

Neptra hike power tariff

ISLAMABAD (PPI): The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) again on Thursday raised the electricity tariff by Rs 0.79 per unit. As per details, the power regulatory authority approved a Rs0.79 per unit hike in electricity tariff in the wake of the monthly fuel adjustment. The consumers have to pay the additional amount in May. In March, the power was generated from the expensive power plants.



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No mercy for May 9 rioters

Nation to not forgive if attackers escaped from justice, says Shehbaz

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here on Thursday said that the nation would not forgive if the attackers of civil and defence installations on May 9-10 escaped from justice. The prime minister added that those involved in rioting and planners would be tried under the relevant sections of Anti Terrorism Act.

Chairing a high-level meeting at Governor House Peshawar to review the law and order situation, the prime minister also assured that no injustice would be made with those who were found not involved in subversive activity.

Besides others, the meeting was attended by Governor Haji Ghulam Ali, caretaker Chief Minister Azam Khan, Interior Minister Rana Sanaulah Khan, Finance Minister, Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb, Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Prime Minister Adviser Amir Muqam, Chief Secretary and IGP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Prime Minister said that this important meeting was planned soon after the May 9-10 incident, but was delayed due to some unavoidable engagements.

However, he said that a zoom meeting was arranged with the Governor KP and Chief Minister to get himself appraised about the huge damages and losses inflicted by the rioters. The prime minister regretted that these elements, who claimed themselves as pro-Pakistan, were in fact involved in vandalism and by attacking the defense installations they have caused damage beyond imagination that even could not have been done by our enemies in the 75 years history of the country.

He told the participants that Federal Government in consultation with provincial governments has decided that those involved in vandalism and their abettors would be tried under Anti-terrorism Act. Whereas those elements who attacked the defense installations would be tried under the rules authorized to defence institutions. The prime minister reiterated his directives to ensure that no injustice should be done with any innocent in this whole process of bringing the anti-state elements to justice.

Meanwhile, addressing the meeting of the leaders of different political parties at Governor House Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif said that the vandalism and ransacking of the civil properties and defence installations on May 9-10 have exposed the wicked face of Imran Niazi and the government has decided to take strict action against attackers, abettors and planners under the relevant laws.

Murad, Swat approach PHC against raids

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Former Federal Ministers and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Murad Saeed and Senator Azam Swati approached Peshawar High Court (PHC) seeking provision of record of cases registered against them as well as police raids on their residences.

The writ petition filed by Insaf Lawyer Forum (ILF) Coordinator Qazi Anwar while stated that police conducting raids on PTI's leadership residences and harassing despite they are law abiding citizen as well as served higher public offices.

The petition argued that former ministers had approached competent authorities/forums for obtaining record of First Information Reports (FIRs) lodged against them and seeking arrest's warrant during raid at their residence but to no veil. The petitioners seeking obtaining record to contest the charges imposed in FIRs against them before Court of Law and fair trial is ensured by constitution of Pakistan as right of every citizen, the writ argued.

However, both former ministers are deprived from their constitutional right by didn't providing record of cases registered against them while pleaded to produced the record before court, the petition added. Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Secretary Home and Inspector General of Police made respondents in the writ petition while pleaded to stop defendants from arrest of PTI's lead-

ers and direct to produce record of FIRs and arrest's warrant before court. The writ further besought to stop respondents from raids on petitioner's residences and harassment of former ministers while hearing is expected in upcoming of the petition at High Court.

Meanwhile, PTI's workers knocked the doors of PHC against inclusion of Army Act and Official Secret Act clauses against protesters booked for violence occurred on 9th May after arrest of Imran Khan in alleged corruption case.

The petitioner named Gul Raj along with 27 other PTI's activists approached High Court seeking to declared imposition of Section 59 of Army Act 1952 and Official Secret Act 1923 unconstitutional and illegal.

The petitioners are booked for violence, damaging public property and destroying national emblems at City Police Station Mardan but police has included Army Act and Official Secret Act in the FIR which is declared unconstitutional by apex court while pleaded to remove the relevant sections from the case.

Although, Special Anti-terrorism Court Peshawar has granted bail to 80 PTI's workers involved in burning Radio Pakistan Station and attacking Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa office while turned down bail's pleas of two Afghan's nationals involved in damages and violent protests, on Thursday.

According to prosecution, police has booked 82

persons for violent protests on 9th and 10th May which had damaged and destroyed public building and burnt government's offices in the premises of East police station Peshawar Cant. However, the court was informed that neither CCTV footage is nor Call Data Record (CDR) is available while police has failed to ensure recovery from accused and established commencement of crime with inmates put behind the bars in the offense.

Special court granted bail to 80 protestors while turn down of two Afghan nationals allegedly involved in the violent demonstration by PTI's workers after initial arguments. It is worthy to mention that both Afghan nationals failed to produced legal documents for entrance to Pakistan while residing illegally.

AD&SJ grants bail to six PTI's workers: Additional District and Session Judge Atta Ullah Jan granted bails to six violent protesters allegedly burning goats and sheeps alive at Chargano Chowk while destroying cattle market in ferocious protest after arrest of PTI's chairman in alleged Rs60 billion case by National Accountability Court (NAB), on 9th May.

According to prosecution, violent protesters burnt Malagori market which serves as a cattle market in which several animals were burnt alive while various cattle robbed by bandits while PTI's activists along with culprits were nominated in the offense under Section 427 and 436 of Criminal Procedure Code.

PM, FM discuss political situation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Thursday here met Minister for Foreign Affairs Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and held a detailed consultation on the present political situation.

The prime minister appreciated the foreign minister for exposing all over the world, the false propaganda of India on Kashmir and its condemnable attempt to give a wrong impression to the world by calling recent meeting of G-20 in the occupied valley.

He also praised Bilawal Bhutto for effectively espousing the aspirations of Kashmiris during his address to the Legislative Assembly of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Kashmir issue was the unfinished agenda of partition of the sub-continent, he said adding the nefarious attempts of India to claim the Occupied Kashmir as its part would never succeed. Shehbaz Sharif said heart of every Pakistani beat for his Kashmiri brothers.

16 handed over to army for trial

LAHORE (Agencies): An anti-terrorism court on Thursday allowed the handover of 16 suspects, involved in the ransacking and vandalising of Jinnah House, to the commanding officer so they can be tried under the army laws, as the country tightens the noose on the perpetrators of May 9 mayhem.

In the order issued on Thursday, ATC Judge Abher Gul Khan accepted the request of the army officer who had sought the custody of the vandals presently confined in Camp Jail, Lahore. They were named in two separate cases filed in connection with the attack on Corps Commander House also known as Jinnah House.

The accused include Amar Zohaib, Ali Iftikhar, Ali Raza, Muhammad Arsalan, Muhammad Umair, Muhammad Raheem, Zia-ur-Rehman, Waqas Ali, Raees Ahmad, Faisal Irshad, Muhammad Bilal Hussain, Faheem Haider, Arzam Junaid, ex-PTI MPA Mian Muhammad Akram Usman, Muhammad Hashir Khan, and Hassan Shakir.

"In view of the request made by Irfan Athar, C o m m a n d i n g Officer/Military Officer, duly forwarded by the prosecution as the case of above mentioned accused is exclusively triable by a military court, therefore, while accepting the request of Commanding Officer u/s 549(3) Cr.P.C., read with Rule 7(f) of Criminal Procedure (Military Offenders) Rules 1970, Superintendent, Camp Jail, Lahore is directed to hand over the custody of above said accused to Commanding Officer for further proceedings in accordance with the law," the order said.

"They are found guilty of offences Under Sections 3,7 and 9 of the Official Secrets Act, 1923 read with Section 2(1)(d) and 59(4) of Pakistan Army Act, 1952, exclusively triable by Military Court, to the acceptance of which leamed DPG did not raise any objection and forwarded the request for appropriate orders."

IHC orders release of PTI's Ejaz Chaudhry: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) Thursday declared the arrest of PTI Senator Ejaz Chaudhry under 3MPO null and void and ordered his release. IHC judge Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the case.

Taimur Malik Advocate, counsel for the petitioner, appeared before the court. It is to be noted here that several PTI leaders including Ejaz Chaudhry had been arrested under MPO after the violent protests of May 9.



PESHAWAR: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif inspecting the building of Radio Pakistan, which was burnt during May 09 incidents.

Acts like May 9 will not be tolerated: COAS

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD / RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir on Thursday said the nation would neither forgive nor forget those who desecrated the memorials of martyrs and undermined their dignity and such behaviour would not be tolerated.

The Army Chief made these remarks while addressing the families of the martyrs during his visit to the Police Lines here in connection with Pakistan Martyrs' Reverence Day (Youm-e-Takreem-e-Shuhada-e-Pakistan), an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

The Army Chief addressed the families of the police martyrs along with the officers and jawans of the Islamabad Capital Territory Police. The Army Chief said: "What happened on May 9 is very sad and condemnable. Nothing can nullify the sacrifices of those martyrs who have been granted eternal life by Allah Almighty."

He added that Pakistan Army, Police and law enforcement agencies were like the symbol of the state and a lead wall which does not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the dignity of the country. "I want to convey this message to the heirs of the martyrs that today the people of Pakistan and the Pakistan Army stand and will continue to stand with the families of the martyrs of all law enforcement agencies," the Army Chief said.

On arrival at the Police Lines, the Chief of Army Staff was received by the Inspector General of Islamabad Capital Territory Police Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan.

'Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada-e-Pakistan':



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir Ahmed Shah interacting with students after ceremony at General Head Quarters regarding 'Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada-e-Pakistan.'

COAS visits martyrs' monument, lays floral wreath: The nation is observing 'Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada-e-Pakistan' on Thursday, to pay rich tribute to the martyrs who laid their lives while protecting the motherland and its people.

In this regard, the main ceremony was held at General Headquarters in Rawalpindi on Thursday. Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir visited the martyrs' monument, laid floral wreath and offered fateha. Later, prominent personalities also laid the floral wreath at the martyrs' monument.

These included amongst others the families of martyrs, students, Senior Veterans, the Inspector General Islamabad police, the Director General Anti Narcotics Force, the Regional Police Officer Rawalpindi, the commissioners of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Cricketers Babar Azam and Muhammad Rizwan and Radio Pakistan's Newscaster Ishrat Fatima.

Meanwhile, on the eve of Youm-e-Takreem-e-Shuhada-e-Pakistan,

CJCSC, Services Chiefs, retired services' officers and representatives of civil society pay rich tributes to shuhada of Pakistan who rendered ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty for ensuring integrity, sovereignty and honour of the nation and motherland.

The sacrifices of Shuhada are eternal, will continue to inspire future generations of countrymen and will never be forgotten, irrespective of vicious propaganda by the enemies of Pakistan. Today is a day for the entire nation to commemorate and honour each and every Shaheed of the Armed Forces, Law Enforcement Agencies and the Civil Society who laid their lives for upholding the very purpose and ideals Pakistan stands for.

"Shuhada e Pakistan are our heroes and a great asset, whose ultimate sacrifices can never be allowed to be demeaned or undermined by anyone. Pakistani nation takes pride and solemnly pledges to remain deeply indebted to them and their proud families. Shuhada were, are and will continue to be our pride, come what may.

Imran among 600 PTI leaders put on 'no-fly list'

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Over 600 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders and former assembly members including chairman Imran Khan's name have been added to the no-fly list, sources told media on Thursday.

According to the sources within the Federal Investigation Authority (FIA), the names of the PTI leaders and its party chief have been added for their involvement in the May 9 violence and desecration of martyrs' monuments. The names have been added to the FIA's Provisional National Identification List (PNIL) to prevent them from going abroad, added the sources.

Moreover, the former prime minister's wife Bushra Bibi's name has also been added to the list. Apart from that, the list includes Murad Saeed, Maleeka Bokhari, Fawad Chaudhry, Hammad Azhar, Qasim Suri, Asad Qaiser, Yasmin Rashid and Mian Aslam Iqbal. The sources further claimed that some of the PTI leaders and office bearers tried leaving the country in the last three days, however, they were stopped at the airports.

Maleeka Bukhari quits PTI

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Maleeka Bokhari, a former parliamentarian, Thursday announced quitting the Imran Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), joining a long list of leaders to desert the party following the May 9 riots.

"I condemn the events that transpired on May 9. For every Pakistani, the events that took place on May 9 are very painful," the former member of the National Assembly said in a press conference in Islamabad. Announcing her "dissociation" from the party, Bokhari said she wasn't under duress and "no one forced me into making this decision".

"As a lawyer, I want to play a positive role in Pakistan. I also want to spend time with my family," she said. Bokhari quit the party hours after her release from Adiala Jail, where she was sent after being arrested under Section 4 of the Maintenance of Public Order. In her presser, Bokhari backed the authorities' decision to investigate the May 9 events and said the people behind the violent events should be punished.

"When a red line has been crossed, then action should be taken in line with the law," she added. Khan's party has been feeling the heat of the state's might after his party workers burnt and smashed military installations, including the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, after his arrest on May 9 — a day the army dubbed as "Black Day".

40 makeshift fuel stations sealed

LAHORE (APP): The Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), in collaboration with the Hydrocarbon Institute of Pakistan, district administrations, Civil Defence and Department of Weight & Measurements, conducted inspections of fuel stations in various districts of Punjab including Sargodha, Bhakkar, Multan and Sadiqabad.

According to a spokesman for OGRA, 40 roadside makeshift fuel stations were sealed over illegal sale of petroleum products.

These illegal business points were issued penalties over violation of the relevant laws.

The enforcement team also gathered data about prices and quality of petroleum products for further action against the law-violators.

Addl. IGP visits crime scene unit

KARACHI (APP): Additional Inspector General of Police - Karachi Javed Alam Odho Thursday visited the Crime Scene Unit headquarters Saudabad. On the occasion, the additional IGP was briefed about the unit by ADIGP - Crime Imran Shaukat.

During his briefing ADIGP informed that 25 offices of the Crime Scene Unit were working round the clock in different districts and each unit had 12 to 14 trained police personnel on duty.

The main objective of the crime scene unit was to secure the evidence from the scene and enable the investigating officers to access the accused and convict them in the court on the basis of solid evidence, he said.

On the occasion, Karachi Police chief provided each district with one vehicle equipped with modern technology related to the crime scene. SSP Malir, SP Headquarters, DSP Crime Scene Unit and other officers were present on the occasion.

City receives light rain

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore city received drizzle to light rain on Thursday. The Meteorological office has predicted more rain during the next 24 hours, which will bring down temperature from 33 degree Celsius, recorded at 1pm on Thursday. Earlier, the city experienced very high temperatures for almost a week with mercury consistently crossing 40 degree Celsius, and maximum temperature reaching 44 degree Celsius.

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Sindh decided to introduce eco-friendly electric taxis: Memon

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The government of Sindh has decided to introduce eco-friendly electric taxis running on electricity throughout the province. In a high-level important meeting, presided over by the Minister of Information, Transport and Mass Transit Sharjeel Inam Memon, has been decided that 500 new buses worth 25 billion rupees will be purchased and added to People's Bus Service to provide more travel facilities to the people during the next financial year.

Secretary Transport Saleem Rajpoot, CEO Trans Karachi Tufail Palijo, Project Director Yellow Line Ameer Owaisi, General Manager Red Line Pir Sajjad, and Project Director PSB Sohaib were also present and actively participated in the meeting. During the meeting, Transport Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon instructed the initiation of a new route for the People's Bus Service, connecting Hattari to Khesana Mori in Hyderabad. He specifically emphasized that the trial of this new route should commence within three days.

Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the introduction of the new route would provide affordable and comfortable travel facilities for residents in both urban and rural areas.

The Minister of Transport, while issuing instructions to bring all the buses of the People's Bus Service onto the roads of Karachi, emphasized the need to activate the buses that were in backup as well. This directive was given with the aim of ensuring maximum convenience for the people.

He further announced that an additional 20 buses will be provided to the Sindh government by June 15, and these buses will also be incorporated into the People's Bus Service to further enhance travel facilities for the public.

Sharjeel Inam Memon issued clear instructions to eliminate any instances of overlapping buses, ensuring that all buses belonging to the People's Bus Service should be operational on the roads. He emphasized that the buses should actively operate in each and every street of city to

facilitate the public.

Transport Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon promptly issued planning and implementation instructions to establish connectivity between the Orange Lion, Green Line, and Red Lion buses.

He announced that the government plans to purchase 500 buses in the upcoming financial year, and he instructed the Ministry of Transport to prepare a proposal for this purpose. He revealed plans to operate 200 electric taxis in Karachi, with 50 pink taxis specifically reserved for women passengers. These initiatives aim to enhance public transportation and provide dedicated services for women commuters. Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that female drivers will be recruited specifically for the pink taxis designated for women passengers. He emphasized that the introduction of electric taxis will enable affordable travel facilities for the general public. These measures aim to prioritize women's safety and provide cost-effective transportation options for the community.

Sharjeel Inam Memon highlighted that the electric taxi service initiated under the SMTA (Sindh Mass Transit Authority) will create employment opportunities for unemployed youth, operating environmentally friendly taxi will result in substantial savings in oil expenditures, benefiting environment, the public and the government. This initiative serves as a win-win situation, promoting sustainable transportation and economic advantages for all stakeholders involved.

He also mentioned that charging stations and parking depots for electric taxis will be constructed at various locations throughout the city.

During the meeting, Secretary Transport Saleem Rajput put forward a proposal to operate the People's Bus service twice, specifically catering to the convenience of teachers and students at GC University Hyderabad. In response, Transport Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon instructed the relevant authorities to plan and organize the necessary arrangements to implement this proposal effectively.

Punjab chief secretary pays tribute to Maj Shabir Sharif

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman paid a visit to the grave of Major Shabbir Sharif Shaheed (Nishan-e-Haider) on Thursday in connection with the 'Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada' observance.

After laying a wreath and offering Fateha at the grave, he also prayed for all Shuhada and their families.

The chief secretary said that living nations always remember their Shuhada. He pledged to maintain honour and dignity of Shuhada and their families.

"The Shuhada, who rendered their lives

in the line of duty for ensuring integrity, sovereignty and honour of the nation and motherland, in fact, set a great example of bravery. That's why, the nation is paying tribute to them today," he added.

He said, "Shuhada-e-Pakistan are our heroes and a great asset, whose sacrifices can never be allowed to be demeaned or undermined by anyone. The nation solemnly pledges to remain indebted to them and their proud families. Shuhada were, are and will continue to be our pride." Deputy Commissioner Lahore Rafia Haider was also present.

Sindh Police observes Martyrs Reverence Day

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Ghulam Nabi Memon on Thursday said the aim of observing the Martyrs Reverence Day was to remember the eternal sacrifices of the police martyrs for the cause of peace.

Talking to the media after an event held at the Central Police Office (CPO) Karachi to mark the day, the Sindh Police

chief said the police martyrs by sacrificing their precious lives had immortalized themselves in the golden chapter of the history of Sindh Police and the proof of which was more than 2,400 martyrs of Sindh Police. He said police stand like a leaden wall between the people and the criminals, so the stronger the police, the lower the morale of the criminals and terrorists.

Ghulam Nabi said all the law enforcement agencies had rendered sacrifices for establishing peace in the province. He said the children of martyrs were given jobs on the basis of merit in Sindh Police. Earlier, the Martyrs Reverence Day was marked at the Central Police Office, where the IGP Sindh laid a wreath at the Yadgar-e-Shuhada and offered Fateha.



RAWALPINDI: To pay tribute to Pakistan Armed Forces on the occasion of Youm-e-Takreem-e-Shuhad, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif laid floral wreath and offered fateha at Shuhada graveyard.

Pakistan handled COVID-19 in a far better way than its neighboring countries: Bilawal

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Thursday said despite limited resources, Pakistan was able to position itself as a hub for medical treatment and services in the region.

He said Pakistan handled COVID-19 in a far better way than its neighboring countries including India.

"Pakistan had low resources, but due to hard work by the professional medical teams, it managed the pandemic in a better way and earned international prestige," Bilawal said while addressing the Convocation ceremony of Fazaia Medical College here.

He asked all the medical professionals and institutions in the country to keep upgrading their skills in the medical field. The foreign minister said the ministry of foreign affairs was ready to play its due role in facilitating the international partnership in healthcare cooperation.

He said the export of high-end surgical and medical equipment and products of other avenues would

enable Pakistan to qualify in the league of high-technology exporters and to this end. He also urged the country's industry and academia to proactively strengthen their linkages.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari informed that despite low resources, the Sindh government in particular had managed to build state-of-the-art international standard health institutes in the province that were providing free medical facilities to the general public. In Gambat area of Khairpur district, he said the provincial government had established the internationally recognized hospital where patients from across the country were availing free liver, kidney, bone marrow and lung transplant facilities.

Further, the FM said National Institute for Cardio-vascular diseases in Karachi was also providing treatment of heart-related diseases free of charge. He said in every district of Sindh, satellite healthcare centers had also been established to provide emergency treatment to heart patients and children. The minister said after the COVID pandemic, the government had also established the first-

ever infectious disease hospital in Karachi where free treatment is being provided. Congratulating the successful graduates, he asked them to support the government in their efforts to develop high-value services for the people. With respect to the achievements of Pakistan on the international front, the minister said "We have worked day and night towards the betterment of our relations with all the international partners."

He said Pakistan's foreign policy was guided by national interest, pragmatism and constructive engagements. "It is a matter of great satisfaction that despite enormous challenges faced by Pakistan on national, international and economic fronts, we have been able to advance foreign policy interests of Pakistan." The recent achievements on the diplomatic front, he said include Pakistan's exit from the FATF grey list and global recognition of Pakistan's leadership at G77 in China. "When we gathered at the international convention for climate resilient Pakistan, the entire international community stood shoulder to shoulder to Pakistan," he added.

CM visits martyrs' memorials at various places to pay tribute

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi Thursday visited Central Police Office Lahore, Police Lines Qila Gujjar Singh, Yadgar-e-Shuhada Cantonment, Yadgargar-e-Shuhada Mustafabad Kasur, Punjab Rangers Headquarters and SSP Shaheed Ashraf Marth Police Lines Gujranwala in connection with Youm-e-Takreem-e-Shuhada (Martyrs Reverence Day) observance.

He visited the memorials of the martyrs, laid wreaths and offered prayers for elevation of the ranks in Jannat. Chief Secretary, IGP and ACS (Home) also placed flowers at the police martyrs' monument. A


police contingent saluted the martyrs. Mohsin Naqvi also met the families of the police martyrs and expressed solidarity with them and inquired about their problems.

He gave instructions to the authorities concerned to address their issues. Addressing the Martyrs Reverence Day ceremony, the CM said that the nation pays its respects to the martyrs of the country today on this day. He said

that the martyrs' sacrifices serve as a guiding light for the nation and emphasised that their mission of protecting and ensuring peace in the homeland would continue. He strongly condemned the violent events of May 9, terming them a black chapter in Pakistan's history. Mohsin Naqvi said that the unparalleled sacrifices of the martyrs of police and other law-enforcement agencies could never be forgotten.

He said the government would not sit idle till the arrest of the last miscreant. He said that every miscreant was being traced with the help of the law-enforcement agencies.

He vowed to make Capt Asfandiyar Shaheed Chowk and Yadgar Memorial in Faisalabad a memorial square of Pakistan, and those responsible for damaging the memorial boards in Rawalpindi would not be spared.

**LUCKY CEMENT**

**PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT
FOR BUY BACK OF SHARES BY
LUCKY CEMENT LIMITED**

This public announcement is being made in compliance with the Listed Companies (Buy-Back of Shares) Regulations, 2019. The required information is provided as under:

Information	Description	
Name and address of the Registered Office of the Purchasing Company	Lucky Cement Limited Main Indus Highway, Pezu, District Lakki Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	
Purpose of the Purchase	Cancellation of Shares	
Indicative quantum of the purchase both in terms of number of shares, and as a percentage of the paid up capital of the Purchasing Company, as applicable	Up to (a maximum of) 23,800,000 (Twenty Three Million Eight Hundred Thousand) issued ordinary shares of the Company, having face value PKR 10/- (Pak Rupees Ten) each, constituting up to approximately 7.59% of the current issued and paid up capital of the Company	
Date of Commencement of the purchase i.e. effective date of the purchase	June 2, 2023	
Duration of the Purchaser Period	From June 2, 2023 to November 20, 2023 (both days inclusive) or till such date that the purchase / Buy-Back is completed, whichever is earlier.	
Name of the Securities Exchange	Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited	
Authorized Officer appointed by purchase Company	Contact person for handing queries / complaints	
Name	Mr. Faisal Mahmood GM Finance & Company Secretary	Mr. Faisal Mahmood GM Finance & Company Secretary
Phone Number	(0092-21) 111 786 555	(0092-21) 111 786 555
Fax Number	(0092-21) 34534302	(0092-21) 34534302
Postal Address	6-A Muhammad Ali Housing Society, A. Aziz Hashim Tabba Street, Karachi	6-A Muhammad Ali Housing Society, A. Aziz Hashim Tabba Street, Karachi
Email Address	faisal.mahmood@lucky-cement.com	faisal.mahmood@lucky-cement.com

It is clarified that all those persons who validly hold shares of the Purchasing Company, except for the persons mentioned in Regulation 12(2) of the Listed Companies (Buy-Back of Shares) Regulations, 2019, are eligible to participate in the purchase even if their names do not appear on Members' Register of the Purchasing Company.

