaugurate Turkey’s first nuclear power station, at Akkuyu on the southern coast. The Russian-built plant’s launch was due to be one of the main events of Erdogan’s campaign schedule this week.

Erdogan has been campaigning tirelessly to reverse a dip in polls and extend his two-decade election-winning streak. He is running neck-and-neck with secular opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu and must contend with the dual blows of a raging economic crisis and the impact of a massive February earthquake that claimed more than 50,000 lives. But he cut short a live television interview late on Tuesday after getting sick on air.

Funeral prayers of martyrs offered

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The funeral prayers of Sepoy Basit Ali Shaheed and Sepoy Waqas Ali Shah Shaheed, who embraced shahadat during an exchange of fire between security forces and terrorists in Tirah area of Khyber District, were offered at their respective hometowns on Thursday.

According to Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), both the Shaheeds were laid to rest with full military honours. A large number of serving and retired military and civil officials, relatives and people from all walks of life attended the funeral prayers. Armed Forces of Pakistan remain committed to eliminate the scourge of terrorism from every corner of the motherland.

Govt blames Imran for backtracking on talks

ISLAMABAD (INP): Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Thursday blamed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan for backtracking on talks with the government.

In an interview, the federal minister said that the PTI was in contact with the government and two senior members of the party Parvez Khattak and Asad Qaiser had agreed to hold talks but after the Supreme Court ordered both sides to meet and update the court by 4pm, they took a U-turn.

“Imran Khan also said that he was ready for talks. There was flexibility in PTI’s stance but everything got changed suddenly.” A three-member bench

headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial is hearing a set of petitions, including one of PTI, on the delay in elections to the Punjab Assembly.

The court had instructed on April 20 that the rivals should hold parleys on elections and apprise the court the same day, however, after the break, the government informed the bench that they will hold parleys with PTI during the Eid holidays. Sanaullah, while referring to the SC order, said that the PTI backtracked after the apex court issued directives.

“They [Asad Qaisar and Parvez Khattak] also assured that they would sit on April 26 but then Imran Khan withdrew their man-

date.” The minister added that Kh Saad Rafique and Ayaz Sadiq had contacted PTI leaders and he has proof of this. Sanaullah added that Khan torpedoed these efforts by announcing that they were not authorised and that Qureshi is tasked to hold talks on behalf of the PTI. When asked to comment about the SC hearing today, he said that the response that Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan has to give is quite satisfactory “The coalition parties have decided not to close the door of negotiations and they should be done through parliament.” The Supreme Court will be informed about the parliament’s forum for negotiations, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Vice chairman, PTI, Shah Mahmood Qureshi along with other party leaders talking to media persons outside the Supreme Court.

Country needs to boost coop with Iran, Romania: Alvi

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi has stressed the need of boosting bilateral cooperation with Iran and Romania in all areas of mutual interest. These views were expressed by him on Thursday during separate meetings with the envoys of Iran and Romania here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

President Arif Alvi while speaking to the outgoing ambassador of Iran, Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini, said that Pakistan greatly valued its fraternal relations with Iran as both brotherly countries shared historic linkages and cultural affinities, besides having commonalities of views on issues of regional and international significance. He emphasized the need for increasing economic cooperation and expanding the trade volume for the mutual benefit of the two countries. He also highlighted the atrocities being committed by the Indian security forces against Muslims in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu

& Kashmir and other parts of India, saying Muslims were being isolated and persecuted in India and the Muslim World needed to take notice of the Indian brutalities against Muslims. The President thanked the Iranian government for its support and stance on the Kashmir issue.

Appreciating the landmark initiative taken by Iran and Saudi Arabia to normalise diplomatic relations, Arif Alvi said that normalization of relations between the two countries would lead to peace and stability in the Middle East. The meeting also underscored the need for promoting counter-terrorism cooperation to eliminate the menace of terrorism.

Ambassador Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini underlined the need for enhancing economic, cultural and political cooperation between the two countries. He said that both countries had great potential to further expand economic cooperation. He informed that both

sides had agreed to construct six border markets that would boost bilateral trade. He apprised the President of the ongoing electricity transmission projects that would benefit the people of Balochistan.

The President appreciated the contribution of the outgoing ambassador to promoting bilateral cooperation between the two brotherly countries. In his meeting with the Ambassador of Romania Nicolae Goia, the President said that Romania was an important country in Eastern Europe and Pakistan desired to deepen its relationship with Romania in the fields of trade and economy. He thanked the Romanian government for its support to Pakistan in granting and continuation of GSP plus status. Both sides underscored the need for improving economic relations and undertaking regular exchanges and interactions at the highest levels to further cement bilateral ties.