FAISAL MAHMOOD
GM Finance & Company Secretary
Lucky Cement Limited
6-A Muhammad Ali Housing Society, A. Aziz Hashim Tabba Street, Karachi

May 26, 2023
Karachi

**پاکستان تمباکو بورڈ**

نوٹس نیلامی تھیکہ برائے وصولی تمباکو سیس 24-2023 (CESS)

پاکستان تمباکو بورڈ سوہجیر بھٹو خواہش تمباکو سیس (CESS) وصولی کے حقوق کی صورت 12 جون، 2023، یوت 10:30 بجے پورڈ کے ہیڈ آفس پشاور میں نیلامی کرکے قومی شناختی کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے حامل خواہشمند خریدار جو سیس اریو نیوٹھو کو کارڈ پر جمع کئے ہوں کو نیلام میں شرکت کیلئے مطلع کیا جاتا ہے۔

نیلام کی شرائط و ضوابط درج ذیل ہیں

- 1۔ نیلامی میوار ایک سال (یکم جولائی، 2023 سے 30 جون، 2024) تک کے لئے ہوگی۔ 2۔ نیلامی 12 جون، 2023 کو یوت 10:30 بجے شروع ہوگی۔ تمام خریدار رجسٹرڈ اپنے این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ اور سیس اریو نیوٹھو کو کارڈ (CNIC) کی کاپی 10:30 بجے سے پہلے حلفدار بننے کے پاس پہنچی رہیں۔ 3۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 4۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 5۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 6۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 7۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 8۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 9۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 10۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 11۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 12۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 13۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 14۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 15۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 16۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 17۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 18۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 19۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 20۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 21۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 22۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 23۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 24۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 25۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 26۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 27۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 28۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 29۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 30۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 31۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 32۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 33۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 34۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 35۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 36۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 37۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 38۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 39۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 40۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 41۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 42۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 43۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 44۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 45۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 46۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 47۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 48۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 49۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 50۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 51۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 52۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 53۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 54۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 55۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 56۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 57۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 58۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 59۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 60۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 61۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 62۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 63۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 64۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 65۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 66۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 67۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 68۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 69۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 70۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 71۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 72۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 73۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 74۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 75۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 76۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 77۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 78۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 79۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 80۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 81۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 82۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 83۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 84۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 85۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 86۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 87۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 88۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 89۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 90۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 91۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 92۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 93۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 94۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 95۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 96۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 97۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 98۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 99۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 100۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 101۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 102۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 103۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 104۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 105۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 106۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 107۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 108۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 109۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 110۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 111۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 112۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 113۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 114۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 115۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 116۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 117۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 118۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 119۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 120۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 121۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 122۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 123۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 124۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 125۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 126۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 127۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 128۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 129۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 130۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 131۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 132۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 133۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 134۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 135۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 136۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 137۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 138۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 139۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 140۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 141۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 142۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 143۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 144۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 145۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 146۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 147۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 148۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 149۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 150۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 151۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 152۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 153۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 154۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 155۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ اور این این این (NTN) سرٹیفیکٹ کے بغیر کوئی کیا جائے گا۔ 156۔ نیلامی کے لئے خریدار کو کارڈ



Patwaris association demands to end disparity in salaries among public servant

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar Association of Patwaris and Qanon Gooyan Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has demanded from the government to end the disparity in the salaries of government employees. They have requested that patwaris be given salaries similar to officers in the Federal Secretariat and other cadres. They also emphasized that patwaris should be provided with all the facilities given to employees of other institutions, such as the Secretariat. They further suggested resolving the issue of upgradation by promoting patwaris to the 11th scale and Girdawar to the 13th scale, along with address-

ing other pending issues. In their statement, the provincial president of the Patwaris and Qanon Gooyan, Malik Sadaqat ullah, said, we, as patwaris, fulfill our duties diligently and never show negligence in our duties because we perform our duties with honesty and a sense of responsibility. We do not hesitate to put our lives at risk in natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, storms, hurricanes, and viruses like COVID-19, while remaining present everywhere.

Unfortunately, instead of appreciation, we have to face criticism. We always implement court orders and follow the instructions of our superiors.

Since the Revenue

Department was established in Pakistan and the system was introduced during the British era, it is regrettable to say that no concrete steps have been taken, and we continue to suffer.

Our salaries are equivalent to none, and in the current era of inflation, we are struggling. The duties that are not included in our official responsibilities, we still perform them on the orders of our superiors, such as polio duty, for many years, but we have not received any compensation for it. We, patwaris, cannot even afford to pay the rent for Patwar khana. No government has taken any measures at the official level to address the issues of patwaris. Our situation is similar to that of abolished and

city allowances, which have not been provided to us. In the past 75 years, no colony has been established for us, nor have any protections been provided.

The association demanded that the government remove our reservations and provide us with facilities so that we, as patwaris, can live a life of dignity and peace.

In the upcoming budget, we urge the government to consider our issues and allocate abolished allowances, stationery allowances, and other additional duties allowances, and increase our salaries by 100%.

Moreover, we have also requested a meeting on May 27th to discuss our issues and devise an action plan.



PESHAWAR: Corps Commander Peshawar Lt. Gen. Sardar Hassan Azhar Hayat offering dua at Police Shuhada Yadgar after lying flower wreath.

Martyrs will be remembered for infinity, says Feroze

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The martyrs will be remembered for infinity, and the negligent nations are relegated to oblivion in the annals of history. On May 9, the intolerant workers of a fascist political party had crossed all limits to amply prove that they kept their petty politics above the state.

We owe the sovereignty of Pakistan to the martyrs of the Armed Forces, who laid down their lives to defend the motherland and

protect its people. Be it the Kargil front or the war against terrorism, the brave soldiers of the Pakistan Army have not only defeated the enemy, but they have also successfully thwarted the nefarious designs and conspiracies.

On May 9, anti-state elements of the Tehreek-e-Insaf strengthened the agenda of the enemies of Pakistan by attacking the national assets and sensitive installations.

Previously, Pakistan's enemies have miserably

failed to materialise their evil schemes despite all resources and required paraphernalia. The criminal activities of the fascists have totally failed in dwarfing the martyrs; nevertheless, they have exposed their own ugly faces.

The nation have rejected them, and the law enforcement agencies will ensure punishments as per laws of the land. Moreover, it goes without saying that the people of Pakistan respect their martyrs and will always remember their sacrifices.

RTS summons CCPO along with record

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Right to Public Service Commission (RTPSC/RTS) summoned CCPO Peshawar and SHO Tehkhal police station to appear before the commission along with record, on Thursday.

RTS Commissioner Muhammad Asim Imam summoned CCPO Peshawar as well as SHO Tehkhal in failure for registration of FIR on complaint of senior citizens against robbers for looting his residence.

The complainant Gulab Shah has called police helpline after robbery at his residence while police reached the spot and collected evidence but didn't lodged FIR for commencement of crime.

The complainant visited police station Tehkal for registration FIR but SHO can't fulfilled his responsibility while the citizen knocked the doors of RTS to ensure delivery of services within stipulated timeframe.

RTS ordered CCPO Peshawar along with SHO Tehkal police station to appeared before the commission with record on next Thursday. The press statement stated that RTS is committed to ensure good governance by means of delivery of public services within stipulated timeframe make accountable government's servant before public.

'Armed Forces bring pride to us as a nation'

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The commemoration of Martyrs Day is to depict our respect and reverence for our martyrs, who laid down their lives to protect our motherland. It is due to their esteemed sacrifices that the people of Pakistan are leading peaceful lives. We are proud of our martyrs, and their monuments are sacred to us.

The Armed Forces of Pakistan bring pride to us as a nation, and it is performing its duties sans any other considerations. Every conscientious Pakistani holds sacrifices of our martyrs in high esteem, and we are and will stay steadfast with the families of the martyrs.

Imran considers talks with Opp as insult

PESHAWAR (APP): Chairman Qaumi Watan Party (QWP), Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpaohas said that Imran Niazi, who is showing his willingness to negotiate with the opposition forces today, used to consider any kind of dialogue as an insult until yesterday. In a statement issued here on Thursday the veteran politician said that Imran Niazi's selfishness, stubbornness and egotism brought him and his party to a point where the doors of return may have closed down.

He said that politics is the name of advancing matters through dialogue. But this understanding and perception is beyond the scope of Imran Niazi, who considered himself to be a genius.

Health, education top priorities of govt: Dr Riaz



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Chief Minister KP on Health Dr Riaz Anwar has said that health and education were the top priorities of the provincial government and all the state machinery was trying its best to deliver to the nation, adding that although Pakistan was facing multiple challenges but with commitment, dedication and hard work it would become a developed and prosperous country in the near future.

He expressed these views as the Chief Guest at the annual convocation of Mahboob Medical Institute (MMI) held hotel on Thursday. Around 60 graduated students of 2019-22 were awarded degrees and medals.

Vice Chancellor Khyber Medical University Prof Dr Zia-ul-Haq was the Guest of Honor, while Registrar KMU Inamullah Wazir, Chairman MMI Dr Mahboob-ur-Rahman, Director MMI Dr Altaf-ur-Rahman, faculty members, graduated students,

their parents and people from different walks of life participated in the ceremony.

Addressing the participants, VC KMU Prof Dr Zia-ul-Haq and Chairman MMI Dr Mahboob-ur-Rahman said that convocation was a great moment of every student's life which inspired and motivated him/her for making his/her destination bright, adding that they congratulated all the graduated students and their parents and wished them best of luck for their future endeavors.

Meeting facilitates collaboration on humanitarian activities in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A productive courtesy meeting took place at the PDMA HQ here on Thursday between Janat Gul Afridi, Director General of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and representatives from the Surhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP).

The meeting served as a platform for engaging discussions on humanitarian activities in the province.

The meeting encompassed comprehensive deliberations on ongoing initiatives and projects related to disaster management, humanitarian support and rural development within the province.

Updates on the progress of these activities were shared, fostering an atmosphere conducive to exchanging ideas and exploring opportunities for improvement and expansion.

The participants underscored the significance of collaboration and coordination between PDMA and SRSP to ensure the successful implementation of various initiatives.

Central to the agenda was a discussion on the progress and updates of ongoing humanitarian programs undertaken by SRSP, along with an exploration of future strategies and plans moving forward. The participants expressed their commitment to enhancing the effectiveness of these programs.

Janat Gul Afridi, Director General of PDMA, emphasized the need for continued partnership and cooperation between PDMA and SRSP.

The courtesy meeting concluded on a positive note, with both organizations reaffirming their dedication to collaboration and mutual support in the pursuit of effective disaster management, humanitarian assistance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

PA holds Quran Khwani for martyrs

PESHAWAR (APP): To commemorate the services and sacrifices of martyrs of the nation, a special Quran Khwani session was held at the masjid of the Provincial Assembly here on Thursday.

The Quran Khwani was attended by Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Kifayat Ullah Afridi and officers and officials of the assembly. After recitation of the Quran special prayers were offered for granting high place in Heaven to the departed souls of the martyrs.

Secretary Provincial Assembly Kifayat Ullah Afridi paid glowing tributes to the sacrifices of the martyrs and said our martyrs were our heroes as they rendered their lives to save the motherland.

He said the nation presents a salute to the martyrs who nourished the soil of the country with their blood and ensured a safe environment for us. Our martyrs were our pride, he added.

will face inconvenience.

Likewise, the power supply will remain suspended from 132 KV Jamrud Grid Station on 28th May from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00p.m. resultantly consumers of 11 KV Frontier Teach wood, PCB, Express 1, 2, 3, 4, Alhaj Steel, Olympia, Alhafiz Steel, Industrial Estate, PPI 1, 2, Northern Bottling and Kidney Center feeders



PESHAWAR: A view of establish sacrificial animal market on ahead of Eidul Adha at Sarband Bara.



In brief

Tribute paid to martyrs F.P. Report

MARDAN: A rally was organized in Women University Mardan today to pay tribute to the selfless sacrifices of martyrs of Pakistan in which students and teachers participated. The purpose of the rally was to commemorate the eternal sacrifices of Pakistan's martyrs; on the other hand, it was also to convey a message to the nation that honoring and respecting the martyrs, their families and memorials is the duty of every Pakistani. On Pakistan Martyrs' Day, events across the country are being prominently presented to pay tribute to the martyrs of Pakistan. In which special prayers were sought for the recovery of the martyrs of the country, the martyrs of the Pakistan Army, police and other law enforcement agencies were honored. Martyrs' Day of Pakistan is a day of pledge renewal, which forgets hatred and bitterness and conveys a message of love, peace, hope, tolerance and deep love for its martyrs.

Rallies held in Lakki Marwat F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: The district administrations held rallies and functions in Lakki Marwat on Thursday to mark martyrs respect day with national zeal and reverence. In Lakki Marwat, teachers and students took part in a rally taken out from Government Shaheed Muhammad Ghasan Khan Centennial Model High School No. 1, in Lakki city the boy scouts association. Led by additional AC Sultan Nooruddin Ahmer and deputy DEO Gul Faraz, it passed through old kuchery road and culminated at the school's building. The participants carried banners inscribed with the pictures of martyrs. The scout association also arranged a function at Government Shaheed Behram Ahmad Khan Higher Secondary School in Naurang and other public sector schools. Additional AC Gohar Ali graced the occasion as chief guest. Students sang patriotic songs and presented tableaux to pay rich tributes to the national heroes. They also highlighted the supreme sacrifices rendered by police, army and other LEAs personnel and civilians for the motherland. Deputy DEO Gul Faraz, ADEOs Dr Ihsanullah and Amir Jan and principal Faridullah Khan also spoke on the occasion.

Prayers offered for martyrs F.P. Report

BANNU: The martyrs respect day began with collective prayers and Khatm-e-Quran ceremony for the deceased personnel of army, police and other law enforcement agencies held at Madni mosque attended by Maulana Abdul Sattar Shah Bukhari, Maula Muhammad Tayyeb Shah Bukhari, Maulana Shoaibullah Shah and other prominent religious scholars. On the directives of deputy commissioner Manzoor Afridi, additional deputy commissioner Hamid Iqbal and assistant commissioner Syed Abrar Ali Shah led a rally that appeared from the press club building and passed through different bazaars in Bannu city. Government officials, teachers, students and people from different walks of life participated. The district administration also held a function at divisional model school in the cantonment area where students sang national songs and highlighted the importance of the day in their speeches.

Corps Commander, IG FC visits Karnal Sher mausoleum

F.P. Report

SWABI: Commander Peshawar Corps Lieutenant General Hassan Azhar Hayat and Inspector General Frontier Corps North Major General Noor Wali Khan visited the mausoleum of Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed in Swabi and offered Fatiha after laying wreath, on Thursday.

Earlier, a special ceremony was also organized in the historical Fort Bala Hisar Peshawar in which Inspector General Frontier Corps North Major General Noor Wali Khan placed flowers on the martyr's memorial and recited fatiha. A large number of rela-



tives of the martyrs were present at the occasions.

Corps Commander Peshawar and IGFC North paid tribute to the martyrs and appreciated the courage

of their families. The events were attended by high civil and military officials, students, businessmen, and other guests from various walks of life.

Resumption of construction of road work demanded

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Jamiat Ulema Islam Fazl provincial leader and former candidate for PK 15 Qazi Ayazud Din has demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa caretaker government and authorities of the communication and works department to start construction work on the incomplete Kalpani Talash bypass road project.

Talking to local journalists at Timergara here on Thursday the JUI-F leader said that he had met the Lower Dir deputy commissioner Iftikhar Ahmad and executive engineer C&W department here the other day and informed them about the miseries faced by motorists and residents using this road.

He said the project was yet to be completed despite the passage of seven years. Qazi Ayaz said that work on the project was started in 2016 during the Pakistan Tehreek Insaf government in the province but it was not completed within its stipulated time. He pointed out that the 10-kilometer bypass road would also benefit the people of Upper Dir, Chitral and Bajaur. He said the delay had also raised its budget.

The JUI-F leader said the XEN communication

and works department on his proposal sent an excavator machine for filling a culvert at Karimabad Naraisah to open the road temporarily for light vehicular traffic. He said that the culvert had been made functional but it was not the solution. He said that he would also talk to the minister concerned soon so that work on the project could be started well before the presentation of the next general elections.

Girls' school: Taking notice of the parents' complaints, the Timergara tehsil chairman Mufti Irfanul Din along with a team of local journalists visited the lone government girls' centennial model high school Timergara and got information about the missing facilities. The visiting team was informed that a total of 1700 students were enrolled in the school. It was told that 75 to 85 girl students were enrolled in each class lacking basic facilities.

It was noticed that only seven of the 21 washrooms were functional while the rest of them were not in use. The school has no solar panels and students have been suffering during power outages. The tehsil chairman was informed that 9 kanals of the school land had been grabbed by the

land mafia. The school is short of classrooms. The visiting team examined different sections of the school. The tehsil chairman announced to construct two more washrooms from the TMA funds. He demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and high ups of the education department to take notice of the school condition and sanction appropriate funds for its extension.

Taxes to be resisted: The president of the Lower Dir chamber of commerce and industries Syed Noor Alam Badshah has said the traders' community would not accept the imposition of taxes in the Malakand tax-free zone.

Addressing a meeting of the chamber and later talking to local journalists at Timergara on Wednesday, he said the incumbent government wanted to impose taxes in the region in sheer violation of the constitution.

He said the region had been affected by floods, militancy, earthquake and hailstorm badly in the past so the government should instead announce a special package for its residents. He said the business community would never bow before the government to accept the unconstitutional act.

RTI empowered citizens to obtain public exchequer info

F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Right to Information (RTI) Act empower citizens with information to make the government accountable. It is a key of good governance and a watchdog for the public offices' holders. By using RTI Law, students and educated segment can use RTI as a tool for social change. It can be benefited you against the injustice in the process of admissions and jobs selection process, on Thursday.

This argued by Farah Hamid Khan, Chief Information Commissioner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Commission (KPIC) said in seminar on

'Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Information Act' organized by Department of Political Science on Thursday here at Bacha Khan University Charsadda. Vice Chancellor Dr. Bashir Ahmad, faculty members and student in a large number participated in the said seminar.

As guest speaker Mrs. Farah Hamid Khan said that KPIC is committed to ensure implementation of RTI Law into each and every corner of the province. "I wish RTI a very common term for every common citizen and be benefited by this law" she further said. While talking about the role of Public

Information Officer (PIO) she said that PIO has the key role in implementation of this law, and very soon a training session on RTI Law for the PIOs of public sector universities of the province will be arranged.

In the seminar Syed Saadat Jahan, Assistant Director Communication, KPIC imparted a detail lecture on RTI Law. Jahan shed light on the procedure of lodging information request in public bodies. In conclusion remarks Vice Chancellor, Bacha Khan University Dr. Bashir Ahmad praised the mechanism of KPIC and thanked to CIC KPIC for participation in the seminar.

Pre-monsoon preparation reviewed

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Under the chairmanship of Commissioner Malakand Division Shahidullah Khan, a review meeting held to regarding preparations for monsoon rains during the summer by the district administration and Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), on Thursday.

During the meeting administrative and relief officers from the districts of Malakand Division participated through video link while Secretary to Commissioner Malakand Muhammad Ali Khan and Reporting Officer PDMA Malakand Division Salman Ahmed participated in Commissioner's Office Saidu Sharif. In the meeting, pre-planning, preparations of teams and resources, and issues were reviewed to deal with any unexpected situation arising from monsoon rains and snow or glacier melting

during the summer. While presiding over the meeting, Commissioner Malakand Division Shahidullah Khan said that in case of any sudden calamity, the people look towards the institutions and in such a case, only good planning helps the institutions to play a better role.

Commissioner Malakand Division said that plans based on actual data should be sent to the relevant forums to ensure the availability of resources. Commissioner Malakand Division noted that climate change is a big problem for Pakistan, and institutions have to work under a proactive plan to reduce its negative impacts. Commissioner Malakand Division said that people should avoid

spreading false and unverified rumors during any emergency situation and the concerned district administration should make a comprehensive plan to adopt a coordinated action plan in this regard and the people should only accept trusted information provided by your concerned institutions.

Timely provision of correct information helps to avoid loss and in such cases, all concerned district administrations need to activate an early warning system to deal with any emergency situation. Commissioner Malakand Division this year in view of landslides due to melting of snow in the upper areas and road closures due to GLOF adopting comprehensive planning, the concerned administration should be alert at all times and ensure the availability of heavy machinery to avoid any untoward incident.



KOHOT: Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan, Vice Chancellor Kohat University of Science and Technology chairing 106th ASRB Meeting.

KKKUK pays tribute to Pak Army F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, on Thursday organized a Seminar and Walk on the occasion of Youm-e-Takreem-e-Shuhada-e-Pakistan, paying tribute to the courageous martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the nation.

According to a press release issued here, the Vice Chancellor of Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, Prof. Dr. Sardar Khan along with esteemed faculty members, administration officials, and a large number of enthusiastic students actively supported the remembrance.

The day commenced with a Seminar, which served as a platform to enlighten the attendees about the significance of Youm-e-Takreem-e-Shuhada-e-Pakistan and honor the sacrifices made by the brave heroes of our nation. The speakers, including Registrar Muhammad Rashad, Controller of Examinations Dr. Muhammad Zubair, and Dr. Fasih ur Rehman, Lecturer in the English Department emphasized the valor and dedication displayed by the martyrs.

The Seminar was attended by notable dignitaries, including Deputy Registrar (Academics) Muhammad Rahim, PS to Vice Chancellor Sadiq Ullah Khan, Deputy Director Administration Abdul Baseer, Deputy Provost Zulfikar Ali Anjum, and Network Administrator Ali Abbass, who added their valuable insights to the event.

The participants expressed their gratitude towards the sacrifices made by the shuhada (martyrs) and demonstrated their unwavering support for the Pakistan Army. The atmosphere reverberated with patriotic fervor as the attendees passionately chanted slogans in favor of the martyrs and the brave soldiers defending the nation.

Following the Seminar, a symbolic Walk was organized, with participants carrying banners and placards inscribed with messages of reverence for the fallen heroes. The Walk proceeded through the university campus, allowing the participants to showcase their solidarity and pay homage to the martyrs.

Rally held in Khyber F.P. Report

JAMRUD: Like elsewhere in the country, Martyrs Respect Day was observed in Khyber on Thursday aimed to remember Martyrs and to honor families of the deceased. In this connection a rally was organized in Landi Kotal under the banner of Tehreek Islahat Pakistan (TIP) that was led by the former Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Shafiq Sher Afridi.

Scores of the party workers, councilors and tribal elders besides people from different walks of life participated in it while carrying placards and banners inscribed with statements lauding sacrifices of the forces. The rally turned into a public gathering at Babe-Khyber. Addressing on the occasion the former MPA Shafiq Sher Afridi and others said that due to unmatched sacrifices, rendered by the forces, permanent peace was restored in the country.

Strong army guarantees stable Pakistan therefore the whole nation stands aside to their forces, they added. The speakers condemned attacks on military installations and memorials on May 9 and said the culprits should be dealt with as per law.

Moot commits to achieve sustainable development

Fazal Haq

MARDAN: The mayors of tehsil councils are committed to ensure the devolution of local government powers and jurisdiction over municipal services as well as revenue generation to achieve goals of sustainable development and good governance at gross root through peaceful and tolerant society, on Thursday.

This commitment was made by chairmen and mayors of different tehsil councils of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during Mayor Conference held at Mardan while expressed their views and recommendation for the betterment of democracy in the symposium.

Mayor Mardan Himayatullah Mayar said that meetings will be organized in all tehsil of the district to promote peace, non-violence, and tolerance, as well as to create a better environment in society. Representatives from various schools of thought will participate in these meetings, with the aim of spreading awareness about peace and tolerance and mutual collaboration in the Society."

Mayor Mardan addressed the Mayors Conference, organized in collaboration with the Strong City Network and City Local Government, focusing on combating hatred, extremism, and domestic violence. The conference was attended by Chairman Rustam Maulana Mubarak Ahmad Darani,

Chairman Rajar Ghulam Haqqani, Chairman Pabbi Ghayoor Khatak, Chairman Pashtakhara Peshawar Haroon Saffat, Professor Dr. Rashid Khan, Professor Abdul Shakoor, Atal Khan Mayar, representatives of the Civil Societies and journalists.

On this occasion, Mayor Mardan Himayatullah Mayar said that the lack of tolerance, extremism, and violence in society is largely due to not giving importance to each other's opinions. The degradation of society is caused by ignorance and lack of awareness. "The Constitution of Pakistan guarantees the protection of the rights of every individual. It is essential to discourage extremism, hatred, and violence through religion, color, race, or specific mindsets. Our role is crucial in the progress and well-being of society."

The lack of employment opportunities for youth also contributes to these issues" He added. "For a better and peaceful future, we need to grow positive thoughts in minds and characters of children, so that they can contribute to the betterment of society and humanity. A uniform curriculum is essential for the better mental development of children" Mayor Mardan added. He stated that the women in the region have also been greatly affected by extremism and terrorism. Women have endured all forms of injustice and violence.

Mayor Mardan Himayatullah Mayar emphasized that we all need to come together to prevent domestic violence. Addressing the conference, Dr. Rashid said that people's wrong mindset for political purposes often leads to conflicts and issues. Chairman Peshawar Haroon Safat stated that political leaders should take steps to address social issues and promote awareness, in addition to developmental projects.

Member City council Ashok Kumar said that "Minorities have complete rights in Islam. However, due to ignorance and misrepresentation, we often create difficulties for minorities." Atal Khan Mayar expressed his views, saying that there is a need for a change in the curriculum and the level of mental development at the school and college level. The role of teachers, scholars, and parents is crucial.

Chairman Takhtbhai Maulana Muabarak Ahmad Durrani Said that The solution to conflicts, extremism, and terrorism lies in religion and Islam. Chairman Raj Ghulam Haqqani, Chairman Pabbi Ghayoor Khatak, and other participants also expressed their views on the betterment of society, combating extremism, and promoting better mental development. At the end of the conference, Mayor Mardan Himayatullah Mayar expressed gratitude to all the participants on behalf of the City Local Government.

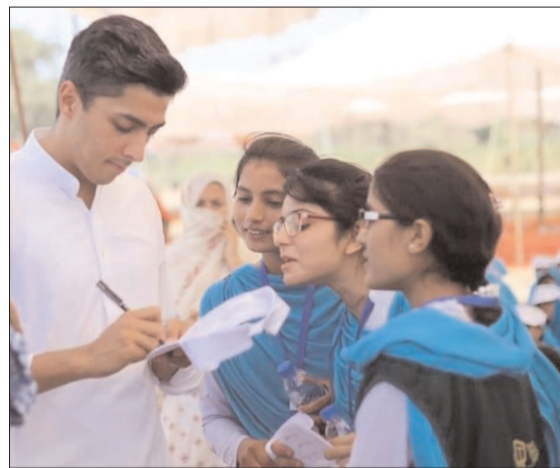
Education key to compete with world: Ali Tareen

Saqib Mushtaq

LODHARAN: The importance of acquisition of knowledge can be estimated from the fact that Allah made first revelation of Ayat of Surah Alaq Read with the Name of your Lord Who created everything. The proven hadeeth is that which was narrated by Ibn Maajah from the hadeeth of Anas ibn Maalik, who said: "The Messenger of Allah (Peace be Upon Him) said: 'Seeking knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim.'"

Only those nations and people who acquired knowledge and disseminated it have succeeded ever since. In early days of Islam the Muslim not only acquired knowledge but among them were born many great scholars and scientists like Ibn al-Nafis ibn al-Nafis (1213-1288) was an Arab physician who presented blood circulation theory when European scientists were not even aware of that until William Harvey scientifically proved blood circulation in 1628. The Cordoba of Spain during the Muslim rule was considered the foundation of knowledge.

Jamia al Azhar of Egypt was considered the first university of the world but now it is pathetic to note that the Muslim are way



behind in field of knowledge from rest of world and it is contributing cause in declining of the ummah. As far as Pakistan is concerned the rest of SAARC countries have moved much ahead of Pakistan in field of education. The literary rate of SAARC countries is quite higher than Pakistan. Ali Tareen's wonderful educational plan for the best future of the students of South Punjab. Ali Tareen Tareen Oxford Scholarship was launched for the students of South Punjab. Through this scholarship, intelligent students of South Punjab will be able to study at Oxford University in UK.

Ali Tareen will pay all the educational expenses of the selected students under

this program. Student sessions will also be organized to nurture the trend of admissions to Oxford with the support of Ali Tareen. The scholarship will be launched as a five-year program for Masters classes. Tareen Oxford Scholarship Program will be a milestone for students of South Punjab.

There is an effort to provide the best opportunities for modern education to the students of South Punjab. It is good initiative and step of tareen education foundation to revive the glory of the Muslim in field of knowledge and education. As a noble and responsible citizens we appreciate and commend steps taken by tareen education foundation in field of education.

Pakistan's Martyrs Day observed with zeal

F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: A rally was held in Parachinar on the occasion of Pakistan Martyrs' Day in which tributes were paid to the martyrs of forces and the teachers who were martyred in Teri Mangal School.

On this occasion, a rally was taken out from DC office Parachinar in which slogans of Pakistan Zindabad and Pakistan

Army Zindabad were raised. In their address on this occasion, Deputy Commissioner Saiful Islam Shah and DPO Muhammad Imran said that there is peace in Pakistan due to the blood sacrifice of the martyrs and we are living a peaceful life and remember the sacrifices of the martyrs. In his address to the rally, Principal Wajid Ali Khan paid tribute to the forces and the teachers who were martyred in Teri

Mangal School of Kurram district and said that the sacrifices of all the martyrs are unforgettable for us.

The children and other participants of the rally were waving the national flag in their hands and holding up different kinds of placards and banners on which slogans were written in favor of the martyrs. They were also holding pictures of the martyred teachers in Mangal School.



Sudan conflict displaces over 1.3 million UN

CAIRO (AP) The fighting between Sudan's military and a powerful paramilitary force has displaced more than 1.3 million people, the UN migration agency said. The International Organization for Migration said the clashes have forced over 1 million people to leave their homes to safer areas inside Sudan. Some 320,000 others have fled to the neighboring countries of Egypt, South Sudan, Chad, Ethiopia, the Central African Republic and Libya.

The fighting erupted on April 15 after months of escalating tensions between the military, led by Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, and the Rapid Support Forces commanded by Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo. The conflict derailed Sudanese hopes of restoring the country's fragile transition to democracy, which was disrupted by a military coup led by the two generals in October 2021. The conflict has killed at least 863 civilians, including at least 190 children, and wounded more than 3,530 others, according to the most recent numbers from the Sudanese Doctors' Syndicate - which mainly tracks civilian casualties. It has also pushed the East African country to near collapse, with urban areas in the capital, Khartoum, and its neighboring city of Omdurman turning into battlegrounds. Egypt is hosting the largest number of those who fled, with at least 132,360 people, followed by Chad with 80,000 and South Sudan with over 69,000, the agency added.

All but one of Sudan's 18

provinces experienced displacement, with Khartoum at the top of the list with around 70% of the total number of displaced people, according to the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix. Sporadic fighting continued in several areas, despite a cease-fire reached this week. Residents reported hearing gunshots and explosions in central Khartoum as well as areas close to military facilities in Omdurman. Both sides in the conflict traded blame for violating the cease-fire.

The weeklong cease-fire, which was brokered by the United States and Saudi Arabia. It was the latest international effort to push for humanitarian aid delivery to the conflict-torn country. A joint statement from the US and Saudi Arabia warned that neither the Sudanese military nor the Rapid Support Forces observed the short-term cease-fire. "The Sudanese people continue to suffer as a result of this devastating conflict, the statement said. It called on both sides to "fully abide by their commitments and to implement the temporary cease-fire to deliver urgently needed humanitarian relief.

Earlier, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken cautioned both parties of possible sanctions if the latest cease-fire was not adhered to. But, White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters in Washington that the cease-fire has largely been holding, despite reports of sporadic fire in Khartoum and elsewhere. "Ultimately, it's of course up to the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid

Support Forces to implement this thing," Kirby said. "But in general, in the main, it appears to be holding. I want to caution you though, this is early, I mean, just went into effect yesterday afternoon. We have seen this movie before. So, we're being pretty pragmatic as we look at it." The fighting has exacerbated the already dire humanitarian conditions in Sudan. According to the UN, the number of people who need assistance this year has increased by 57% to reach 24.7 million people, more than half the country's population. The international body said it would need \$2.6 billion to provide them with much-needed humanitarian assistance. The UN special envoy for sexual violence Pramila Patten, meanwhile, said she is "is gravely concerned" about reports of sexual attacks against women.

"There are strong indications that it is parties to the conflict who have committed sexual violence, including rape, against women and girls," she said in a statement. She said many of the sexual attacks apparently took place in residential areas in Khartoum, or while they were fleeing the fighting in the capital. Other attacks on women also took place in the western region of Darfur, where sexual violence against women has been consistently reported over the past two decades, she said. She called for investigations into the allegations and urged all parties to take immediate measures against suspects, including suspending or removing them from the ranks.

France bans short-haul flights

PARIS (Agencies) France has formally banned domestic flights on short routes that can be covered by train in less than two-and-a-half hours in a move aimed at reducing airline emissions. The change, which came into effect, will mostly rule out air trips between Paris and regional hubs such as Nantes, Lyon and Bordeaux, with connecting flights unaffected.

Max Boycoff, chairman of environmental studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder, said the French law will be a test case for governments around the world. "While this material impact is quite minimal - only 2 percent of global emissions come from aviation - in symbolic ways, it has a lot of purchase," he told Al Jazeera. "The way in which this generates conversations, much like the one we're having now, can open up further possibilities for emissions cuts elsewhere." He noted rail travel represents about one-third of the hydrocarbon emissions compared with flights. "Everything does count and the ways we get from place to place does matter, and transportation overall contributes to somewhere between one-quarter and 30 percent of global emissions. This demonstrates the power of climate policy action," Boycoff said.

Although the measure was included in a 2021 climate law and already applied in practice, some airlines had asked the European Commission to investigate whether it was legal. The law specifies train services on the same route must be frequent, timely and well-connected to meet the needs of passengers who would otherwise travel by air - and able to absorb the increase in passenger numbers. Laurent Donceel, interim head of industry group Airlines for Europe (A4E), said governments should support "real and significant solutions" to airline emissions, rather than "symbolic bans". A4E highlighted its own net zero by 2050 strategy, which includes switching from jet fuel to non-fossil sources and deploying battery or hydrogen-powered aircraft. The step comes as French politicians have also debated how to reduce emissions from private jets.

Thirsty elephants rampage

CAMEROON (Agencies) Wildlife officials in north Cameroon are struggling against a marauding herd of elephants that wandered into a regional capital this week after trampling through surrounding villages and killing at least two people. An estimated 6,830 elephants live in Cameroon, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, making it one of the largest populations of the endangered species left in Africa.

Conservation efforts have increased their numbers over the past years. But the loss of habitat to plantations and villages can cause the animals to occasionally wander into human settlements, trampling crops and homes, and sometimes charging people. Forestry and wildlife official Jean Nyemeg said elephants trampled a child to death this week in a village near Maroua, the capital of Cameroon's Far North region. The four elephants then made two incursions into Maroua itself. "The elephants moved in search of water due to the arid nature of the region," Nyemeg said, adding that the herd was first spotted near the border with Chad.

Footage shared on social media showed people scattering and taking videos with their phones as the herd wandered down asphalt roads. Rangers on foot have been trying to woo them into a national park about 120km (75 miles) from Maroua, Nyemeg said. The deputy mayor of the nearby Kalfou district,

Oumarou Tamboutou, said the elephants killed a man there last week. The Ministry of Forests and Wildlife said in a statement that the animals were migrating to the Waza National Park when a crowd of onlookers, unaware of the danger, blocked the route. The disoriented elephants killed a person, named Bintou, in the locality of Balda, the ministry said and asked locals not to approach the animals as they were still moving towards the national park.

Wagner chief says 20,000 of its troops killed in Bakhmut battle

MOSCOW (Agencies): Some 20,000 troops from Russia's Wagner mercenary group were killed in the months-long battle for control of Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine, its founder has said. Yevgeny Prigozhin said he had recruited about 50,000 prisoners to fight with Wagner in Russia's war in Ukraine and that about 20 percent of them had been killed.

A similar number of his contract soldiers had also perished in the battle for the city, he told Russian political strategist Konstantin Dolgov in a video interview posted on his Telegram channel. This weekend, Wagner and the Russian military claimed to have taken control of Bakhmut, which has been left in ruins by the prolonged fighting, with Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulating the armed forces. But Kyiv has said its forces continue to fight for the city. Prigozhin, a businessman whose influence has deepened since Russia began its full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than a year ago, has scathingly criticised the country's military leadership, accusing Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov of incompetence. If ordinary Russians continued getting their children back in coffins while the children of the elite "shook their arses" in the sun, he warned in his latest video, Russia would face turmoil along the lines of 1917 that brought the Bolsheviks to power.

"This divide can end as in 1917 with a revolution," he said. "First, the soldiers will stand up and after that, their loved ones will rise up," he said. "There are already tens of thousands of



them - relatives of those killed. And there will probably be hundreds of thousands - we cannot avoid that." Last year, Prigozhin toured Russian prisons in a bid to convince inmates to fight with Wagner in Ukraine in exchange for an amnesty if they survived to return home. Russia's most powerful mercenary leader said Ukraine was preparing a counteroffensive aimed at pushing Russian troops back to its borders before 2014, when Moscow invaded and then annexed Crimea. Ukraine would try to encircle Bakhmut, the focus of intense fighting in the east, and attack Crimea, he added.

"Most likely of all, this scenario will not be good for Russia so we need to prepare for an arduous war," Prigozhin said in the interview. "We are in such a condition that we could

lose Russia - that is the main problem ... We need to impose martial law." The attacks in Russia's Belgorod region, which Moscow has blamed on Ukraine, was a further example of the failures of the military leadership, he said, warning that Ukraine would seek to strike deeper into Russia. Russia needed to mobilise more men and gear its economy exclusively to war, the Wagner chief said. Prigozhin is known for his explosive-laden outbursts directed at Shoigu and Gerasimov. Earlier this month, he accused the Russian defence chief of failing to provide his soldiers with enough ammunition and threatened to pull out of Bakhmut. He filmed the video in front of rows of corpses he said were dead Wagner fighters as he unleashed a wave of invective at Shoigu and Gerasimov.

S Korea, US troops to hold massive live-fire drills near border with NK

SEOUL (AP) The South Korean and US militaries were set to begin massive live-fire drills near the border with North Korea on Thursday, despite the North's warning that it won't tolerate what it calls such a hostile invasion rehearsal on its doorstep.

Drills, the first of the allies' five rounds of firing exercises until mid-June, mark 70 years since the establishment of the military alliance between Seoul and Washington. North Korea has typically reacted to such major South Korean-US exercises with missile and other weapons tests. Since the start of 2022, North Korea has test-launched more than 100 missiles but none since it fired a solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile in mid-April. North Korea has argued its torrid pace of tests was meant to respond to the expanded military drills between the US and South Korea, but observers say the North aims to advance its weapons development then wrest greater

concessions from its rivals in eventual diplomacy.

The US-South Korean firing exercises, called "the combined annihilation firepower drills," would be the biggest of their kind. The drills have been held 11 times since they began in 1977, according to the South Korean Defense Ministry. Ministry officials said this year's drills are to involve advanced stealth fighter jets, attack helicopters, multiple rocket launch systems and other weapons from South Korea and the United States. It wasn't immediately known how many troops would take part in the drills, but previous exercises in 2017 drew about 2,000 soldiers and 250 weapons assets from both countries.

An earlier Defense Ministry statement said the drills are meant to enhance the allies' combined operational performance capabilities. It said South Korea and the United States will seek to establish "the overwhelming deterrence and

response capabilities" to cope with North Korean nuclear and missile threats. North Korea's state media called the drills "a typical North Korea-targeted war rehearsal." It said North Korea "cannot but take a more serious note of the fact that" that the drills would be held in an area a few kilometers (miles) from its frontier. KCNA said the US and South Korea will face unspecified "corresponding responses" over their series of large-scale, provocative drills.

Earlier this year, the South Korean and US militaries conducted their biggest field exercises in five years. The US also sent the nuclear-powered USS Nimitz aircraft carrier and nuclear-capable bombers for joint exercises with South Korea. In their summit last month, US President Joe Biden and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol announced steps to reinforce their deterrence capabilities such as the periodic docking US nuclear-armed submarines

in South Korea; bolstering joint training exercises; and the establishment of a new nuclear consultative group. Biden also issued a blunt warning that any North Korean nuclear attack on the US or its allies would "result in the end of whatever regime" took such action.

Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, later said the Biden-Yoon summit agreement revealed the two countries' "most hostile and aggressive will of action" against the North. She threatened to further bolster her country's escalatory nuclear doctrine, saying "The pipe dream of the US and South Korea will henceforth be faced with the entity of more powerful strength." Worries about North Korea's nuclear program grew after the North last year legislated a law that authorizes the preemptive use of nuclear weapons. Many foreign experts say North Korea has yet to possess functioning nuclear missiles.

UN conference pledges \$2.4b to head off Horn of Africa famine

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) A United Nations-backed conference raised \$2.4 billion to prevent famine in the Horn of Africa, which is reeling from its worst drought in decades as global temperatures rise. The money will provide life-saving assistance for nearly 32 million people across Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, the world body's humanitarian agency OCHA said in a statement.

Famine has been averted, thanks in part to the tremendous efforts of local communities, humanitarian organizations and authorities, as well as the support of donors, OCHA said. But the sum is considerably less than the \$7 billion the United Nations says is needed to provide help to people affected by drought and conflict in the region. The emergency is far from over, and additional resources are urgently required to prevent a return to the worst-case scenario, OCHA added.

Since late 2020, countries in the Horn of Africa - Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan -- have been suffering the region's worst drought in 40 years.

Five failed rainy seasons have left millions of people in need, decimated crops and killed millions of livestock. More than 23.5 million people are enduring high levels of acute food insecurity in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, according to OCHA. In Somalia alone, which is also in the throes of an Islamist insurgency, the number of people displaced from their homes by armed conflict, drought or floods now stands at 3.8 million, with 6.7 million people struggling to find food, according to figures from the UN and the Norwegian Refugee Council.

More than half a million children are severely malnourished, the two organizations added. Deaths from hunger are on the rise in Africa because of droughts worsened by climate change and conflict, UN officials and scientists say. The devastating drought in the Horn of Africa could not have occurred without the effects of greenhouse gas emissions, the World Weather Attribution group, an international team of climate scientists, said in a report released in April.

We can be anything but complacent, said Andrew Mitchell, the United Kingdom's Minister of State for development and Africa. The clear and present threat remains, and we must act now to prevent further suffering. Funding pledged today will help millions, but we must work together to break the cycle of crisis afflicting so many states. Earlier this week, a group of NGOs, including Islamic Relief Worldwide and Save the Children, called on donors to fully fund the humanitarian response required for one of the biggest climate injustices of our time. Citing UN numbers, the organizations pointed out that despite funding mobilized to aid the region last year, an estimated 43,000 people died from the drought in Somalia alone in 2022.

At the opening of the donors' conference -- organized in conjunction with Italy, Qatar, the UK, and the United States -- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appealed for an immediate and major injection of funding to stop people from dying. We must act now to prevent crisis from

turning into catastrophe, he added, recalling that last year donor countries delivered vital help to 20 million people in the region and helped avert a famine. Guterres said people in the region -- which he described as the epicenter of one of the world's worst climate emergencies -- were paying an unconscionable price for a climate crisis they did nothing to cause. We owe them solidarity. We owe them assistance. And we owe them a measure of hope for the future. This means immediate action to secure their survival.

And it means sustained action to help communities across the Horn adapt and build resilience to climate change, he added. OCHA said the funds pledged would allow humanitarian agencies to sustain aid pipelines of food, water, health care, nutrition and protection services. Joyce Msuya, the UN's deputy emergency relief coordinator, welcomed the pledge but added We must persist in pushing for stepped-up investments, especially to bolster the resilience of people already bearing the brunt of climate change.

Rights activist briefly detained

BEIRUT (AP) Lebanese authorities briefly detained a prominent Egyptian blogger and human rights activist, his lawyer and sister said, but the reason for his arrest was not immediately clear. The first word about the arrest of Abdul-Rahman Tarek, also known by his nickname Moka, came from his sister, Sara Tarek. She posted on her Facebook page that her brother was detained by plainclothes policemen from his apartment. She called for his release

saying he had spent seven years in jail in Egypt until his release last year.

Tarek was taken to police intelligence headquarters in Beirut where he spent about five hours and was later released, his lawyer, Farouk Moghrabi. The reason behind the arrest was not immediately clear, Moghrabi said. Sara Tarek later wrote that her brother was released and he is at home.

Security officials did not immediately confirm Tarek's arrest and later

release. Mary Lawlor, the UN's independent expert on human rights defenders, tweeted "I hear extremely disturbing news that an Egyptian human rights defender in exile in Lebanon was arrested today with no warrant." She tagged Lebanon's foreign ministry in her tweet. A group of Lebanese activists had planned to hold a protest outside police headquarters to demand Tarek's release but it was called off after he was set free.

‘Ukraine joining NATO not on agenda’

BRUSSELS (Reuters) Ukraine will not be able to join NATO as long as the war against Russia rages on, the alliance's chief Jens Stoltenberg said. To become a member in the midst of a war is not on the agenda, he said at an event organized by the German Marshall Fund of The United States in Brussels. The issue is what happens when the war ends.

In September, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced a bid for fast-track membership of NATO after Russian President Vladimir Putin proclaimed four partially occupied regions of Ukraine as annexed Russian land. NATO allies have not acceded to Zelenskyy's request, with Western governments wary of moves that they fear could take NATO closer to entering an active war with Russia. However, both Kyiv and some of its closest allies in

eastern Europe have been pushing for NATO to at least take concrete steps to bring Ukraine closer to membership at the alliance's summit in Vilnius in July.

It is time for the alliance to stop making excuses and start the process that leads to Ukraine's eventual accession, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba wrote in an op-ed for Foreign Affairs in April. What we need is a clear written statement from the allies laying out a path to accession. Latvian Prime Minister Krisjanis Karins said Russia would start a conflict all over again unless Ukraine was allowed to join NATO after the end of the war. To have ... lasting peace, we will need Ukraine, (an) independent, free and liberated Ukraine, as a part of the NATO alliance, he said after meeting Stoltenberg. In a rare visit to Kyiv in April, Stoltenberg underscored

that Ukraine's future lies in NATO, a strong reaffirmation of a 15 year-old decision. But he did not give a timeline. NATO agreed at its 2008 summit in Bucharest that Ukraine will eventually become a member of the alliance.

However, leaders have since stopped short of taking any steps such as giving Kyiv a membership action plan that would lay out a timetable for bringing the country closer to NATO. At the Brussels event, Stoltenberg acknowledged there were differences among NATO members over how to address Kyiv's membership ambitions. There are different views in the alliance and, of course, the only way to make decisions in NATO is by consensus. There are consultations going on now, he said. No one is able to tell you exactly what will be the final decision of the Vilnius summit on this issue.

Canada and S Arabia rekindle diplomatic ties after 2018 spat

TORONTO (Agencies) Saudi Arabia and Canada have both announced that they will resume diplomatic relations, ending a bitter 2018 dispute over human rights. In separate statements, the two countries said they would "restore the level of diplomatic relations" that had been in place prior to the 2018 spat.

Each side will also appoint a new ambassador. Saudi Arabia has yet to announce its selection, while Canada named Jean-Philippe Linteau, a long-time member of its Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The move was prompted by discussions between Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman during November's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Forum. Canada cited "mutual respect and common interests" as motivation for the rekindled ties. Diplomatic ties first ruptured in 2018 when Saudi Arabia arrested several high-profile female human rights activists.

They included Samar Badawi, whose brother, the dissident Raif Badawi, was

also imprisoned at the time. His wife and children had fled to Canada, where they were granted citizenship.

The new arrests prompted a series of social media messages in support of the activists, first from Canada's foreign minister, then from the foreign ministry itself. "Canada is gravely concerned about additional arrests of civil society and women's rights activists in #SaudiArabia, including Samar Badawi," the ministry wrote on its official Twitter page in August 2018. "We urge the Saudi authorities to immediately release them and all other peaceful #human-rights activists." Those messages prompted a Twitter feud with Saudi Arabia, which retorted that Canada's interference in its affairs was a "breach of the principle of sovereignty".

"The Canadian position is a grave and unacceptable violation of the Kingdom's laws and procedures," Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs wrote in response, in a string of messages announcing it would recall its ambassador to Canada. It also declared Canada's Ambassador Dennis Horak a "persona non grata" and gave him 24

hours to leave the country.

Relations between Canada and Saudi Arabia remained frosty, particularly after allegations in October 2018 that journalist Jamal Khashoggi had been murdered in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. Canada, among other countries, denounced the killing as an "unconscionable attack on the freedom of expression" and imposed sanctions against Saudi nationals linked to the attack.

But recently, Saudi Arabia has been on the world stage for a series of rapprochements. In March, the kingdom re-established diplomatic relations with Iran in a deal brokered by China, and this month, it resumed ties with Syria. It also hosted Syrian President Bashar al-Assad for Arab League summit. Saudi Arabia has also worked to broker peace in Sudan, hosting talks between representatives for the country's two warring generals. The United States has also been party to those negotiations, and White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan has also met Saudi officials to discuss peace in Yemen.

The Frontier Post**JALIL AFRIDI***Managing Editor*

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Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

*USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

Role of foreign Pawns in national affairs

FAISAL Vawda, a former PTI leader and one time Federal Minister has recently claimed that ex-spymaster Faiz Hameed was the real architect and mastermind of the mega corruption case involving 190 million pounds that had currently become a great challenge for the former Prime Minister and the PTI Chairman Imran Khan regarding the Al-Qadir Trust. Vawda told the reporters that his compulsion was to tell the nation that General retired Faiz Hameed was the biggest beneficiary in the Al-Qadir Trust case instead of his former boss and PTI Chairman Imran Khan. Mr. Vawda further said that he had timely warned Imran Khan about snakes in his party, but his advice wasn't taken seriously.

The state of Pakistan had always endured recurrent political instability and turbulence throughout its history because of the dubious character of its leaders and the complicity of civil and military bureaucracy. Historically, all blunders and misdeeds with the country had been done in the garb of national interests and service to the nation, however, the state remained the ultimate loser in this nefarious game. Domestic political conspiracies in the country started with the murder of the first Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan in the early years of Pakistan's independence and several public leaders fell prey to the prejudice of their political rivals, the greed of military dictators and the selfishness of senior adjudicators who upheld the theory of necessity instead of preservation of the merit and the constitution. Multiple foreign-sponsored pawns directly landed in the country's power corridors or suddenly emerged in national politics and later disappeared from the scene and returned to their foreign havens after accomplishing their agendas. Interestingly, the political landscapes of the country witnessed extreme volatility, and multiple incidents relating to ongoing political wrangling occurred in recent months, however, the character of Mr. Faisal Vawda had been most controversial, and alarming in the movement who played an agent provocateur's role in the already highly volatile political landscapes of the country.

Several so-called good Samaritans came to Pakistan after the PTI secured tremendous public ratings in the 2018 general elections and grabbed important positions in the government. Mr. Vawda, a Pakistani American businessman, donor, and a close confederate of former Prime Minister Imran Khan also emerged in national politics and grab victory in NA-249 Karachi on the PTI ticket. Later, the dual national billionaire was conferred with a federal ministry and Senatorship in the upper house by then Prime Minister Imran Khan as a reward for his services to the party. However, Vawda's political career ended up for the time being on legal grounds in February 2022. Over the recent months, the former PTI leader has played the role of whistleblower and a fortune teller by squealing alerts and forecasting unconfirmed prophecies regarding past and future events including the PTI Azadi March that struck with an assassination attempt against Imran Khan, the murder of investigative journalist and anchorperson Arshad Sharif, May 9 riots and other highly sensitive and controversial issues of Pakistan's political history. Recently, the self-proclaimed politician had commented on the conduct of Pakistan's former Chief Spy, who had once remained the most loyalist military bureaucrat of his former party Chief and both mutually hatched the political and military strategies for Naya Pakistan.

Ironically, no state institution had noticed the irresponsible and dubious character of Pakistani American politician, who had been consistently playing out of his mandate and middling in sensitive issues without any proof/evidence relating to national security. If he really has valuable information about the series of events, he must consult with relevant government institutions in the larger interest of the nation instead of creating havoc by spreading sensation through the media statements and unreal verbalism. During this era of acute uncertainty and political rosaceae meng, Who has tasked him and granted impunity to Mr. Vawda to launch propaganda campaigns against others particularly the personalities attached to or remained a part of our prestigious institutions in the past? Previously, the Pakistani nation had rejected the hate philosophy of his Political mentor and observed youm-e-Takreem on May 25, to honor its Shuhadas and Ghazis. Pakistan is not a Banana Republic where every other crook started abusing, name-calling, and defaming our military veterans in the garb of political and civil rights. Vawda is advised to use the relevant forum if he has any substantial evidence against the said officer otherwise he must tight his lips as the Pakistani nation will not further tolerate to his baseless assertions and he would be left with no option except remorse and pardon.

‘Remember, you are white, a man of the superior race,’ this was one of the rules Lieutenant Grigori Chertkov espoused while deployed in Africa in the service of the Russian Empire in 1897. He was part of a delegation sent by Russian Emperor Nicholas II to Ethiopia to establish a formal Russian diplomatic mission with the aim of bringing the African country into the Russian imperial fold.

In the eyes of the African people who saw the Russian convoy make its way from a port in Djibouti to Addis Ababa, the Russians were probably hardly distinguishable from any other European colonial troops they had seen. Wearing white pith helmets - not only an item of headwear but also a symbol of presumed racial superiority - the Russians, like their European counterparts, were there to advance an imperial cause.

More than a century later, another Russian emissary visiting the Ethiopian capital would speak of colonialism on the African continent as if his country never tried to engage in it. At a July 2022 press conference, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov criticised the West for trying to bring back the "colonial epoch". His speech conveniently missed the fact that his ancestors wanted to be part of the imperial domination of Africa that defined that epoch. Indeed, today's official Russian rhetoric outlines the history of Russian relations with Africa in exclusively anti-colonial terms. And yet, historical facts reveal that Russia was part of the imperial "scramble for Africa" - only, it failed miserably at it.

Throughout most of the 18th and 19th centuries, Russian imperial expansionism focused on its immediate neighbourhood. Wars of conquest and colonisation were fought south into the Caucasus and east into Central Asia and the Far East. As it grew stronger, the Russian Empire ventured farther afield, expanding its sway into North America and even trying to establish a colony in Hawaii.

When the "scramble for Africa" started in the 1880s among Western imperial powers, the continent started to arouse the appetite of the Russian imperial elite as well. Nikolai Ashinov, a self-styled Cossack, an adventurer and a man with the rare ability to charm imperial decision-makers, is credited with bringing Africa to the attention of

Russian imperial officials.

In 1885, his name started making headlines around the empire thanks to his audacious proposals to gain Russia a foothold in Africa by conquering Sudan and Ethiopia along with their Red Sea coasts. Ashinov asserted that he had enough volunteers willing to create a colony for the crown. The only thing he lacked was a green light from St Petersburg, the imperial capital. The most remarkable thing about Ashinov's campaign was not the boldness of his venture but the excitement it caused within the highest echelons of power. A number of ministers as well as Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod Konstantin Pobedonostsev, who exerted enormous influence over the emperor, saw this idea as a chance to acquire a colony in Africa at a low cost. That is, St Petersburg would not have to send an army to make the conquest because it would be a private venture. Various statesmen also saw the importance of such an undertaking. Some, like Navy Minister Ivan Shestakov, wanted to establish a coal station for Russian steamships on the Red Sea coast, which had acquired global significance after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869.

Others, like Nikolai Baranov, the governor of Nizhny Novgorod - Russia's commercial hub for trade with the Caucasus, Iran and Central Asia - were more interested in the opportunity for resource exploitation. He suggested establishing the Russian-African company with its own fleet and garrison, which would extract resources and trade goods with the locals. Apparently, it was Baranov's arguments about the commercial benefits of such an exploit that won over Emperor Alexander III. In March 1888, a Russian warship with Ashinov and several of his companions landed off the coast of Tadjoura, located today within the borders of Djibouti. Lieutenant AK Ivanovskii, a navy representative, negotiated a protectorate status for the territory with a local sultan while Ashinov's task was to stay and lay the foundation of a future settlement.

Soon, Ashinov had travelled back to Russia, boasting of having established the Russian colony of New Moscow. As preparations started for sending settlers in under the guise of a religious mission, officially led by Archimandrite Paisii, news reached the government that the settlement did not exist.

Oleksandr Polianichev

Ashinov's men who were supposed to have established the settlement fled soon after they came ashore as they had no livelihood to survive. Ashinov turned out to be what many suspected he was: a liar.

To avoid international embarrassment, St Petersburg withdrew its support for the settlers mission but still allowed it to proceed as another private venture, perhaps hoping the second time, Ashinov would be successful. In December 1888, a large crowd of people came to the port of Odesa to bid farewell to more than 100 settlers of diverse backgrounds, among them Ashinov himself. They arrived onboard a steamship in the Gulf of Tadjoura in January 1889 and eventually settled in the old Ottoman fort of Sagallo, hoisting the flag of the Russian Empire over it. New Moscow was finally a reality. To feed themselves, settlers started farming, but they did not stay there long enough to reap the fruits of their efforts. Contrary to the assurances that a local chief had given to the Russian newcomers, the entire coast had already been claimed by France.

In February 1889, after a few attempts to force the Russians to surrender the fort, French gunboats shelled Sagallo, killing several settlers. The rest were collected by the French and dropped off at Port Said in Egypt, where a Russian steamship picked them up and took them home. To avoid a diplomatic scandal of tremendous proportions, the Russian authorities denied any involvement in the colonisation of Tadjoura. Although the attempt to colonise the Red Sea coast failed spectacularly,

Russia's desire to expand its empire into Africa did not disappear. It continued to eye Ethiopia due to its Orthodox faith and test the ground for possible economic and political advances. Nikolai Leontiev, a landowner and an adventurer, was one of the imperial subjects who led that effort. Celebrated in today's Russia as an alleged anti-colonial hero who established Russo-Ethiopian "friendship", he was anything but.

Leontiev managed to get into Ethiopian Emperor Menelik's closest circle and helped establish Russian diplomatic relations with Ethiopia. Although he was not authorised as an official emissary of St Petersburg, he nevertheless tried to play such a role. Taking

advantage of Italy's looming colonial invasion of Ethiopia, Leontiev promised the Ethiopian ruler large supplies of arms and ammunition in exchange for a colony for Russia on the caravan route from Harar to the Red Sea. Ethiopia did not receive any substantial military supplies from the Russian Empire until the war against Italy was over, but the Russian adventurer's thirst for self-promotion led him to invent a myth of Russia's, and his personal, role in the victory over the Italian troops. In 1897, Menelik appointed Leontiev as the governor of a newly annexed territory in Ethiopia's south. He fashioned himself as the real colonial ruler of this realm, considering the Ethiopian emperor's authority there as rather nominal.

Soon Leontiev started planning how the Russian Empire could exploit these territories. His initial idea was to establish a Russian joint-stock company to extract resources and ensure that the territory would later become a Russian protectorate, but St Petersburg did not respond to his proposal. Then Leontiev sought to attract British, French and Belgian capital, often exaggerating the commercial potential of the territories he was governing. Needless to say, his investors never got their money back. In a few years, he accumulated enormous wealth thanks to the generous investments while also mercilessly exploiting local people and resources. As he told one of his Russian associates, "I will take all elephant tusks, I will exhaust all my future slaves, and only then will I think about the history of Abyssinia."

In 1902, on the run from angry investors, Leontiev once again invited the Russian government to take over the territories. This time, the Russian emperor and his ministers took the invitation more seriously, but Menelik was quick to intervene and expel his former confidant from the country. This episode effectively put the nascent diplomatic relations between the Russian Empire and the Ethiopian Empire in danger. Today, the Kremlin portrays Leontiev as the embodiment of imperial Russia's alleged anti-colonialism and uses his fabricated image to take credit for Ethiopia's victory in the Battle of Adwa. Meanwhile, Ethiopian officials do not seem eager to challenge this myth, proba-

bly out of their own geopolitical considerations.

In 1897, while Leontiev was still enjoying good standing in Menelik's court, the Russian foreign ministry sent its first official diplomatic mission to Addis Ababa. This mission, which is seen as laying the foundation for Russia's relations with Africa, is also touted today by Moscow's official historical narrative as a symbol of the Russian Empire's purported anti-colonial sensitivities.

According to the Kremlin, the mission was dispatched out of St Petersburg's desire to protect Ethiopia, to safeguard its freedom and sovereignty from imminent encroachments by Western imperialist powers. This could not be further from the truth, however. Russian officials were there to advance Russian imperial interests, and they engaged with Africans, not as equals, but often as racially inferior people. Apart from Chertkov, who insisted he was of "superior race", Pyotr Krasnov, another member of the mission, described the local population in appallingly racist terms in his memoir: "At first glance, they are disgusting with their dark colour, their nakedness. Especially terrible are those whose skulls are clean-shaven or covered with yellowish-brown burned hair." Pyotr Vlasov, who headed the mission as the official envoy, also talked of Ethiopia in no "anti-colonial" terms. In fact, the very choice of sending him points to Russia's colonial ambitions in the African empire. Vlasov had previously served as consul in Rasht and Mashhad in northern Iran, which at that time was one of the main targets of Russia's informal colonialism.

Ethiopia was, of course, no Persia. While markets in the Persian north were heavily dominated by Russian industrial products, Russian consuls enjoyed a substantial degree of power and Russian officers exerted significant influence over the Persian military, Ethiopia was too far away for Russian imperialists to achieve this level of control. As Vlasov reported, Russia could advance its interests in Ethiopia by establishing a military base or a "colony in the broad sense of the word" on the Red Sea coast. If it did not succeed in that, it could at least make Ethiopia "an obedient weapon in our hands" to keep pressure on British forces in neighbouring Sudan, Uganda and Somaliland. But

Menelik had his own geopolitical game in mind, and the Russian Empire occupied a secondary role within it. Russian representatives, in turn, held Menelik in low esteem, accusing him in their reports of being "greedy", "avaricious", and "always in need of money" - money that the Russian Empire could not afford to spend on Ethiopia.

Despite a rather successful idea to ramp up Russia's prestige in Ethiopia by establishing a hospital in Addis Ababa, Russian influence was weak. In a report to the foreign ministry, Vlasov's successor, Konstantin Lishin, spoke in favour of Russia's more direct engagement in Ethiopian affairs, advocating the exploitation of its gold deposits and encouraging the emperor "to intervene in the domestic affairs of the country" in view of Ethiopia's expected disintegration. However, the defeat the Russian Empire suffered in its war with Japan in 1905 and the revolution of the same year put these designs on hold. Still, the desire to get involved in Ethiopia did not go away. As Sergei Witte, finance minister of the Russian Empire from 1892 to 1903 and the head of its government from 1905 to 1906, put it: "Here in Russia our high spheres have a passion for conquests, or rather for grabbing what, in the government's view, is lying around loose. Since Abyssinia is, after all, a semi-heaven country, but its religion has some glimpses of Orthodoxy, of the Orthodox Church, we really wanted to declare Abyssinia under our protectorate and, on occasion, to swallow it."

But this was the pipe dreams of a European empire that lagged behind its more successful counterparts to the west. That these dreams did not come true was not for the lack of trying. While the Russian Empire failed in Africa, it enjoyed remarkable success in expanding and maintaining its dominion in Eurasia, where its imperial troops imposed brutal rule on various nations and established infrastructure for the extraction of resources. Throughout Asia, Russia pursued the same mission to "civilise the natives" that its Western allies and rivals did elsewhere in the world, sharing with them the same "white man's burden". Contrary to the Kremlin's bold anti-colonial assertions today, Russia was part and parcel of global European imperialism.

Aljazeera

Why is the African Union absent in Sudan?

ON April 24, just nine days after the beginning of Sudan's deadly conflict, the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the rival paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) said they agreed to a 72-hour ceasefire on the back of two days of "intense" negotiations led by the United States and Saudi Arabia.

In a statement announcing the much-welcomed nationwide truce, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged the warring parties "to immediately and fully uphold the ceasefire" and added that "the United States will coordinate with regional and international partners" to achieve a permanent peace agreement. True to his word, just two days later Blinken had a phone conversation with African Union (AU) Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki about "ending the fighting in Sudan". In an official statement, Blinken said he and Faki agreed that "the AU's continued leadership remains essential in pressing the SAF and the RSF to immediately cease military operations and allow unhindered humanitarian access".

Despite all the pleasantries about the importance of African leadership in Blinken's press release, however, the situation was crystal clear: an African nation was engulfed in deadly conflict and, yet again, the US - the unapologetic doyen of neo-colonialism - was leading the global response. In the face of a crisis unfolding in their own backyard,

African leaders and diplomats were reduced to background actors and commentators with no impact. Sure, there were some African efforts - at least on paper - to ease the violence. Comoros President and current AU Chairman Azali Assoumani said he had phone conversations with SAF head General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and RSF chief General Mohamed Hamdan "Hemedti" Dagalo, on April 23 and 25 respectively.

On April 28, in an official statement published by the AU, Assoumani described his deliberations with the two generals as "rich, constructive and promising", and called on "all actors of the international community to support the efforts of the African Union to restore peace and stability in Sudan". However, it seems these "promising" conversations failed to deliver any meaningful results, as an extension to the US-Saudi brokered April 24 ceasefire was secured not by any AU official or African leader, but once again, by the US and Saudi Arabia. There was no mention of the AU's supposedly pivotal leadership when the Saudi-US facilitated talks began in Jeddah on May 6, either. Left to follow the negotiations from afar, the AU attempted to include itself in the conversation by issuing a statement "reaffirm[ing] the imperative of the ceasefire in Sudan" and demanding al-Burhan and Dagalo show respect for "International Humanitarian Law and International Human

Rights Law". Nevertheless, there was once again no mention of the AU - or any African power for that matter - in the Jeddah Declaration of Commitment to Protect the Civilians of Sudan, which was signed and published on May 11.

In short, throughout the continuing Sudan crisis, African diplomats were overshadowed and reduced to loquacious spectators by the US. Far from coordinating and leading a comprehensive intervention, all the AU has managed to do so far was to release a couple of generic soundbites and express hollow concern for the wellbeing of Sudanese civilians. It has been more than a month since fighting erupted in Khartoum but the leading African body has not yet found the time to convene an emergency heads of state meeting to deliberate on the deadly conflict. Many African leaders, however, had time to attend the coronation of King Charles III in London on May 6.

It has been more than a month since fighting erupted in Khartoum but the leading African body has not yet found the time to convene an emergency heads of state meeting to deliberate on the deadly conflict. Many African leaders, however, had time to attend the coronation of King Charles III in London on May 6. In October 2001, speaking to a joint session of parliament on the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) in Cape Town, former South

Tafi Mkaha

African president Thabo Mbeki said, "We are agreed that we must strengthen democracy on the continent; we must entrench a human rights culture; we must end existing conflicts and prevent new conflicts." Following the establishment of the AU less than a year later, in July 2002, African leaders resolved to shun external interventions - from countries like the US - and instead implement African solutions to African problems.

Sudan, under the military leadership of former President Omar al-Bashir, swiftly emerged as one such challenge. In 2003, a war erupted between the Sudanese government and rebel groups in Darfur. In the following few years, the conflict claimed some 300,000 lives and displaced more than 2.5 million people. To suppress the rebellion against his regime, al-Bashir recruited the assistance of the so-called Janjaweed militias - which eventually evolved into the RSF - and provided them with funding and immunity from prosecution.

Subsequently, in 2009, the International Criminal Court (ICC) indicted al-Bashir for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in Darfur, after it found evidence of mass atrocities committed by government forces and the Janjaweed paramilitaries. Unfortunately, the AU - in a flawed and damaging bid to advance "an African solution" to the Sudan problem - refused to help

bring al-Bashir to international justice.

It advised its member states to ignore the ICC warrant, claiming that the ICC was unfairly targeting African leaders and that al-Bashir's lawful arrest would endanger attempts to secure peace in the Darfur region and South Sudan. In addition to these imprudent and unwarranted anti-ICC actions, it endorsed a sham presidential election in April 2015, which the opposition boycotted and al-Bashir won by 94 percent of the vote, as "the expression of the will of the voters of Sudan". Four years later, the RSF and the Sudanese army conspired to remove al-Bashir from power, following nationwide demonstrations against his 30-year-long despotic rule.

Although it said it strove to advance peace in Sudan, the AU refused to support international law and international cooperation as stipulated in the Constitutive Act of the African Union. And while it was supposed to serve the people of Sudan, it disregarded basic democratic norms and the values enshrined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. It mollycoddled a ruthless dictator and suspected war criminal in al-Bashir for years on end. Amid widespread repression, insecurity and corruption during al-Bashir's tenure, it failed to support the pressing sociopolitical and economic interests of ordinary Sudanese.

For it was in the years following the meaningless uproar over the ICC warrant that al-Bashir for-

malised the illiberal Janjaweed militias into the RSF, a development that would have severe ramifications for peace and democracy in Sudan. In April 2019, the RSF was involved in the military coup that ousted Bashir. In June of that year, it led a devastating crackdown on a peaceful sit-in protest in Khartoum that left 120 people dead and hundreds injured. Later, it would participate in the October 2021 military coup that toppled the short-lived transitional government of Sudan and thwarted democracy. Now, along with the equally repressive Sudanese army, it has plunged Sudan into another cataclysmic conflict. The AU claims to be a dynamic and people-centred Pan-African organisation, but it has helped foster a dangerous and regressive military complex in Sudan. To be sure, progressive African interventions and solutions should promote democracy and good governance without fear or favour. And to be sure they should be prioritised over any solution or intervention offered by old or new colonial powers with ulterior motives and conflicting interests. For a long time in Sudan, however, the AU allowed an illiberal dispensation to fester and remained idle in the face of immense human suffering. Enough is enough. Sudan is in Africa - it is not a remote and troubled US outpost. It is indeed Africans who should be solving African problems. It's high time the AU stuck by its own declarations and fulfilled its expansive mandate.

Putin’s threat hangs over tiny Moldova

Nathalie Tocci

WHILE Russia's war on Ukraine rages on and Kyiv prepares its counteroffensive, Moldova, the former Soviet republic sandwiched between Ukraine and the EU, is fortunate to be still standing. Had Russia succeeded in its original war aims, not only would it have captured Kyiv and Odesa, but from there it would have been a matter of days before Russian forces had reached Chisinau.

Moldovan authorities have no doubt this was Vladimir Putin's plan. The prime minister, Dorin Recean, is crystal clear: Moldova survives only thanks to Ukrainian resistance. If Moscow had been able to spread the war to Moldova, there is no way it would have been able to put up the kind of fight the Ukrainian armed forces have. Yet, as far as the future of democracy, international law and European security are concerned, Moldova's fate is as important as Ukraine's. The war fought militarily on Ukrainian soil still reaches deep into Moldova: disinformation, cyber-attacks, the destabilisation efforts of a Moscow-backed opposition and a separatist enclave loyal to Russia are only some of the existential threats that its 2.6 million people are dealing with.

Yet, considering how things could have turned out, I returned from a recent trip to Moldova and Ukraine (organised by the Vienna Institute for Human Sciences) with an incredible sense of hope. A consequence of the invasion, certainly unintended by the Kremlin, is that Moldova has been recognised as a candidate for EU membership. Moldova's president Maia Sandu's pro-European and reformist credentials were important in this achievement. Sandu has made it her goal to take Moldova into the EU by 2030. But in western Europe, too, there has been an attitude shift: even governments traditionally sceptical about EU enlargement, such as the

French, have, at least for the time being, embraced Moldova's path to European integration.

Only a year ago, Moldova relied on Russia for 100% of its natural gas imports. Now, that figure is down to 0%. Energy prices remain unaffordably high for many Moldovans, but it is no longer a security threat. Moldova's electricity still comes from Transnistria, a Moldovan region which broke away in 1992 and is now controlled by Russian-backed separatists. But if Russia were to cut gas supplies, causing electricity generation to grind to a halt, it would trigger an economic collapse in Transnistria rather than a protracted blackout in Moldova. Moldova and Ukraine have synchronised their grids with the EU's and built interconnections with neighbouring Romania. Without electricity powered by Russian gas, Moldova would temporarily struggle, but it would survive. And Russia knows it. It also knows that its invasion of Ukraine has upended Transnistria's economy, casting doubt over this puppet region's political future. Transnistria survives on the electricity it sells to Moldova, powered by Russian gas that it gets for free. Russia maintains a massive ammunition depot and a 1,500-strong military force in Transnistria, but only about 70 of these soldiers are actually Russian. The rest are Transnistrians with dual Moldovan and Russian passports: for most, their role in Russian forces is just a job.

Why, then, does Moldova not seek to regain control of its territory? Over dinner in Chisinau, Nicu Popescu, Moldova's foreign minister and an old friend of mine, explained the predicament. The answer is counterintuitive yet logical. Why accelerate a political process that would distract Moldova from its EU reform path, while possibly trigger-

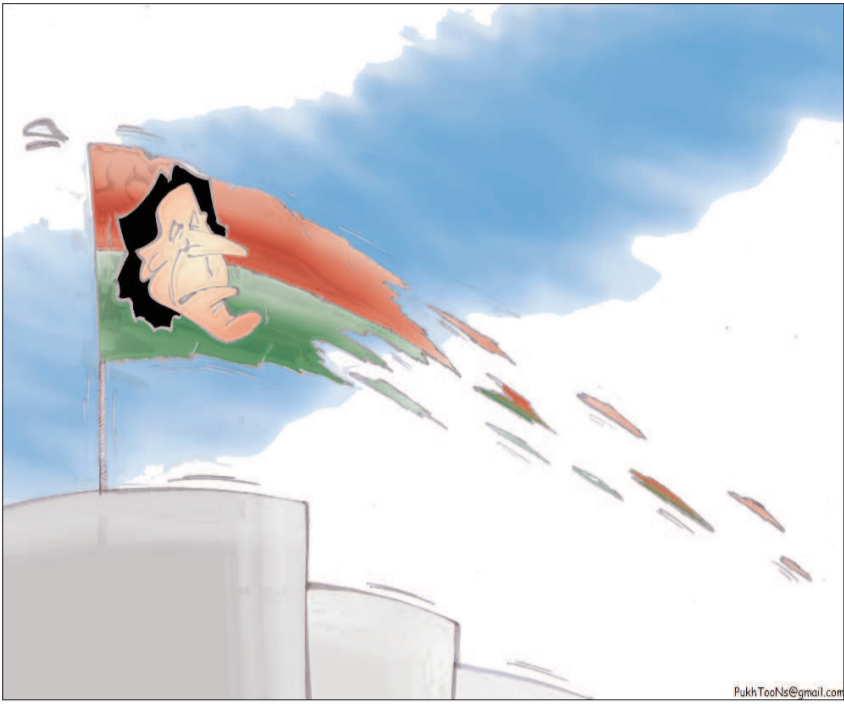
ing a Russian-backed coup or overt military response? Chisinau wants the eventual reintegration of Transnistria, but wants it to happen through the Moldovisation of Transnistria, not the other way around. All that said, Moldova's security situation remains precarious, with a tiny and underequipped army facing a persistent Russian threat. The country's economic challenge is almost as daunting. Lacking a strong industrial base, Moldova does not have an obvious path out of its unwanted ranking as Europe's poorest country. Even before the war, with an energy crisis that caused inflation to soar, annual income per head averaged at less than \$4,000, compared with the EU average of \$33,000. The cost of living crisis explains Sandu's waning popularity and could still bring her down in elections next year.

But for now, Moldovans have a government determined to make the best of its difficult predicament. There is no lack of will to deliver democratic reforms such as fighting corruption. Russian meddling and disinformation may be leveraging the very real economic hardship to whip up anti-government sentiment, but public support for EU membership is strong: thousands turned out for a pro-EU rally this week. What is lacking is capacity. Huge numbers of Moldovans of working age have left the country and, while some of the best and brightest do return, it requires a massive act of passion and commitment: a minister in Moldova earns less than a junior researcher at my institute (who, alas, is not well paid). Several of the people we met had given up comfortable jobs abroad to serve their country; I was in awe of their stories, yet saw how difficult it is to harness sufficient talent to lead the country to a brighter future. Moldova needs constant and consistent European sup-

port: a healthy middle ground between the hyped frenzy of concern when Russia's threats are in the spotlight, and the neglect when Moldova's small size and relative resilience drives the international community to focus elsewhere.

Next week, Chisinau will host a summit of leaders of the European Political Community, the new European club for EU member states, countries in the waiting room to join, and nations such as the UK and Norway which have chosen to remain outside. When I asked Sandu's foreign policy adviser what the dream outcome was, the answer was simple and compelling: demonstrating to our citizens (and to the Kremlin) that we're not alone. In Moldova, the mood is realistic, yet hopeful. Ukraine's resistance has secured Moldova's existence, and Moldovans are now sowing the seeds for their European future. As I think back to that hope I sensed in Chisinau, my mind drifts to Odesa, which is just 200km away and which I was able to visit a few days later. The Ukrainian Black Sea port is a long way from the frontline, yet it bears the outward signs of a country at war. The streets are emptier than Chisinau's and I spotted buildings damaged by a Russian drone attack. There is a nighttime curfew but security measures have been eased and an extended grain deal means Odesa's docks, strangled for months by a Russian naval blockade, are working again. As in Moldova, there is a mood of cautious optimism. In between meetings, I sneaked away to visit the family of Olga, a Ukrainian refugee who lived with me last year. Olga and her son Vlad are still in Rome, but her mother and grandma stayed in Ukraine. They look after Olga's garden now, which I had heard so much about from her. When I video-called Olga that day, I wanted her to see it: the cherry tree was in bloom.

The Guardian



Not your grandfather’s cold war

Rabah Arezki

AS tensions between China and the United States are escalating, there is much talk among scholars and commentators about a new Cold War between the two powers. US officials have also indicated that they are thinking of relations with Beijing in those terms. Yet, the situation in global politics and economy today is quite different from the post-World War II era, when the Soviet Union and the US faced off. Back then, countries were stuck between a rock and a hard place and had to choose a side.

Of course, there was the non-aligned movement, which promoted decolonisation and sought to stave off an escalation into a nuclear war between the USSR and the US, but many of the members of the movement still had to choose a camp to join. What sphere of influence a country would fall into was determined not only by ideology and the interests of political leaders, but also by threats and coercion coming from the great powers. Indeed, throughout the Cold War, Washington and Moscow backed a series of coups and insurgencies in Africa, Latin America and Asia, trying to sway countries into their spheres of influence. Today, the ability of superpowers to instigate regime change with impunity is considerably more limited. That is because they risk an immediate and massive backlash from global public opinion, which is amplified by technological interconnectedness and social media. Furthermore, China, unlike the Soviet Union, is not just a strategic rival to the US, but also an economic one. This means countries caught in the middle of the China-US rivalry would be able to "bargain" not just on defence but also on economic terms.

Globalisation also makes the choice of exclusive alignment much more costly. Today, choosing a side would mean turning one's back on economic gains from investment and trade with the other camp. That is why it is unlikely that history will repeat itself and deliver a cold war similar to the one in the previous century. The tensions between the US and China are playing out in a different way in the global arena today. Alignment, for example, is not exclusive, as states try to engage with one power in one sphere and with the rival in another. This means that the process of de-globalisation which some observers have warned about is unlikely to dominate in the coming years. Instead, what we are likely to see is re-globalisation. That is, globalisation is taking a new path that is defined by global interconnectedness due to technological advances and which is no longer solely driven by the pursuit of efficiency in trade and investment. In other words, the process which in the past created global supply chains and entangled great powers and smaller countries into tight trade relations is changing to reflect new global realities.

Tensions between the US and China and their attempts to isolate each other economically are influencing trade and investment decisions. Superpowers now have new considerations in approaching trade relations, such as the security of sup-

ply and rewards for partner countries. The US and its allies are arguing that outsourcing production in key industries to China and maintaining a high level of technological integration with Chinese companies are threatening national security. That is why they have started moving such production to other countries which may not provide the best conditions for it from an economic standpoint but which are nevertheless perceived as more politically dependable. Small and middle countries are, thus, being rewarded with investment and trade or even aid for helping with

Tensions between the US and China and their attempts to isolate each other economically are influencing trade and investment decisions. Superpowers now have new considerations in approaching trade relations, such as the security of supply and rewards for partner countries. The US and its allies are arguing that outsourcing production in key industries to China and maintaining a high level of technological integration with Chinese companies are threatening national security. That is why they have started moving such production to other countries which may not provide the best conditions for it from an economic standpoint but which are nevertheless perceived as more politically dependable. Small and middle countries are, thus, being rewarded with investment and trade or even aid for helping with this process of "decoupling" - or "derisking", as European Union Commission Chief Ursula von der Leyen recently called it.

this process of "decoupling" - or "derisking", as European Union Commission Chief Ursula von der Leyen recently called it. Instead of just offering lower taxes to foreign corporations and reducing the cost of doing business, smaller countries can now take advantage of these new geopolitical rents from the great powers, which have to spend much more political and economic capital to create new allies and keep old ones. Countries at the forefront of that re-globalisation include large emerging markets, exporters of fossil fuels and critical materials for the energy transition and digitalisation, and countries in geostrategic locations. Large emerging markets such as Brazil, India, Indonesia, Mexico and Turkey are flirting with both superpowers and making the most of their multi-layered relationships. Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, have long been exclusive allies of the US which was backstopping their security in exchange for energy supply. That exclusive relationship is shifting, not least, because the US has become energy independent. China, which has become a major importer of oil from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, is gaining influence in the region. Gulf countries are now courted by the two superpowers and that allows them to get political and economic favours from them more easily.

In Africa, countries, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have

including ports, but it also signed a new security pact with it, which could pave the way for a Chinese military base on its territory, considerably expanding its reach in the region. While some nations may benefit from China-US tensions, the world as a whole is likely to suffer. This is because re-globalisation will undoubtedly lead to a loss in economic efficiency and potentially exacerbate poverty. Trade and investment flows overall are likely to decrease, undermining the economies of many developing countries. This would curb wealth and job creation and affect millions of households.

Furthermore, re-globalisation will not mitigate the risks associated with the growing tensions between the US and China. The conflict in Ukraine, which some see as a proxy war between the US and China, and tensions over Taiwan reflect the dangers of their rivalry. The temptation of the two superpowers to weaken each other by provoking regional conflicts could heighten the risk of direct military confrontation.

In this respect, the new cold war resembles the old one, with the shadow of a global war and nuclear annihilation looming large. Lessons from history must be learned and the US and China need to establish effective mechanisms of de-escalation. Dialogue and trust building between the two superpowers could limit the economic and geopolitical fallout of their clash for the rest of the world.

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Climate scientists make their case but will the world listen?

Mohamed Chebaro

THE news that humanity will be pushed out of its so-called climate niche, in which our world has flourished, progressed and developed for millennia, is too alarming for policymakers everywhere to simply gloss over. It cannot be blamed on excessive scientific reading and analysis of data or simply discarded as a scaremongering effort by anti-fossil fuel lobbies. They cannot even claim that there are much more pressing geostrategic life and death issues to worry about. Instead, they must give credence and urgency to the need to deal with climate change, which all of us in the Global North and Global South alike are noticing every day.

Despite all the international action plans to reduce emissions and transition to a less polluting socioeconomic formula, it seems that our world is likely to surpass the key limit of 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels - as set out in the 2015 Paris Agreement - within the next five years. The World Meteorological Organization, in its latest report published last week, revealed that there is a 66 percent likelihood that the annual average near-surface global temperature between 2023 and 2027 will be more than 1.5 C above pre-industrial levels for at least one year. This would mean 2 billion people experiencing average annual temperatures above 29 C by 2030, a level that very few communities have experienced in the past.

This would only mean more fre-

quent severe and extreme weather, such as hurricanes, cyclones, heat waves, droughts and wildfires. These would likely affect the stability of ecosystems and the food available to us, as well as displacing an even larger number of people from their native lands, with all that that could mean for peace and stability in the world. The UN weather agency's latest series of revelations offered a recap and reminder as it opened its 19th congress in Geneva, which assembles all 193 of its member states. It is pressing the message that the current provisions and policies dealing with global warming are likely to expose humanity to life-threatening extreme heat by the century's end, as the planet is on track to be 2.7 C above pre-industrial levels by 2100. This will push more than 2 billion people outside their climate comfort zone, with chunks of the population in countries like India, Nigeria, Indonesia, the Philippines and Pakistan facing deadly heat levels if this scenario were to materialize. If the world were able to cap global warming at 1.5 C, it would reduce the number of those at risk to below half a billion.

Scientists have maintained that, even with the 1.2 C of warming seen to date, we have already amplified the intensity and duration of weather extremes felt around the world and the damage caused as a result. The threshold for "dangerous heat" used in the new findings is a mean annual temperature of 29 C. Across history,

human communities have been densest around two distinct mean annual temperatures - 13 C in temperate zones and 27 C in more tropical areas. Higher temperatures beyond those thresholds, scientists believe, could strongly be linked to greater mortality, reduced labor productivity and poorer crop yields. All this would likely come along with more armed conflicts and the spread of more infectious diseases.

I do not want to be a doom and gloom ambassador, but the facts around us are difficult to ignore. Punching the word "climate" into a search engine returned the following headlines: "Half the world's largest lakes and reservoirs are drying up," "1 billion people in 43 countries are threatened by cholera," "Glaciers are melting at dramatic speed, making saving them a lost cause," "The Tigris and Euphrates rivers are shriveling," "Centuries-old oasis in Morocco threatened with extinction due to climate change," and "From Somalia to Pakistan, the world's poorest are facing the harshest impacts of climate change." Despite all this, the world continues to brush aside the negative news, instead preferring to consume today and deal with the problem of sourcing our staples, water and other essentials tomorrow.

This is, of course, an accepted form of human instinct that seeks to shield itself from the negative and keep going even when faced with such colossal levels of adversity. But this should not make us

complacent or ready to favor the avoidance of global warming concerns and deny that the climate is the highest-ranking priority, even before national security, throughout the state system of today.

The world is surely not standing idle in its public and private efforts to mitigate the potential damage caused by a warming planet. Countries and corporations are meeting, talking and pledging, and some are executing ambitious plans to curb emissions, while others are banking on technology such as carbon capture or a less-damaging fossil fuel that can be used in cars and aviation.

Even food production, personal and public transport, heating and cooling and other areas that we take for granted are trying to adapt to mitigate the threats humanity will face from the drastic impacts of emissions, but clearly all that is not enough. The latest report from the World Meteorological Organization is a poignant reminder that maybe what has already been achieved and what is planned to be done in the future is not enough. What is needed is a global effort - by the rich and the poor, the West and the East, the conservative right and the radical left, and the believers in conspiracy theories, to mention just a few - to pause geostrategic discord and point-scoring in the interest of finding and implementing the roadmap necessary to transition to a cleaner and saner existence. But amid the divisions and competition among the powerful actors leading our world, our planet and species look increasingly vulnerable.

reduced.

President Xi also suggested that China and the five Central Asian countries create new joint high-tech projects in the fields of finance, agriculture, green and low-carbon development, medical services, healthcare and digital innovation. He said that while China will devise a plan for deepening scientific and technological cooperation with the Central Asia countries, including sharing its experience on eradicating poverty, it will also urge Chinese companies operating in the region to create more jobs. "To bolster our cooperation and Central Asian development, China will provide Central Asian countries with 26 billion yuan (\$3.8 billion) of financing support and grants," Xi said. The participation of the five Central Asian countries' presidents in the Xi'an summit has helped intensify collaboration. The heads of state of the five Central Asian countries decided to develop a comprehensive program for the economic development of Central Asia with an emphasis on strengthening regional trade and increasing exports to China. As for China, it can act as an investment driver facilitating economic cooperation and common development. It is of fundamental importance that the holding of summits will become regular. The participants agreed to hold the next summit in Kazakhstan in 2025, signaling the beginning of long-term development for the Central Asian countries.

The China Daily

Win-win plans bind China, Central Asia

Djoomart Otorbaev

THE China-Central Asia Summit in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, which concluded on Friday, laid a solid foundation for long-term cooperation among China and the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The summit unveiled a comprehensive plan for collaboration, from building infrastructure to expanding trade, from prioritizing high-quality products to strengthening people-to-people exchanges. And China said it is ready to coordinate its national development policies and plans with those of the five Central Asia countries and promote modernization and common prosperity.

Also, President Xi Jinping emphasized that "We will jointly foster a new paradigm of deeply complementary and high-level win-win cooperation." During the summit, Xi said Central Asia was "the center of the Eurasian continent, which is located at the crossroads connecting East and West, North and South", stressing that China intends to build a community with a shared future with Central Asia. That China accords priority to its special relationship with the five Central Asia countries, which are its close strategic neighbors, is no secret. This fact was evident when Xi proposed the Silk Road Economic Belt in Astana, Kazakhstan, in 2013, and chose Kazakhstan as his first foreign destination after three years of strict

COVID-19 prevention and control measures on his way to Uzbekistan to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit.

Not surprisingly, security issues were at the center of the discussions at the summit, with President Xi saying: "We must jointly pursue a global security initiative, resolutely oppose external interference in the internal affairs of the countries of the region and attempts to provoke 'color revolutions', maintain zero tolerance for the 'three forces' (extremism, separatism and terrorism), and strive to solve the dilemmas of regional security." He also said the Central Asian states' "sovereignty, security, independence, and territorial integrity" must be protected. The heads of state of the Central Asian countries were in complete agreement with Xi's statement, with Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev saying: "We invariably advocate that Central Asia be a space for creation, and we do not accept the transformation of the region into an arena of geopolitical confrontation." China has become the largest trading partner of the five Central Asian countries, with their trade volume exceeding \$70 billion last year. In comparison, Central Asia's trade with the European Union was about \$47.5 billion, with Russia \$42 billion and the United States \$4.4 billion in 2022. And with the China-Central Asia trade volume in the first quarter of 2023 exceeding \$24.8 bil-

lion, up 37.3 percent year-on-year, indications are that annual trade will touch another high this year.

President Xi has urged China and the Central Asia countries to increase energy trade, deepen cooperation in the energy sector, especially green energy and the peaceful use of nuclear power. Accordingly, it was announced at the Xi'an summit that the Central Asian countries will increase the supply of crude oil to China through the expanded Atyrau-Kenkiyak and Kenkiyak-Kumkol pipelines. Xi also said that building "Line D" of the China-Central Asia gas pipeline should become a priority for all sides. More important, Xi emphasized that China will support the building of an international transport corridor across the Caspian Sea and accelerate the construction of modern transport hubs for freight traffic between China and Europe. The transit time for goods from China to Europe through Central Asia and the Caspian Sea has already been reduced from 53 to 19-23 days. The goal now is to reduce it further to 14-18 days by the end of this year. As Kazakh Prime Minister Alikhan Smaïlov recently said, "the transit time through the territory of Kazakhstan has been reduced by two times - from 12 to six days, and we are striving to reduce it to five days by the end of the year." This means the efforts to reduce the transit time for goods from China to Europe has been further



SBP, FPCCI agree to jointly work on various socio-economic schemes

PESHAWAR (APP): State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Region have agreed to work with mutual understanding and cooperation on various socio-economic projects including small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

In this connection, a meeting was held between Provincial Coordinator of (FPCCI), Sartaj Ahmed Khan and Chief Manager SBP Ishtiaq Ahmed in this

regard here on Thursday. Deputy Chief Manager Sulaiman Khan and Loan Officer Saleemullah Khan also attended the meeting.

In the meeting, various aspects were discussed and suggestions were made keeping in view the economic development in the province. Both parties agreed for strengthening of Pak-Afghan trade relations and the promotion and support of SMEs and utilization of all available resources for the purpose.

Speaking on the occasion, the Coordinator

FPCCI, Sartaj Ahmed Khan said that the promotion of trade between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and its adjacent neighboring countries, especially Afghanistan, has become the need of the hour.

Apart from this, the creation of awareness was also considered necessary to ensure support in all aspects of discouraging the usury system and the importance of Islamic banking and other aspects related to economic development, in which small and medium enterprises are also

at the forefront.

Both parties also agreed to the proposal of conducting research based informative training sessions.

In order to achieve the above objectives, State Bank Chief Manager Ishtiaq Ahmed assured the FPCCI of all possible cooperation and mutual understanding.

Appreciating the proposal to move forward, he assured the FPCCI for support to implement the promotion of Islamic banking to eradicate usury from the business activities.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, Cussler, BMC Crystal and Ocean Hope carrying Containers, Palm oil and Chemicals, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Liquid Cargo Terminal and EngroVopak Terminal respectively.

Meanwhile, another ship, Spirit of Sea-trek with 57,000 tonnes of Coal also arrived at the outer anchorage of the port during the same period.

A total of 06 ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, Cussler, MSC United-VIII, Ocean Hope and Bulk Paraguay left the Port on Thursday morning & another ship, Afra Rossi is expected to sail on Thursday.

A cargo volume of 67,577 tonnes, comprising 25,117 tonnes imports Cargo and 42,460 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 1,926 Containers (422 TEUs Imports and 1,504 TEUs export) was handled at the port during the last 24 hours

There are 07 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Express Rome, Spirit of Sea-Trek and Sea Adore & another ship, Olita carrying Containers, Coal, Gas oil and Canola Seeds are expected to take berths at QICT, PIBT, FOTCO and FAP respectively on Thursday & another Containers ship, RDO Fortune is due to arrive at Port Qasim on Friday.

President SCCI resigns

PESHAWAR (APP): President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Muhammad Ishaq has tendered his resignation from his post as executive committee member.

Citing reasons for resignation in a letter issued to Secretary SCCI, Muhammad Ishaq said that he wanted to introduce reforms for betterment but some stakeholders hindered his efforts and initiatives.

"I am confident that my departure would serve as a wake-up call that hinders progress and positive change", he said in the letter.

Public Notice

It is published through this notice that I Muhammad Riaz S/O Khan Haider R/O Spin Khawry distt Hangu is the owner of plot no 893 size 5 Marla Registration No 8044 PHA Hangu Town Ship Tehsil & Distt Hangu appointed as Mr Shah Baraz S/O Mir Adam khan R/O Bandr Kala Landi Jalender Tehsil & District Bannu through special deed no 207 Bahi No 4 volume no 33 Dated 1/9/2022 which is registered in the office Hangu of Tehsildar/Sub Registrar The attorney Holder now wants to transfer the above said plot if any bank /Institution/Firm/person has any objection above the transfer he should contact the Hangu PHA office Kohat within 15 days in writing with proofs otherwise Plot will be transferred mad no objection will be accepted. Manager RFC Kohat PHA Hangu Township phone 0922-514515.

PSX's 100-index loses 87.65 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday witnessed a bearish trend losing 87.65 points, with a negative change of 0.21 per cent, closing at 41,029.68 against 41,117.33 points on the previous day.

A total of 125,344,925 shares valuing Rs 4,059 billion were traded during the day as compared to 105,572,761 shares valuing Rs 2,576 billion the previous day.

As many as 320 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 109 of them recorded gains and 181 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 30 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Gul Ahmed with 10,735,237 shares at Rs 22.93 per share, Pak Refinery with 8,370,529 shares at Rs 14.10 per share, and WorldCall Telecom with 8,105,061 shares at Rs 1.10 per share.

Blessed Tex. witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 27.75 per share price, closing at Rs 397.75, whereas

the runner-up was Faisal Spinning with a Rs 25.17 rise in its per share price to Rs 375.17.

Bata (Pak) witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 73.67 per share closing at Rs 1606.33, followed by Service Ind. Ltd with a Rs 13.32 decline to close at Rs 246.33.

Rupee gains Rs1.39 against Dollar

Pakistani rupee gained Rs1.39 against the US Dollar (USD) in the inter-bank trading on Thursday and closed at Rs285.74 against the previous day's closing of Rs287.13.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs309 and Rs312, respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs2.87 to close at Rs 306.64 against the last day's closing of Rs309.51, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen came down by 03 paisas and closed at Rs2.04, whereas a decrease of Rs3.11 was witnessed in the exchange rate

of the British Pound, which traded at Rs353.66 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs356.77.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by 38 paisas and 37 paisas to close at Rs77.81 and Rs76.19; respectively.

Gold prices decrease by Rs 1800 to Rs 236,000 per tola

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 1800 and was sold at Rs 236,000 on Thursday against its sale at Rs 237,800 the previous day, All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 1543 to Rs 202,332 from Rs 203,875, whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs 185,471 from Rs 186,886.

The price of per tola silver and that of ten-gram silver remained unchanged to close at Rs 2900 and Rs 2486.28 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market dipped by US\$ 21 to \$1961 against its sale at \$1982, the association reported.

UBL launches dedicated 'UBL Freelancer Account'

F.P. Report

KARACHI: UBL, one of Pakistan's leading bank, has announced the launch of 'UBL Freelancer Account', a new banking solution designed specifically for the growing population of freelancing individuals in the country. The product is envisioned to be a unique value proposition for freelancers, providing them with the freedom and flexibility to bank on their terms while ensuring that their financial needs are met.

As a current account with no initial deposit balance, no minimum balance requirement and simple account opening documentation, customers can conveniently open an account through the bank's website and branches across the country.

Customers can further enjoy various product benefits and preferential services

including free general banking services, discounted tax facilitation and availability of credit card. Discounts on co-working spaces - a pain point of freelancers - will also be offered. Upon maintaining an adequate balance, customers can further avail rate breaks on loans and complimentary insurance coverage for uncertain circumstances.

To provide customers with the tools and resources they need to succeed in their business, UBL is working with freelancing platforms to enhance networking opportunities among customers and maintain ongoing engagement with potential customers.

"The launch of UBL Freelancer Account highlights our commitment to understanding the evolving needs of our customers and offering innovative solutions," said Mr. Zia Jjaz,

Deputy CEO, UBL. "We recognize that freelancers have different banking needs than traditional businesses and salaried individuals. Therefore, we have designed this account to cater to their specific requirements and make banking easier and more accessible for them."

With the launch of the UBL Freelancer Account, the bank is further solidifying its position as a leader in the banking industry in Pakistan, and is committed to providing customers with a comprehensive suite of products to help them grow and succeed in their careers.

Providing dedicated services to this burgeoning population will further facilitate the freelance industry, bolster export remittance and spur sustainable economic development contributing to a more prosperous Pakistan.

Most markets down as US debt impasse sparks Fitch ratings warning

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Most Asian equities sank Thursday on fears of a US default as the struggle to hammer out a debt deal led Fitch to warn the country's gold-plated credit rating was at risk.

Nerves have been rattled across global markets owing to a lack of real headway in the standoff on Capitol Hill to increase the US borrowing limit so it can meet its debt obligations.

Talks earlier this week between President Joe Biden and Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy were described as "productive" but the two sides have made little progress since, with Republicans demanding spending cuts but Democrats calling for a "clean" increase.

Analysts said that while there is a broad

expectation an agreement will finally be reached -- likely at the last minute following a period of brinkmanship -- investors were growing increasingly agitated and risk-averse.

On Wednesday, the uncertainty led Fitch to put the country's AAA-ranked credit on "rating watch negative". The firm said the move "reflects increased political partisanship that is hindering reaching a resolution to raise or suspend the debt limit" before June 1, when the US Treasury Department warned the government will run out of money, triggering a default.

Most economists warn that the failure of the United States to pay its bills would likely have devastating economic consequences for markets and the global economy. "Fitch still

expects a resolution to the debt limit before the X-date," the ratings agency said in a statement.

"However, we believe risks have risen that the debt limit will not be raised or suspended before the X-date and consequently that the government could begin to miss payments on some of its obligations."

The announcement raises the possibility of a first ratings downgrade since S&P did so during a similar standoff in 2011. Tony Sycamore, of IG Australia, called the move "a bit of a slap" to both sides.

"It just adds urgency that these two guys get together, or these two parties get together because their lack of action is making the ratings agencies nervous, and I think the markets are very nervous as well," he added.



SIALKOT: Special Adviser to Chief Minister Punjab for Youth Affairs and Sports Department Punjab Wahab Riaz addressing Business community at SCCI.

Pak's total foreign reserves reach at \$9.73b

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 9,731.1 million while reserves held by the central bank reached at US\$ 4,193 million.

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that foreign reserves of the central bank decreased by US\$ 119 million to US\$ 4,193.0 million due to external debt repayment in the week ended on May 19.

Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at US\$ 5,538.1 million, it added.

In the previous week ending on May 12, total liquid foreign reserves held by the country were US\$ 9,937.5 million. Among them, foreign reserves held by the central bank were US\$ 4,311.9 million while net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were US\$ 5,625.6 million.

Australian wool industry boosted

CANBERRA (APP): Australia's wool industry has welcomed increased demand in the Chinese market, an Aussie wool enterprise head said.

John Roberts, chief executive of Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), has returned to Australia after "a productive week" in China, meeting senior industry figures in Shanghai, Zhangjiagang, Tongxiang, Nanjing and Beijing.

He said that increased demand for wool and a growing appetite for locally-made brands in China is expected to drive an increase in the amount exported from Australia to China.

Roberts said it was important to go to China for the first time in almost four years because right throughout COVID-19, the partners were still able to support Australian wool growers and the domestic trade more broadly.

"And it was important to get up there and acknowledge that and thank the Chinese processing sector on behalf of our stakeholders," he said in a recent media release.

There was an underlying confidence in China and a quiet determination to expand in China, he added.

According to Roberts, Chinese consumers are buying local brands and designers, a massive shift from 10 to 15 years ago.

The chief executive said there had been major changes in both consumer and industry attitudes when it comes to environmental issues as well.

"There has been a massive shift towards traceability because there's been so much online buying, but the concept of sustainability in China has escalated at a rate I hadn't quite expected," he said.

"Every plant I went to has been updating, and I've never seen so many solar panels, and they weren't there four years ago. Overall, the expansion in plant capacity is incredible."

AWI is a not-for-profit enterprise that conducts research, development, and marketing along the worldwide supply chain of Australian wool to increase the long-term profitability of woolgrowers.

"Our trade-to-trade relationship is rock solid and always has been," he said.

Murtaza assures to reactivate CIP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Syed Murtaza Mahmud Thursday assured to reactivate Cutlery Institute of Pakistan (CIP) through Technology Up-gradation and Skill Development Company within the next 6 to 8 months in order to support the industry.

He said this while in a meeting with a delegation of Pakistan Cutlery Association Wazirabad headed by its Chairman Shakeel Azam, said a press release issued here.

He said that all possible support including required certification and training would be extended to the industry for enhancing exports to UK. He asked the delegation to submit a viable plan for getting support for establishing warehouses in the European Union and Saudi Arabia.

"Their issue of raw material availability to the cutlery industry will be addressed in a coming meeting of Steel manufacturers", the

federal minister added.

The minister maintained that National Productivity Organization would provide experts for arranging shop floors and improving general management practices of the industry.

The minister was also briefed about a study for enhancing the competitiveness of the cutlery sector conducted by the Engineering Development Board and Pakistan Business Council jointly.

The purpose of the study was to propose policy recommendations after a detailed review of the literature and consultation with the members of the cutlery industry.

Earlier, the minister was briefed about the issues the cutlery industry is confronting at local and international levels.

The minister was informed that the manual process and low technological level in manufacturing units, unavailability of high-quality local raw material (stainless steel)

and reliance on imports, unavailability of laser sharpening techniques and reliance on manual methods, liquidity and working capital issues due to delay in sales procedures, shortage of skilled labour, non-utilization of subsidized financing schemes, lack of marketing efforts i.e. reluctance of industry to venture into new markets and hesitation of banks to approve LCs in non-traditional markets, branding issues due to the absence of stamping of "Made-in Pakistan" on exported products, non-availability of ceramics material, high rates of taxation on electricity and high regulatory duty on steel scrap are the main barriers for the industry to flourish.

The federal minister assured the delegation to resolve their issues at a priority and such interactions with them in the future. Their proposals and our efforts will bring positive results to improve the state of affairs on the industrial front, he told.

Seafood valuing \$406.090m exported

ISLAMABAD (APP): Seafood exports from the country during first 10 months of current financial year grew by 16.22 percent as compared the exports of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period form July-April, 2022-23, over 174,703 metric tons of fish and fish preparation valuing \$406.090 million exported as compared the exports of 131,776 metric tons worth \$349.429 million of same period of last year, according the data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

Meanwhile, country earned \$346.337 million by exporting about 79,687 metric tons of meat and meat preparations as against the exports of 49,417 metric tons costing \$284.699 million of same period last year.

The exports of meat and meat products from the country during the period under review grew by 21.65 percent as compared the exports of the same period last year.

However, the exports of rice from the country decreased by 11.17 percent as about 3.258 million metric tons of rice valuing

\$1.822 million exported during last 10 months of current financial year as compared the exports of \$2.051 billion of the same period last year.

Food commodities valuing over \$4.277 billion exported during 10 months of current financial year as compared the exports of \$4.457 billion of corresponding period of last year. During the period from July-April, 2022-23, the exports of food group from the country decreased by 4.04 percent as compared the same period of last year.

On the other hand food group imports into the country grew by 0.19 percent as it was recorded at \$7.762 billion as compared the imports of \$7.747 billion of same period last year.

In last 10 months, the imports of dry fruit and nuts decreased by 44.80 percent as it was recorded at \$32.114 million as compared the imports of \$58.180 million, where as tea imports reduced by 12.16 percent and it was recorded at \$467.640 million as against the import of \$532.390 million of corresponding period of last year.

Tokyo's Nikkei index rebounds to close higher

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo's key Nikkei index ended higher on Thursday, helped by sound earnings from chip giant Nvidia, despite the lack of progress on US debt ceiling negotiations.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index added 0.39 percent, or 118.45 points, to 30,801.13 while the broader Topix index slipped 0.29 percent, or 6.25 points, to 2,146.15. The dollar stood at 139.67 yen, against 139.43 yen in New York on Wednesday.

On Wall Street overnight, the Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 0.8 percent while the broad-based S&P 500 shed 0.7 percent and the tech-rich Nasdaq index declined 0.6 percent.

Investors were fretting over the lack of signs of a deal on the debt ceiling in Washington, even as the June 1 deadline approaches.

In Japan, the market started with losses following the Wall Street falls. But shares in US chip company Nvidia soared more than 25 percent as it "reported a better-than-expected earnings report after the US closing bell," which prompted rallies in chip-related shares in Tokyo, IwaiCosmo Securities said in a note.

Vietnamese automaker, Chinese partner reveal first mini electric vehicle

HANOI (APP): Vietnamese car manufacturer TMT Motors unveiled on Wednesday the first flagship micro electric car, the Wuling HongGuang MINI EV, marking its debut in the local industry of electric vehicles with what has been known as the world's best-selling microcar for three years in a row, TMT Motors said in an online statement.

"Externally, the first Wuling HongGuang MINI EV, featuring color-coordinated peach pink and white roof, has been meticulously finished with details," said TMT Motors.

The mini electric car has been assembled at the existing facilities of TMT Motors in the northern province of Hung Yen, about 40 km southeast of the capital of Hanoi, which currently has an annual capacity of 30,000 vehicles and is set to double the capacity to 60,000 units per year, the Vietnamese automaker added.

The electric car is the brainchild of SAIC-GM-Wuling Automobile, a joint venture between Chinese automakers SAIC Motor and Guangxi Automobile Group, and U.S. firm General Motors.

TMT Motors and the SAIC-GM-Wuling joint venture in February signed a strategic cooperation agreement, in which TMT Motors has the exclusive authority to manufacture, assemble and distribute Wuling mini models in Vietnam. The Chinese partner is committed to supplying components and auto parts to ensure quality and delivery.

"The Hongguang MINI EV is set to play a role in opening the mini electric vehicle segment in Vietnam," TMT Motors chairman Bui Van Huu said at the signing ceremony.



In brief

Asia Cup fate to be decided during IPL

LAHORE (INP): The fate of this year's Asia Cup, which may determine Pakistan's participation in the World Cup in India, will be decided on the sidelines of Sunday's Indian Premier League (IPL) final in Ahmedabad, Asian Cricket Council (ACC) President Jay Shah said. Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), host of the eight-team Asia Cup in September, has offered a "hybrid" model to stage some matches at a neutral venue after India refused to tour the country. Owing to their soured political relations, bilateral cricket between India and Pakistan remains suspended and they play each other only in multi-team events. Pakistan have threatened to boycott the World Cup in India in October-November should they be forced to stage the entire Asia Cup in another country, which could be the United Arab Emirates. Shah said cricket chiefs from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan would attend the IPL final in Ahmedabad on Sunday, where a final decision would be taken. "We will hold discussions with them for outlining the future course of action in relation to Asia Cup 2023," Shah, also the secretary of the powerful Indian board, said in a brief statement on Thursday.

Rahis Nabi rejoins Football team

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Former Burnley and West Brom youngster Rahis Nabi has rejoined the Pakistan men's football team for the upcoming international events, the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) confirmed on Thursday. The 24-year-old midfielder, who has previously represented teams like Burnley and West Brom, has also played for the Men in Green in the World Cup Qualifiers in 2018. Taking to Twitter, the PFF confirmed Rahis Nabi will represent the national team in upcoming events. "RAHIS NABI IS BACK!" wrote PFF. "The England born midfielder who has represented the likes of Burnley and West Brom at youth level is all set to represent the Shaheens. Rahis has previously represented Pakistan at the World Cup Qualifiers in 2018," the PFF added. Before Rahis Nabi, former England Youth captain Easah Suliman and former Manchester United youngster Otis Khan were also cleared to represent Pakistan at the international level after FIFA approved the request made by the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) to change their national eligibility. Aston Villa academy graduate Easah Suliman is poised to turn out for the Pakistan football side at next month's South Asian Football Federation Championship (SAFF). It is pertinent to mention that the Pakistan men's team will make their return to the SAFF Championship after missing out on the previous two editions. The Shaheens have been drawn with India alongside invitee Kuwait and Nepal in group A. The SAFF Championship will take place from June 21 to July 4 in India. Pakistan will collide with the host nation India in the tournament opener in Bengaluru, before facing Kuwait and Nepal. Pakistan's last encounter with India was also at the SAFF Championship, back in 2018, with India winning it 3-1.

Yasin wins Mr Pakistan title at 34th National Games in Quetta



QUETTA (INP): Representing the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda), renowned bodybuilder Yasin Khan has won Mr Pakistan Olympic 2023 title during the ongoing 34th National Games in Quetta. Competing with the top bodybuilders from across the country, the Peshawar-born athlete secured the first position. Yasin, at the final round of the event, had a competition with Karachi's Fida Baloch. Yasin was voted as the best poser which earned him the coveted title. "It's a very proud moment for me," the champion bodybuilder said while speaking to media. He said overall the competition was quite tough and he had to work really hard to reach

this stage. He also thanked to his parents, trainers and friends for their all-out support extended to him.

The people, as the won the title, lifted him on their shoulders and took a round of bodybuilding arena. He said he didn't expect this much love from the people of Quetta. He was grateful to the people for their support and appreciation.

Yasin, has won several accolades previously, aims to represent the country at the international level. He said he wanted to do much more than this for his country. He sought support of the government for bodybuilders. He said bodybuilders needed financial support to represent Pakistan in the world.

Punjab athletes take their tally to 26 medals

LAHORE (APP): Showing outstanding performance, Punjab sports teams have so far won 26 medals, including six silver and 20 bronze medals in 34th National Games in Quetta, according to a release issued on Thursday.

According to the information made available here

by the Sports Board Punjab, overall Punjab athletes added eight medals including two silver and six bronze to their National Games medals tally.

Punjab judo team won four medals including two silver and two bronze. Mohammad Ehtsham and Bano Butt won silver medals in -60kg and -44kg weight categories. While Atrooba and Adnan Maqbool won bronze medals in -48kg and -50kg weight categories, respectively.

In karate, Punjab's Khadija won bronze medal. In table tennis, Punjab team beat Pak Navy by 3-0 in round match on Thursday. In first match, Mohsin Raza beat Asim 11-8, 11-8, 5-11, 11-3. In second match, Awaiss Hassan beat Ramzan 11-6, 11-7, 11-7.

In third match, Zain Pervaiz beat Talha 11-6, 11-7, 11-7. In taekwondo, Punjab players Samra Zafar and Aqsa Asif clinched bronze medals in -49kg and -73kg weight categories, respectively. In wushu, Punjab's Ajmal, Mehreen, Abdullah, Shaheen and Junaid reached the semifinals in National Games. In basketball, Punjab team defeated Navy with the

margin of 66-63.

Wapda wins men, women team tennis titles

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Wapda emerged victorious in both men and women's tennis team events of the 34th National Games, stunning Pakistan Army in the showdowns at the PTF Tennis Complex, Garden Avenue, here on Thursday.

In the men's final, Wapda beat Army 2-1 to claim the gold medal.

Pakistan No.1 Aqeel Khan provided Wapda a solid start by beating young Abdullah Adnan 6-2, 6-1.

Army's Huzaifa Abdul Rehman then evened the tie by beating Muhammad Abid 6-0, 6-0. In the deciding doubles, seasoned Aqeel and Shahzad Khan defeated Huzaifa Abdul Rehman and Abdullah Adnan. Wapda's women's team in their corresponding final triumphed over Army 2-0 to clinch the gold medal.

Sarah Mahboob Khan edged passed upcoming Amna Ali Qayum 6-2, 6-3, while Ushna Suhail staved off challenge from Mahin Aftab to win a three-set tough contest 6-2, 4-6, 7-5.



Babar Azam visits Zalmi Talent Hunt in Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Zalmi and Pakistan captain Babar Azam arrived in Peshawar to watch the Zalmi Talent Hunt Program being continued at Hayatabad Cricket Stadium on Thursday.

Babar Azam was received by the Peshawar Zalmi management soon after his arrival at Hayatabad Sports Complex to watch talent hunt. On arrival in Peshawar, Babar Azam was presented with a traditional Pashtoon "Qula" Turban and was enthusiastically welcomed. The Peshawar Zalmi Talent Hunt program has been going on for three days in Peshawar wherein more than 10,000 young cricketers were registered in Zalmi Talent Hunt.

After the talent hunt, Peshawar Zalmi has formed four teams consisting of young cricketers, who were short-listed from the two-day open trials. The selection committee headed by Inzamam-ul-Haq with former fast bowler M Akram, Kamran Akmal, Fayyaz Khan were the members.

Soon after short-listed four teams, league matches were also conducted and among them the best and final twenty players were selected. The short-listed 20 players would be sent to National Cricket Academy and would be trained and coached under qualified coaches.

Haseebullah, Imran, Omair half-centuries keep Shaheens alive



HARARE (Monitoring Desk): Half-centuries by Haseebullah, Imran Butt and Omair Bin Yousuf and three-fers from Qasim Akram and Shahnawaz Dahani helped Pakistan Shaheens beat Zimbabwe Select by 177 runs in the fifth one-day of the sixth-match series at the Harare Sports Club in Harare.

This was Shaheens' second win in the one-day series as the hosts lead the series 3-2. The final match of the series will be played at the same venue on Saturday, 27 May.

Chasing 315 to win, the hosts were never in a position to win the game as they continued to lose wickets at regular intervals and were dismissed for 137 in 31.4 overs. Only wicketkeeper-batter Clive Madande top-scored for his side, scoring an unbeaten 41 off 46, hitting five fours.

For Shaheens, right-arm fast Dahani and right-arm off-spinner Qasim bagged

three wickets each. Left-arm spinner Mehran Mumtaz took two wickets for 36 from seven overs.

Earlier, after being put into bat, Shaheens scored 314 for six in their allotted 50 overs. Making three changes to their side in the must-win game, Shaheens got off to a great start as opening batters Imran Butt (64, 65b, 7x4s, 1x6) and Haseebullah (62, 77b, 9x4s) had a 139-run stand between them. After the departure of Haseebullah and Imran in the 24th over, Omair and Rohail Nazir stitched a 55-run partnership for the third wicket.

Soon after Rohail's (16, 24b, 1x4) departure, Shaheens lost three wickets for 32 runs as they were in a spot of bother with 250 for six in 42.3 overs. At that crucial juncture, well-settled Omair was joined by Aamir Jamal and the pair knitted an unbroken 64 runs for the seventh wicket.

Player of the match

Omair continued his rich vein of form with an undefeated 89 off 87 deliveries, having already amassed two centuries and a half-century on the tour before today's match. Aamir played a bright cameo as he scored an unbeaten 24 off 18 balls, hitting two fours and a six.

For Zimbabwe Select, Brandon Mavuta took two wickets for 39 from eight overs.

Scores in brief: Pakistan Shaheens beat Zimbabwe Select by 177 runs

Pakistan Shaheens 314-6, 50 overs (Omair Bin Yousuf 89 not out, Imran Butt 64, Haseebullah 62; Brandon Mavuta 2-39)

Zimbabwe Select 137 all out, 31.4 overs (Clive Madande 41 not out; Qasim Akram 3-9, Shahnawaz Dahani 3-29, Mehran Mumtaz 2-36)

Player of the match – Omair Bin Yousuf (Pakistan Shaheens).

Pakistan to host WBC World Youth title fight next month

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani boxer and Asian boy Usman Wazir would be defending his WBC World Youth title in the fight to be held in Gilgit Baltistan on June 24.

Usman also along with the whole nation was observing 'Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada-e-Pakistan', on Thursday paid tributes to the martyrs who laid their lives while protecting the motherland Pakistan.

"We are able to sleep comfortably at night in our homes as Pakistan Army is guarding the borders of the country. I dedicate all my achievements to the courageous heroes (Shuhada), who have made ultimate sacrifices for the country. All titles won by me till now are dedicated after the martyrs of Pakistan Army," he said in a press conference here.

Wazir said our country could not prosper without Pakistan Army and condemned the tragic and heart-rending May 9 incidents which took place when Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) violent protests broke out in the country, following arrest of its Chairman Imran Khan.



Meanwhile coming to his fight, Wazir said the World Youth Title fight would be held in Gilgit on June 24 with the support of Pakistan Army and GB Government. He said it was his desire when he became the World Youth Boxing Champion, that Pakistan should also host a major international event.

"The World Youth Title Fight will be held in Pakistan for the first time in which twelve countries will participate besides

Pakistan. I will have a tough competition against Tanzania's opponent in the title fight. Boxers from England, Bangladesh, Iran, Philippines, Turkey, Malaysia, Afghanistan, UAE, Indonesia, Germany, Cameroon and Tanzania will feature in the event, he said.

To a question, Wazir said national boxers from all provinces would also be seen in action in the extravaganza. Two women fights were also planned in the Championship.

Djokovic and Alcaraz in same half of French Open draw



PARIS (AFP/APP): Novak Djokovic could face world number one Carlos Alcaraz in the semi-finals of the French Open after both players were placed in the same half of the draw on Thursday.

Djokovic is chasing a record 23rd men's Grand Slam title in the absence of the injured Rafael Nadal, who will miss the tournament at Roland Garros for the first time since his 2005 title-winning debut.

The third-seeded Djokovic, Roland Garros champion in 2016 and 2021, meets 114th-ranked Aleksandar Kovacevic of the US in the first round in Paris -- the first French Open since 1998 without Nadal or the now retired Roger Federer. The 24-year-old Kovacevic is making his Grand Slam

main draw debut.

Djokovic, who turned 36 on Monday, has been bothered by a recurrence of a right elbow injury which has disrupted his clay-court season. He failed to go beyond the last eight at any of the three events he played on clay this spring, losing his number one spot to Alcaraz.

Djokovic has also fallen behind Daniil Medvedev in the rankings after the Russian succeeded him as Italian Open champion last weekend. US Open champions Alcaraz and Medvedev both start their Roland Garros campaigns against a qualifier or lucky loser.

Alcaraz is also on track to play 2021 French Open runner-up Stefanos Tsitsipas in the quarter-finals. Reigning women's champion Iga Swiatek begins her title defence against Spain's Cristina Bucsa, the world number 67 who was beaten by the Pole in the third round of this year's Australian Open.

The top-ranked Swiatek, bidding to become the first back-to-back women's champion at the French Open in 16 years, is coming off a high injury which forced her to

retire in Rome. She is seeded to meet 2022 runner-up Coco Gauff in the quarter-finals and could face Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina, last week's Italian Open winner, in the last four.

"This is my favourite tournament. I always get this extra motivation to practise harder here. I'm really excited to be here," Swiatek said during the draw ceremony.

Aryna Sabalenka, who won her maiden Grand Slam crown in Melbourne, plays Marta Kostyuk of Ukraine in round one. Sabalenka has never got beyond the third round in Paris despite making at least the semi-finals at all of the other three majors.

Third seed Jessica Pegula has a tricky opening match against fellow American and 2022 Australian Open finalist Danielle Collins, while Rybakina gets a qualifier or lucky loser first up.

Ons Jabeur, seeded seventh, is a potential quarter-final opponent for Rybakina, who defeated the Tunisian in the 2022 Wimbledon final. Jabeur also finished runner-up to Swiatek at the US Open.

Diana takes four wickets as Blasters beat Challengers



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Diana Baig starred in Blasters' win over Challengers on Thursday as the right-arm seamer took four wickets for 20 runs at the State Bank Ground. Challengers, after opting to bat, were bowled out for 117 in 40 overs and Blasters chased down the target in 35.3 overs with six wickets in hand.

Openers Javeria Khan (37 off 55) and Javeria Rauf (20 off 49) stitched 56 runs for the first wicket for Challengers, but Diana-

inspired Blasters fought back and sent half of the opposition's batting back in the pavilion with only 88 runs on board.

Challengers slipped from 75 for one to 88 for five -- losing four wickets for only 13 runs -- as Ayesha Bilal and Ayesha Zafar returned three for 25 and two for 16.

Blasters faced early breakthroughs and were two down for 22, but a solid third wicket stand of 56 runs between Muneeba Ali (35 off 67) and Dua Majid (20 off 48) paved way for a successful run chase.

Iram Javed was unbeaten on 25 off 37 and Saba Nazir made 10 not out of 16.

In the third match of the seven-match tournament, Dynamites will take on Challengers on Saturday.

Scores in brief: Challengers 117 all out, 40 overs (Javeria Khan 37, Javeria Rauf 20; Diana Baig 4-20, Ayesha Bilal 3-25, Ayesha Zafar 2-16)

Blasters 121-4, 35.3 overs (Muneeba Ali 35, Iram Javed 25 not out, Dua Majid 20; Noreen Yaqub 2-18)

Player of the match – Diana Baig (Blasters).

Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt KP Men Hockey League begins

PESHAWAR (APP): Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif Youth Talent Hunt Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Men Hockey League got underway here at Astro-Turf of the historical Islamia College Peshawar on Thursday.

Director Distance Studies University of Peshawar Dr. Noor Zada was the chief guest who formally inaugurated the Provincial League. Secretary KP Hockey Association Haji Hidayat Ullah, Coordinator for Hockey international player Waqar Ahmad, Technical Judges Sajid Khan and international Zia ur Rehman Binori, and Haroon Khan, representative of the Higher Education Commission, players officials and a large number of spectators were also present. Before the start of the matches on the opening day, the teams from Swat (Swat Green and Swat White), Bannu, Mujeeb, Faizan, international Saeed Ullah and Saqib Ameer played while for Swat goal-keeper Zeeshan Abbas saved three goal-scoring attempts.

Yasir Ali, Sharjeel, Mujeeb ur Rehman, Shah Fahad, Umair and Nawab Ali played well but failed to

Hazara, Bannu and Peshawar and after trials one team each qualified for the Provincial League. Swat Region has given two teams on the request to Higher Education Commission (HEC). In the first match Bannu recorded a one-sided victory against Swat Green by 4-0. In the 23rd minute star full-back of Bannu Hassan Ullah gave a key lead through an excellent penalty corner conversion by making 1-0 lead.

His excellent push did not give rival goal-keeper any chance to stop and in the 27th minute he scored another goal through penalty corner conversion to make the tally 2-0. Nadeem Khan in the 47th and Saqib Junior in the 57th minute were the goal scorers through field attempts. Thus Bannu won the match by 4-0.

For Bannu goal-keeper Kaleem, forwards Zeeshan, Afanan, Manan, Mujeeb, Faizan, international Saeed Ullah and Saqib Ameer played while for Swat goal-keeper Zeeshan Abbas saved three goal-scoring attempts.

score any goal.

In the second match Mardan beat Swat White 5-1 in another one-sided match. For Mardan Huzaifa, Aimal, Kashif, Shahzeb and Hamza scored one goal each. The other four goals scored on the field attempt while full-back Hamza scored on the penalty corner conversion while for Swat Muhammad Ilyas reduced the margin through field attempts.

In the last match of the day's proceedings, super-fit Peshawar defeated Hazara by 3-0 in a one-sided match. Peshawar fully dominated the proceedings and did not allow Hazara Region to strike back. Hazara got three consecutive penalty corners in the 7th, 9th and 13th minute of the first quarter but failed to score any goal. For Peshawar full-back Saleem Khan scored two goals in the 16th and 54th minute on penalty corners while Daniyal scored the third goal on the field attempt in the 58th minute.

Murad Ali, Subhab Khan, Haroon Rashid supervised the matches while Sajid Khan and Zia Ur Rehman Benori acted as field judges.



In brief

ANF foils two bids to smuggle drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in two operations managed to foil two bids to smuggle drugs and recovered 600 grams heroin and 48 heroin-filled capsules, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. In an operation, ANF recovered 600 grams heroin from a parcel booked at Islamabad GPO for Birmingham. In another operation at Lahore International Airport, 48 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the possession of a Jeddah-bound passenger, resident of Sargodha, going on SV-739. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.

IRSA releases 177,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 177,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 205,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1427.52 feet and was 29.52 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 68,600 cusecs and 60,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1117.95 feet, which was 67.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 57,400 cusecs and 38,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 68,700, 61,100, 42,100 and 14,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 43,500 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 24,600 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

AIOU confirms BA, B.Ed admissions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has completed the process of admission confirmation for BA (Associate Degree) and B.Ed programs offered in Semester Spring 2023. AIOU has informed the students about the admission confirmation through mobile SMS. Students can also check their admission status at <https://fmbp.aiou.edu.pk/application/index.php>, a press release on Thursday said. Students who have applied online for admission in Semester Spring 2023 but have not yet received the admission confirmation, are directed to visit the online portal link. In case of any objection, upload the required documents by 31st May 2023. Any delay in uploading of documents will result in denial of admission which will be the sole responsibility of the candidate.

Police arrest 8 drug peddlers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers and bootleggers, conducted raids in different areas and rounded up eight accused on recovery of over 1390 grams charras and 20 liters liquor, said a police spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that Pirwadhai and Wah Cantt police rounded up Qasim, Amir, Idrees and Ali Ahmed and recovered 1390 grams charras from their possession. Similarly, Westridge, Naseerabad and Kahuta police conducted raids and arrested Muntaz, Mehtab, Zafraan and Waqas and recovered 20 liters liquor from their possession. Separate cases have been registered against all accused while further investigations are underway.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visited Sardar Ayaz Sadiq's residence to offer condolences on the death of Sardar Mehmood Sadiq, elder brother of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq.

Kundi welcomes PTI MP in PPP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday welcomed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Dr Haider Ali for joining Pakistan People's Party (PPP). Kundi in a press conference here while observing the Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada-e-Pakistan (Day of Honouring the Martyrs of Pakistan) said, "We stand with the families of the Shuhada."

"I on behalf of the party and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and former president Asif Ali Zardari welcome Ali to the party which top priority is to give respect to everyone. PPP workers have always stood with their leaders through

thick and thin," he said.

Commenting on dialogues with PTI, he said, "If we look at Former President Asif Ali Zardari's previous interviews, he has always said that PTI is not a political party."

"Imran Khan is not a political leader but a sportsman. PTI will fall through its weight only and we can see it today," he quoted Zardari as saying.

"When an assassination attempt was made on Shaheed Benazir Bhutto in Karachi at Karsaz the very next day she was visiting the homes of PPP leaders to inquire about their health. This is the true identity of a leader," he said.

Kundi said PTI was just restricted to Zaman Park and their leaders were nowhere to be seen now. "The way forward to the

political crisis is free and fair elections. PPP's stance has been loud and clear that whichever party gets the highest polls should run the country. All institutions in the country should remain within their constitutional limits and work," he said.

He said even though the times were, PPP had never thought of defaming or damaging any organ of the state or institution in the country. "Zardari spent 4,915 days in prison, Faryal Talpur 187 days, Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah 765 and the list goes on from Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) leaders Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz, Hamza Shehbaz etc. On the other hand, PTI leaders cannot even stand a day in prisons," he said.

STO visits Taxila Facilitation Center to check licensing facilities

RAWALPINDI (APP): Senior Traffic Officer (STO) Rawalpindi, Munir Ahmed Hashmi here on Thursday paid a surprise visit to Taxila Facilitation Center and inspected the licensing facilities.

The STO while talking to the citizens inquired about the licensing facilities being provided by the traffic police.

He said that City Traffic Police (CTP) were taking all possible steps to facilitate the citizens according to the vision of Deputy Inspector General Traffic, Punjab Mirza Faran Baig.

The CTP were providing the licensing facilities 24/7 to the residents of Rawalpindi district, Munir Ahmad said. The citizens having original ID cards could avail the licensing facilities from the nearest facilitation center.

All the facilities related to licensing were being provided to the residents of Taxila and its surroundings at their doorstep, he added. The response time of the personnel and the whole process of the driving test were being monitored through CCTV cameras, the STO said adding, merit and transparency in issuance of driving licenses is being ensured through online sign test and video automated system.

Construction halts pedestrian bridge access

ISLAMABAD (APP): The widening of the Grand Trunk Road, famously GT Road, near Al-Shifa Eye Trust, has halted pedestrians' access to the overhead bridge, causing problems for children, women and the elderly especially patients visiting the healthcare facility. Tariq Mahmood, a local resident near Al-Shifa Eye Trust Hospital told APP that late Lieutenant General (R) Jahan Dad Khan had constructed a well-designed overhead bridge in 1988 for the local masses and the patients visiting one of the largest charity hospitals of the division.

He added that the bridge was used by local residents and hospital patients as an efficient facility to cross one of the busiest highways to reach their destinations along the GT Road. Tariq said now that the NHA was widening the road, and the bridge was temporarily closed to pedestrians resulting in huge difficulty for children, the elderly and hospital patients to cross the road.

Int'l Partners Support Group to be instrumental in securing climate finance: Sherry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman on Thursday hoped that the International Partners Support Group would be instrumental in securing financial and other commitments for the implementation of climate resilient projects in the coming years. She made these remarks while chairing the meeting of International Partners Support Group attended by a large number of bilateral and multilateral development partners and senior diplomats including ambassadors and high commissioners.

Sherry Rehman welcomed the distinguished participants and expressed gratitude for their continued support and commitment to Climate Resilient Pakistan.

Sherry Rehman highlighted the creation and purpose of the International Partners Support Group as a forum to facilitate coordinated implementation of the

Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Framework (4RF).

She also appreciated the role of UNDP as the secretariat of the International Partners Support Group.

The officials and representatives of the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank, USAID, IMF, UNDP and other international organizations also participated in the second meeting. Federal Minister of Law and Justice, the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Finance and Revenue, Secretary of Ministry of Economic Affairs, Secretary of the Ministry of Planning, Secretary of Poverty Alleviation, officials of the Ministry of Finance and Planning were also present on this occasion.

The International Partners Support Group is a 41-member group comprising federal ministries and international development partners.

Govt disburses Rs 91.636 for various water sector schemes so far

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government had released an amount of Rs 91.636 billion for various water resources schemes under the annual Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) so far in the current fiscal year 2022-23.

According to the official data issued by the Planning Commission, the government had specified a sum of Rs 97.559 billion for various projects in PSDP 2022-23. Out of the total release amount, the local component stood at Rs 78.57 billion while the foreign aid component was Rs 13.06 billion. A sum of Rs 59.97 billion had been spent on various water-related projects so far. The Ongoing schemes included 13 hydel and 61 water sector projects, whereas the new projects were only 13 in total.

The allocation of ongoing hydel projects included Rs 55,383 million for Dasu Hydropower Project (2,160 MW), Rs 12,083 Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (696 MW), and Rs 12,000 mil-

lion for Tarbela Fifth Extension Hydro Power Project (1,410 MW).

Among the ongoing water sector projects, Rs 20,000 million each was allocated for Diamer Basha Dam Project and K-4 Greater Water Supply Scheme (260 MGD), Rs 12,060 million for Mohmand Multipurpose Dam Project, Rs 7,000 million for Diamer Basha Dam Project (Land Acquisition and Re-settlement), and Rs 5,000 each for Nai Gaj Dam Project Dadu (Sindh) and Karachi Canal Project (Phase-I) Dera Bugti, Naseerabad, Bolan and Jhal Magshi.

The major allocation for new schemes included Rs 500 million for the Chashma Right Bank Canal Left Cum Gravity Project and Rs 300 million each for the construction of five small dams Salari-2 Dam, Rai Jo Da Dam, Shalmani Dam, Garwari Dam, and Amari Dam in Kohistan Dadu, and six small dams including Densi, Kcodal, Kambowah, Khirporah and others in District Zhob and Sherani.

Martyr's sacrifices will always be remembered: DIG

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Inspector General of National Highways and Motorway Police, North Zone Muhammad Yusuf Malik said on Thursday that the sacrifices of the martyrs will always be remembered.

Deputy Inspector General of National Highways and Motorway Police, North Zone Muhammad Yusuf Malik expressed these views while addressing a ceremony organized by NHMP North Zone in connection with Martyr's Reverence Day.

For observing the day with enthusiasm, various events were organized by the Motorway Police.

DIG Motorway North Zone Muhammad Yusuf Malik visited the martyrs memorial at Line Headquarters on M-1 at Swabi and Line Headquarters on M-2 at North Chakri.

On this occasion, he said that the martyrs were the pride of the nation and their sacrifices will always be remembered and departmental support will be extended to the families of the martyrs.

Ashrafi pays tribute to martyrs, calls for justice on 'Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada-e-Pakistan'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman and Prime Minister (PM) Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and the Middle East, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood, on Thursday, expressed his heartfelt tribute to the courageous martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty for ensuring the security and sovereignty of the nation.

He gave these remarks during the commemoration of 'Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada-e-Pakistan'.

Emphasizing the unwavering commitment of the Pakistani nation, Ashrafi stated that Pakistan, its defense institutions, and Islam were their redlines, underscoring that these principles were non-negotiable. While reflecting on the tragic events of May 9, a day etched in the his-

tory of Pakistan as 'Black Day', he urged the superior judiciary to expedite the trials of individuals involved in the heinous crimes, such as the torching of the Corps Commander House in Lahore, the attack on Radio Pakistan in Peshawar, and the assault on the General Headquarters.

Moreover, Ashrafi advocated for the perpetrators responsible for targeting national security installations to face military courts under the Army Act, as it aligned with the law and the Constitution. He emphasized the importance of holding the guilty accountable while ensuring the release of the innocent.

He asked the relevant quarters that no hurdles should be placed in the path of justice, as it would

strengthen the national security policy for the foreseeable future. In his talk with APP, Ashrafi likened the attack on Pakistan's sovereignty to the tragic events of 9/11, marking it as the first assault of its kind in the 75-year history of the nation. He called for all individuals involved, including masterminds, facilitators, culprits, and accomplices, to be brought to justice through all possible means.

To express solidarity with national security institutions, Ulema and Mashaykh observed the following Friday as 'Stability Day' under the umbrella of the Pakistan Ulema Council. As the nation pays tribute to its martyrs and continues its pursuit of justice, Pakistan stands united in safeguarding its security, sovereignty, and national interests.

Divisional peace committee strongly condemns May 9 riots

RAWALPINDI (APP): The divisional peace committee here on Thursday strongly condemned May 9 riots.

Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chhatta chairing a meeting of the divisional peace committee said that on the directives of the government, the peace committee and the interfaith committee would be actively mobilized to counter negative propaganda against state institutions. Regional Police Officer (RPO) Syed Khurram Ali was also present on the occasion. Additional Commissioner (AC) Coordination Syed Nizarat Ali, Hafiz Iqbal Rizvi, Coordinator Divisional Peace Committee, Azhar Bukhari, President, Anjuman Tajaran Rawalpindi, Shahid Ghafoor Paracha, scholars and leaders of the traders from across the division attended the meeting.

Special prayers were offered for the elevation of the martyrs and the safety of the country. "The divisional peace committee is the most effective platform which plays an important role in implementing the government's policy," the commissioner said. On May 9, sensitive installations were targeted and the memorials of the martyrs were desecrated which was a sad incident, he added.

The events of May 9 were being strongly condemned by the citizens, he

informed. The Commissioner further said that on Friday the scholars in sermons should not only condemn the events of May 9 but also encourage the younger generation to come forward and play a role to promote patriotism. "The army is ours and we are breathing in free air today because of the sacrifices of the martyrs," he said adding, the suffering caused to the relatives of the martyrs due to the desecration of the memorials of martyrs is highly condemnable. "Living nations respect their martyrs. The scholars need to play a constructive role to prevent such incidents," he urged. All Deputy Commissioners had been instructed to peace committee meetings in that regard, he said.

The RPO said, "The miscreants tried to harm the state institutions on May 9 which is highly condemnable."

"All institutions represent the state and no one will be allowed to challenge the writ of the state," he said. In the meeting, the scholars while expressing their views said, "Love for the country is a part of our faith and we are standing with the forces of Pakistan."

"Protecting the motherland is a shared responsibility of all of us," they stressed.

In the meeting, special tributes were paid to the martyrs.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar addressing during the Launching of Islamabad Capital Territory Prohibition of Corporal Punishment Rules at Islamabad Model College for Girls.

Third polio case reported

JALALABAD (Khaama Press): The Afghanistan reported the third case of the poliovirus of 2023 as the health authorities detected it in Nangarhar province. A new polio case from the Nazyan district of Nangarhar province has also been reported, affecting a 30-month-old male child. With this, there have been three confirmed polio cases in the nation so far this year, all of which are from the province of Nangarhar.

100 tons medicines delivered

KABUL (Agencies): The European Union (EU) has delivered nearly 100 tons of medicines and medical supplies to Afghanistan. Deputy political representative of the European Union for Afghanistan, Raffaella Iodice, tweeted that nearly 100 tons of medicine and medical supplies were delivered to Kabul, Afghanistan. "Close to 100 tons of medicines and medical items safely arrived in Afghanistan via the EU's humanitarian Air Bride," Iodice tweeted.

\$449.9m needed for healthcare services

KABUL (Khaama Press): On Thursday, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) said that the organization requires \$449.9 Million to assist 15.6 million people in the country. The organization also warned that failure to invest in life-saving health services would lead to increased mortality and morbidity among the most vulnerable in the country. "Multiple shocks are driving Afghanistan's health needs. Failure to invest in life-saving health services will increase mortality and morbidity among the most vulnerable," OCHA tweeted.

It continued, this year, \$449.9 Million is required to assist 15.6 million people with essential health care services. The organization warned that the "huge funding gaps threaten to severely disrupt aid efforts in Afghanistan and humanitarian actors' ability to ward off a worsening crisis." Amid the humanitarian crisis, the de facto authorities extended the ban on women's aid workers on April 4, 2023. The decision extended the directive previously issued by the de facto Ministry of Economy on December 24 2022, which banned Afghan women from working for national and international non-governmental organizations. Meanwhile, the UN and other international organizations condemned the decision and called for immediate reversal of the decree. The decision disrupted humanitarian operations as per the UN, even though aid agencies remain on the ground delivering life-saving assistance to millions of people, the organization said. Despite widespread criticism, the de facto authorities uphold their policies and ban 50% of Afghan females from attending school or working for aid organizations.

IEA seeking good ties with its neighboring countries



KABUL (Agencies): Acting Prime Minister and Deputy for Political Affairs, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, said in a meeting with the Chinese ambassador in Kabul that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan wants good relations with all its neighboring countries. Kabir met with the Chinese ambassador, Wang Yu, in his office, the prime minister's office said in a statement. Wang expressed satisfaction with the security situation in the country and said China wants enduring peace and stability in Afghanistan. China believes that peace in Afghanistan is for the benefit of the region, neighboring countries, and China, he added. With joint efforts of Kabul and Beijing in the economic sector, we can achieve great success in the future, Wang said. For his part, Kabir reminded Wang of the historical ties the two countries share and said Afghanistan has always sought good ties with all its neighbors, including China, and that IEA is committed not to allowing Afghanistan's soil to be used against any other nations. Kabir thanked China for providing facilities to Afghan businessmen and said that the Islamic Emirate is ready to provide all facilities to Chinese investors, and maintain their security in Afghanistan.

Earthquake rocks Badakhshan province

BADAKHSHAN (Khaama Press): An earthquake of magnitude of 4.3 rocked Badakhshan province of Afghanistan on Thursday. The quake of 4.3 occurred at 10: 00 am local time today with a depth of 26 Km south of Isqashim, Tajikistan, the Indian National for Seismology said. The earthquake epicentre was the Zebak district of Badakhshan province, Afghanistan, with a latitude of 36.49 N and a Longitude of 71—58 E. No casualties have been reported so far; further details are awaited. The frequency of earthquakes has increased in the region, particularly in the Badakhshan province of the country. Earlier on Monday, two earthquakes occurred on the same day, one with a 4.3 and the other with a 4.9 magnitude on the same day. The second was a massive quake that even the tremors felt in Kabul's capital, though the epicentre was the Faizabad district of Badakhshan. Afghanistan is one of the most vulnerable countries in the region to natural disasters, including earthquakes, landslides, flooding and avalanches. Due to the frequent natural disasters, including earthquakes, which occur in the country, including north-east and northern regions, additional safety measures and precautions steps are required to decrease the severity of the disaster.

University in Uruzgan lacks dedicated building, dormitory



URUZGAN (TOLONews): Rahmatullah Rahmani, head of the university in Uruzgan, said that eleven years have passed since the establishment of the university, but it still has no building. Rahmatullah Rahmani said that students in the five faculties are studying in technical vocational education, and 2,000 students attend. "We don't have a building in this university and these university students are studying in the education ministry building and the technical vocational education and training building," said Rahmatullah Rahmani. Some students consider the lack of a building for the university and dormitory a serious challenge to their education process and they asked the authorities to address these challenges. "We are not able financially to rent a room and pay for our bread. The construction and cost of books is another problem," said Abdul Bari, a student. "The way now is very expensive if we are provided with a dormitory that will be good for students, but now we are faced with challenges," said Jawed Ahmad, a student. Meanwhile, the governor of Uruzgan province acknowledged these challenges and said that efforts are being made to address the problems. "To provide more facilities I will make a trip to Kabul and share these challenges with the Minister of Higher Education and PM," said Mohammad Ali Jan Ahmad, the Governor of Uruzgan. Based on the information of the officials of Uruzgan province, construction work on the university began six years ago at the cost of 33 million afghani, but due to differences between the local people and the government, the construction process was stopped.

Investors demand decrease in royalty, tariff on coal

KABUL (Pajhwok): Some coal mining investors in Afghanistan have complained against high custom duty and royalty on coal mining at a time when its rate globally declined by 80 percent. Nasratullah, a coal mine owner in the Dara-i-Suf's Shabashak area, told Pajhwok Afghan News few months earlier one tonne of coal was sold against 5,500 afis in this area and 6,000 afis in Qarmaql area but currently one tonne was sold against 900 afis or 1,300 afis. He said this comes that one tonne of coal was accounted 1,800 to the owner who at the moment suffered up to 900 loss considering the quality of the coal. "One tonne of coal is accounted 1,800 afis for us without considering the risk factor which means that there could be unfortunate incident in the mining site after which it has financial consequences for the owner," he said. In addition he said that the government charged 3,000 afis royalty on one tonne and 6,000 afis custom duty. He said representatives of the coal miners had been visiting the government representatives over the past few months to reduce custom duty and tariff. He said: "If the government reduced royalty on one tonne to 1,500 afis then they could sell one tonne of coal against 2,400 afis."

He said, currently 80 percent work had stopped because the investors suffered losses and if the government did not reduce the royalty amount there is the possibility that work on other mines would have also stop. Ghazi Mohammad, the representative of the Mohammad Nabi Nashir Coal Mine Company also acknowledged the prevailing situation and said he coal miners have shared their concerns with the 'Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan' (IEA) at different levels. "We brought a letter from Kandahar as well and I hope that the problem would be resolved," he said. He added in the past the coal prices jumped in international market and at that time its royalty was increased in Afghanistan to 3,000 afis and the custom tariff was surged to 6,200 afis but now that global rates had declined there was no change in the royalty amount and tariff in Afghanistan. In international market, last year in September one tonne of coal was sold against \$465 but currently its rate had declined to \$162. Ghazi Mohammad said that many coal miners had stopped their work since there was no decline in the royalty and tariff charges after a decline in the world market. He said if royalty declined to 2,000 afis and custom tariff to 2,700 afis as it was in the past most problems of coal miners would be resolved. Mohammad Rasoul Totakhel, the Coal Exporters Union head also acknowledged the complaints of coal miners in this regard. He said coalminers were facing losses because the royalty and custom duty rates are skyrocket. He said they shared the issue with the IEA officials often but received no positive response from them. The issue was conveyed to the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum as well but no response was received. Finance Ministry's Spokesperson Ahmad Wali Haqmal said that royalty is mainly selected on the bases of the economic situation of the country and people, adding that the current royalty which is 3,000 per tonne which is reasonable. He said custom tariff is selected on the bases of demand and supply if there is increasing demand the tariff also grow and if there is decline in the demand the tariff also come down. He said currently, custom duty on one tonne of coal was \$60.

Four coal miners die of suffocation in Baghlan

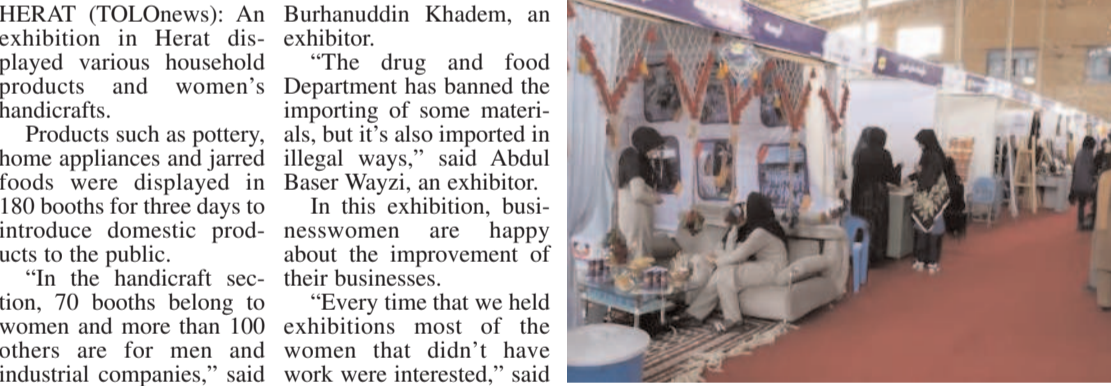


BAGHLAN (Khaama Press): At least four miners died of suffocation from an explosion in Baghlan province coal mines, officials said on Thursday. On May 23, two separate gas explosions in the Tale Barfak and Jalghah districts of Afghanistan's Baghlan province resulted in the deaths of four coal mine workers. In the first instance, two brothers named Nazmir and Abdulsir died after being gassed while working in a coal mine in the village of "Peshte Marq" in the Tale Barfak district, according to Abdullah Hamid, the head of Taliban mines in Baghlan, confirmed the two incidents. In the second occurrence, a father and son named Shir and Dost Mohammad died while working in the Jalghah district's Shahkul Chenark. Earlier on May 17, a coal miner died of gas inhalation while sex others were poisoned in the Baghlan province, Tale Barfak district, raising more questions about the country's mine safety regulations. As a result, safety precautions are often neglected at the expense of labourer life. This shows that miners' welfare is urgently needed in the country to ensure their safety and security first.

Iran not recognize Afghanistan's caretaker govt: Iranian FM

TEHRAN (Xinhua): Iranian foreign minister said on Thursday that his country does not recognize Afghanistan's caretaker Taliban government and insists upon the formation of an inclusive government in the country, according to Iranian Students' News Agency. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, making the remarks in a meeting attended by the country's diplomatic personnel, expressed Tehran's dissatisfaction with the neighboring country's failure to form an inclusive government. He added that the Taliban is only part of Afghanistan's reality, not all of it. Amir-Abdollahian said over the past few months, clashes have occurred every now and then along the common border with Afghanistan, which have become a source of concern. Another source of argument between the two sides is the joint water rights of the Hirmand River. The Iranian Space Agency spokesman said last week that satellite photos show that the Taliban have made alterations to the river's route, preventing its water from reaching Iran. Amir-Abdollahian stressed that Iran's water rights from the Hirmand River should be respected under a 1973 treaty between the two countries, which entitles Iran to receive 820 million cubic meters of water from the river per year. The Taliban government issued a statement last week, saying Iran's frequent requests for water and "inappropriate" comments on media are "harmful," adding it is committed to the 1973 treaty. The Hirmand River originates in the Hindu Kush Mountains near Afghanistan's capital Kabul and runs 1,126 kilometers south before flowing into Hamoun wetlands in Iran's southeastern Sistan and Baluchestan province, which Amir-Abdollahian said is suffering from drought.

Exhibition showcases household products, women-made handicrafts



HERAT (TOLONews): An exhibition in Herat displayed various household products and women's handicrafts. Products such as pottery, home appliances and jarred foods were displayed in 180 booths for three days to introduce domestic products to the public. "In the handicraft section, 70 booths belong to women and more than 100 others are for men and industrial companies," said TORYALY Ghawsi, deputy of the chamber of industry and commerce in Herat. Business owners want to prevent the import of goods similar to domestic products. "Our neighbor's product was imported into our country before and now we are also faced with the same problem," said Burhanuddin Khadem, an exhibitor. "The drug and food Department has banned the importing of some materials, but it's also imported in illegal ways," said Abdul Baser Wayzi, an exhibitor. In this exhibition, businesswomen are happy about the improvement of their businesses. "Every time that we held exhibitions most of the women that didn't have work were interested," said Bahnaz Saljoqi, deputy of the Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western provinces. "We ask the Islamic Emirate to support women," said Pari Seddiqi, a businesswoman. Meanwhile, local officials in Herat said that the current government should support women. According to the Herat province governor, for the growth of domestic production, the government provides more facilities to industrialists. "Our goal in the short term is to close the borders to similar and non-standard goods," said Noor Ahmad Islam Jar. According to the Herat Chamber of Industries and Mines, the province has reached self-sufficiency in several sectors, including non-alcoholic beverages, dairy products, flour, food products including cakes and cookies, and stones for construction.

Fee charged on stallers land in state treasury: Kabul Municipality

KABUL (Pajhwok): Some residents in capital Kabul say stalls distributed to vendors in capital Kabul help improved the order and cleanliness of the city while Municipality administration said the stalls placed temporarily in public places. Meanwhile stallers complained against the high rent of their stalls and demanded the municipality to decrease the rent. Referring to the high monthly rent for the stalls, the municipality administration said the matter of the rent was related to the cabinet and they also suggested to the cabinet to reduce the rent. Amid at bringing order and dealing with the growing congestion, the Municipality last installed unmovable stalls on roadsides in different places, including Sara-i-Shamali, Fruit Market, Pul-i-Kheshti and other places. The move was highly appreciated by the people and termed it beneficial in bringing beauty to the city and removing congestion. Hikmatullah, the resident of Kabul City, said in the past the hand-carts were moving in the middle of the road and now the installation of stalls brought order as all the stalls are organized in a single row. Syed Alam, a driver in Kabul City expressed happiness with the installation of stalls, and asked the government to implement the plan in other parts of the city as well where hand-carts creating problems and block the road. Ghulam Mohammad, the representative of 250 stalls, in the Fruit Market said of the of the total 250 stalls only 70 were active and the remaining had been closed because the owners were unable to pay the rent. He said the Municipality administration last week closed nine stalls due to the non-payment of rent and warned others as well to pay the rent otherwise they will by also shut. Ghulam Dastagir, who sell plastic in one of the stalls, said the amount government set as rent was back broking, adding that in the past hey paid 370 afis rent but now had to pay 5,250 afis at a time when the income and market condition had worsened. Haseebullah, another staller who sell clothes in the Taimani 2nd road, said in the past he did not pay the rent but bow they have to pay 1,720 afis. These shopkeepers were thrilled to have seen a proper place provided to them for their business but demanded decline in the rent as well. Municipality representative, Niamatullah Barakzai, said vender work was a half day temporary job adding that a vendor could not stay at one point and do his job. He said the amount charge on stallers was not a rent but a fee and according to the law municipality could charge fee on individuals who use a public place for any activity. The fee had been divided in three category considering the congestion and location. In the first category one square metre area is charged 320 afis, second category the same area is charged 920 afis and in the third category one square metre area sis charged 1,720 afis. He said the high amount of fee which is up to 6,000 afis is due to the large area occupied by the stallers, adding that an individual could do it in one square metre area as well. Barakzai said in the past a mafia system was imposed and the public money landed in the private pocket bu not the public money is going to the government treasury. Referring to the high rate of fee charged on stallers, he said he issue was related to the cabinet and they had suggested to the cabinet about the decline in the stalls fees. He, however, said until a new decision is taken by the cabinet the stallers should pay their fee.

Widespread anger against attackers felt in country: PM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said the ransacking and putting on fire of the historic Radio Pakistan Peshawar's building exposed the barbaric mind-sets of the attackers, who had no regard for humanity and national heritage.

Addressing an event here to express solidarity with the employees of Radio Pakistan and Associated Press of Pakistan at Radio Pakistan Peshawar's building, the prime minister said that a wave of widespread anger against attackers was felt in the country after the attack. He mentioned that people from all walks of life strongly condemned the assaults at the government buildings and security installations across the country on May 9 and 10.

"There is no difference between the rioters of May 9-10 and the terrorists," the prime minister said, adding that his government would ensure that such deplorable incidents never repeat again. He vowed exemplary punishment to the culprits as per the law.

The prime minister said the May 9-10 devastation was beyond imagination and even the enemy was not able to carry out such

deplorable incidents in the past. He said the Radio Pakistan Peshawar was a historic station established before the independence of Pakistan in 1935. The announcement of Pakistan's independence was also made from this station and the Radio Pakistan Lahore station at midnight of August 13-14, 1947. He said millions of Muslims, under the leadership of Father of the Nation Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, rendered great sacrifices for the motherland, adding the violent incidents of May 9 and 10 put the entire in a state of grief and anger.

The prime minister said the ransacking of the historic Radio station was against the spirit of patriotism and love for national heritage. He strongly condemned the alighting of the model of Chaghi hills constructed in the premises of Radio Pakistan Peshawar in memory of the May 28, 1998 successful nuclear explosions that made the country's defence impregnable.

He recalled that the iconic structure depicted the historic moment where the country's defence was made invincible on May 28, 1998, under the leadership of then prime minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. PM Sharif said that living

nations protect their national heritage and archive them for future generations. However, on May 10, he said, nearly 100 years old archive records of the Radio Pakistan Peshawar were burnt to ashes.

He said that the archives of Suratul Qur'an programme, which remained unharmed, was a miracle amid the vandalism carried out at the national broadcaster building. He highly appreciated the bravery and courage of injured employees of Radio Pakistan Peshawar Naseer and Abdullah against rioters and gave them compensation cheques.

The prime minister also directed the finance minister to take immediate steps for the release of the salary of Radio Pakistan employees through the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Islamabad. He also asked the Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting to take steps for starting rehabilitation work on the Radio Pakistan Peshawar building on an emergency basis.

He reiterated that this historic radio station would be rehabilitated so that it could continue to air its strong voice for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan. The prime minister also handed over the keys of vehicles to Radio Pakistan Peshawar on this occasion.

Starlink & Pakistan

Jalil Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: The Frontier Post asked the US State Department Spokesperson, Matthew Miller about Starlink, a satellite based internet company, owned by billionaire Elon Musk. The Spokesperson has asked for some time to reply back and this story will be updated accordingly.

The real interesting part of this story pertains to the world after Corona and how nations are coping/planning for challenges related to Information Technology (IT). Securing data and enabling communication channels to operate accordingly has become one of the most important task for every country around the world.

Space rights of every country and those involved with these rights will also become more active and important in coming days. And obviously making money and profits are elements related to the IT world. It is pertinent to mention here that Starlink since last one year has been providing internet service to users in Ukraine. Beside PTA (Pakistan Telecommunications Authority) some other Pakistani government departments are also said to be involved and are looking into Starkink interests in Pakistan and its possible repercussions.

CJP forms larger bench

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial on Thursday constituted a five-member larger bench to hear petitions against the inquiry commission probing audio leaks involving judges.

The larger bench headed by CJP Bandial and comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Syed Hassan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Shahid Waheed will conduct the hearing on the case tomorrow (Friday) at 11am.

Last week, the federal government formed a high-powered judicial commission headed by senior SC Judge Justice Qazi Faez Isa of the Supreme Court to probe the audio leaks related to the judiciary. The commission has been tasked to complete the inquiry within 30 days.

Among the multiple audio leaks, the commission will also probe into the veracity of the alleged call between former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi and a sitting top court judge as well as another call between CM Elahi and a Supreme Court lawyer over the constitution of an apex court bench. Subsequently, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan questioned the government for the "deliberate omission" of the terms of reference (TORs) and challenged the formation of the three-member judicial commission on audio leaks.

FO rejects India's move

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has categorically rejected India's move to host the meeting of the G-20 Tourism Working Group in Srinagar, Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir from 22nd to 24th May this year.

The Foreign Office (FO) in a statement on Thursday said that Jammu and Kashmir is an internationally recognized disputed territory. The dispute has remained on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council for over seven decades. In that backdrop, India hosted this Meeting in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir in complete disregard of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, principles of the UN Charter and international law.

The Foreign Office spokesperson said holding the G-20 meeting in the disputed territory is a betrayal of the people of IIOJK. For the last seven decades, they have been waiting for the international community to pay attention to their plight and to bring an end to the occupation and human rights violations. The statement further said that tourism and development cannot be promoted by holding the local population hostage and denying them their rights and freedoms.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force.

Negative forces will become active if elections are delayed: CJP

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial said on Thursday that a delay in elections will allow "negative forces" to swing into action and "play tricks" on the country. The CJP's remarks came during a hearing of the review petition filed by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) against the apex court's decision to conduct polls in Punjab on May 14.

The bench that heard the plea included Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Ijazul Ahsan; this is the same bench that issued the directive on April 4. Following the bench's order, the electoral watchdog had informed the apex court that it could not conduct elections owing to security concerns and a paucity of funds. It then filed a review petition, stating that appointing a date for elections is not the Supreme Court's mandate.

The hearing of the review petition began with more arguments from the ECP lawyer which irritated CJP Bandial. "Tell us what your main point is," he asked. Swati responded: "Supreme Court Rules cannot curtail constitutional powers." Noting his point, Justice Ahsan instructed him to proceed.

"The full court has ruled in several cases that the scope of the review is not limited," Swati then contended. On this point Justice Akhtar reiterated that if Swati's argument was accepted, "the Supreme Court Rules will become null and void." "At times, even Parliament's power to legislate is also limited," the ECP counsel submitted. The bench then directed Swati's attention to the role of the interim government. The ECP lawyer said that family members of caretaker cabinet cannot participate in elections.

"In order to maintain transparency in elections, this ban was added to the Constitution." Justice Ahsan then inquired: "If a provincial assembly is dissolved in six months, will the caretaker government remain for 4 and a half years? Will we wait for the dissolution of the National Assembly for 4 and a half years?" Swati confirmed, saying that the caretaker government would work in the respective province for 4 and a half years. He argued that one article cannot be violated while implementing another, adding that Article 254 — which says that an act in not rendered invalid merely because of failure to comply with its time stipulation — lends support to a delay of 90 days.

"A 90-day delay in elections can be redressed," he said. "The redressal

is that the elected government come instead of a caretaker government for 4 and a half years." CJP Bandial cut in. "How is it possible that the elected government remain for 6 months while a caretaker government [stays in power] for 4 and a half years?" he asked. "Where is it written in the Constitution that the [term of] a caretaker government can be extended?" Justice Ahsan asked, adding that doing so would be against the spirit of the Constitution.

Swati submitted that the court's observation was correct. The argument then turned to the role of the ECP and its handling of the situation in the county following the dissolution of the Punjab Assembly in January this year. "Conducting transparent elections is the responsibility of the Commission. The commission cannot say that there are no funds, so elections cannot be held," Justice Ahsan remarked. He further added: "Don't think that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been sidelined by us."

During the proceedings, CJP Bandial accused the electoral watchdog of "talking about politics" — an allegation that Swati rejected, saying: "The Election Commission is an independent body, it is not talking about politics." However, he added, the Commission cannot fail to ensure transparent elections. Justice Akhtar remarked that the ECP had earlier cited funds and security to be the reason for its inability to conduct polls. "Now you are trying to run away from [your responsibility] by talking about the Constitution."

The CJP then asked how long the judiciary — being the guardian of the constitution — was expected to remain silent. "How long can Article 224 be kept in cold storage?" he asked, referring to the Article that discusses the ECP's role in case of dispute over setting up an interim government. "The events of May 9 confirmed the fears of the Election Commission," Swati said. However, the CJP once more cut him off, saying that the court would talk about "principles not concerns".

Justice Akhtar further added that "general elections" do not mean only National Assembly elections. "Five general elections are held simultaneously in elections," he said. Coming down hard on the ECP counsel, the bench asked why the commission had cited funds and security as reasons for an inability to conduct elections. "Why was it not said earlier that elections are not possible even if

resources are available?" Justice Akhtar asked. CJP Bandial then asked: "Which provisions of the Constitution will be invalidated by holding the election on the same day?"

He remarked that, perhaps, 10 years from now, the system would be strong and all the elections will be possible separately. "At present, we are travelling in the darkness with no destination in sight," he said. Turning to the issue of the Punjab polls and the reasons the commission had cited for not being able to hold elections in Punjab, the CJP said that the Commission should not accept the excuse of the Ministry of Finance. Citing the supplementary grants of Rs20 billion approved for members of the assembly yesterday, CJP Bandial came down hard on the electoral watchdog for being "inactive" and said that the ECP "needed to do its homework" before coming to the courts.

"The Election Commission also needed Rs21 billion. [The commission] should get a concrete explanation from the government [as to the cited scarcity of funds]. He further said that the Commission should have thought about its demands. "The Commission asked for 450,000 security personnel. That is the total strength of the operational force," he said, asking what the need of the army in the elections was.

"Army is only a symbol for security, during elections. Polling may be delayed where polling stations are sensitive," Justice Akhtar then added that the Commission's concerns that a provincial assembly may influence the elections of the NA were "unfounded". "Members of the National Assembly can also influence the provincial elections. If the National Assembly is dissolved first, will the commission dissolve the provincial assembly?" "If the Election Commission is transparent and strong, there can be no interference," the CJP said, shutting down Swati's arguments.

Taking another tract, Swati said that the date of October 8 was suggested keeping the country's political situation in mind. "Elections are not possible in the current situation.... The events of May 9 confirmed our fears." "You have again come to the current situation from constitutional principles," Justice Munib said, prohibiting the ECP counsel from bringing up events of May 9. The hearing was adjourned till May 29 (Monday).

FC cop martyred

F.P. Report

TIRAH VALLEY: A Frontier Corp (FC) soldier embraced Shahadat in an attack on the forces check post by militants in Tirah Valley on Thursday. The forces official said that unknown militants waged an unexpected offence on forces checkpoint, located in Mathra area of Tirah Valley.

Militants utilized RPG 7 and other heavy weapons in the attack. As a result one soldier identified as Sepoy Zubair of 213 wing, 27 brigade Martyred on the spot. The forces personnel combated for half hour and repulsed the attack.

Three police hurt in polio team attack: Three police officials sustained injuries when unknown militants attacked a police and polio team convoy here in Mir Dara, Takhtakai, Kamar Khel area of Tirah Valley district Khyber on Thursday.

SHO police station, Tirah Muslim Khan while confirming the incident said that a convoy of police personnel and polio workers was passing through a dense jungle to drop the workers at their respective areas when they were ambushed. The attackers used heavy weapons however our police soldiers retaliated courageously and forced them to flee. He added that in cross firing three of the police force got injured although the polio team remained unhurt. Soon after the mishap, reinforcements of police and other security agencies rushed to the site, cordoned off the whole area and shifted the injured to the nearest health center for medical treatment, he added.

CM arranges APC on KP financial issues



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister, Azam Khan arranged all parties conference (APC) for resolution of financial problems of the province.

Besides others, the meeting was attended by top leadership of political and religious parties of KP, including Sirajul Haq, Aftab Sherpao, Aimal Wali, Ameer Muqam, Arbab Alamgir and Shahjee Gul Afridi. The meeting was told that Rs180

billion were pending to federation under head of different federal transfer and promises made during KP-Fata merger was yet to be fulfilled.

APC decided to constitute a jirga comprising leaders of all parties for getting constitutional rights of the province and would meet the prime minister next week for raising the issue of arrears and outstanding dues. The conference underlined the need for collective efforts for achievement of constitu-

tional rights of the province and thanked the Chief Minister for convening the meeting of APC.

The APC observed that KP was confronted to financial problems and suggested sale of windfall wood placed in different forests. It was also decided to place the proposal before next Cabinet Meeting for approval if the windfall wood sale and it was expected to earn Rs100 billion to Rs150 billion revenue to the provincial Government kitty.

Visit to India proved productive: Bilawal

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari Thursday informed the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs that decision to participate in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's (SCO) summit held in the Indian city of Goa proved productive and positive for Pakistan.

"As far as the Kashmir issue, bilateral issues between Pakistan and India and the responsibilities of multilateralism are concerned, my conclusion after the trip is that it is productive and positive decision to participate in the event" he said. "We thought, we should project Pakistan's case and point of view in front of not only Indian but the other participant countries," he informed the committee.

Bilawal said it was also decided not to provide an open opportunity to India. He said that it was a difficult decision to participate in the event and a lot of work was done by the Foreign Ministry to evolve consensus in that regard. The minister said that former Foreign Secretaries, leaders of allied parties and other stakeholders had been taken on board for their feedback regarding participation in the event in India.

"SCO is a multilateral forum and it provided opportunities to hold meetings with the world leadership and project Pakistan's point of view on various points," he added. Bilawal said the second point that had been considered for attending the event was that all-weather friend of Pakistan China and Russia were the founder of this organization.

He said that SCO had provided an opportunity to highlight Pakistan's narra-

tive as it was the Indian objective to abuse this important forum. He said Pakistan had effectively responded to the Indian narrative of linking terrorism with Pakistan, Muslims and Kashmiris. "The event provided an opportunity to make them understand that I am the son of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto who became a victim of terrorism. People of Pakistan are most affected by terrorism," he added.

He said that Pakistan wanted to fight terrorism in the best interest of the country. The minister said that positive and productive meetings with all the foreign ministers of the members' countries were held on the sideline of the event. He said it was decided before leaving for India not to hold bilateral meetings with Indian leadership due to the August 2019 unilateral decision of India. "It is our principled stance that we will not seek a meeting with our Indian counterpart," he added.

He was of the view that the SCO meeting also provided an opportunity to interact with Indian people, senior anchors and media persons and counter the Indian narrative of linking terrorism with Pakistan and Muslims. He said that Pakistan would host the SCO conference in 2026-2027 and there was hope the Indian counterpart would attend the meeting.

Responding to a question, the minister said, that soon after arriving from India at Karachi Airport, he effectively responded to the allegations of Indians in the SCO conference. He said that diplomatic channels had also been used to respond to the Indian allegations. Responding to a question regarding

Afghanistan, he said a stable, prosperous and secure Afghanistan was in the interest of people of Afghanistan, Pakistan and other neighbouring countries.

He said that it was the request of the interim government of Afghanistan to address the core issue of TTP operating from its soil against Pakistan. He said that after the taking over of the interim Afghanistan government, terrorist attacks in Pakistan had increased. He said that issue of Afghanistan had also been discussed with the participants of the SCO conference during sideline meetings.

Foreign Minister calls on Air Chief: Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Mr Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force during his visit to Air Headquarters, Islamabad today. Matters pertaining to evolving geo-strategic environment and regional security situation were discussed during the meeting.

Air Chief briefed the visiting dignitary about various ongoing projects being carried out by Pakistan Air Force with special focus on the modernization and development of indigenous capabilities. Chief of the Air Staff also briefed the Foreign Minister about his vision of PAF's National Aerospace Science & Technology Park project and highlighted that the mega project is aimed at fostering collaborative research, development and innovation in the domains of aviation, space, IT, cyber & computing to accrue maximum social, economic, technological and scientific dividends for Pakistan.