

**PM, FM discuss issues**  
**F.P. Report**  
KARACHI: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here and discussed overall political situation in the country. Held at the Sindh Chief Minister House, the meeting was also attended by federal ministers Syed Naveed Qamar, Syed Faisal Sabzwari, Marriyum Aurangzeb, State Minister Dr Musaddiq Malik and others.

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KARACHI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing the ground breaking ceremony of Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme (I-IV Project).

## FP probe continues regarding Afghans brought to the US

Ja'il Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: Beside the embarrassment faced by the administration under US President Joe Biden for the way it withdrew from Afghanistan, where people were hanging from running US Airforce planes, another reckless move to gain public sympathy was to bring along over one hundred thousand Afghans to the US without sufficient back-ground checks.

President Joe Biden's administration did this move to show the world that the US does not leaves its partners behind. Some of the Afghans are said to be translators and some of them are said to be informers or soldiers working with the US officials in Afghanistan. There are also said to be those evacuated Afghans who were already US citizens before they were taken to Afghanistan for one job or another. These Afghans Americans are also said to have made the most profits in last twenty years and to avoid US tax authorities, their money is mostly stashed in Middle Eastern bank accounts, especially the UAE.

The need for Pashto translators was so high at one point that several Pakistani Pashto speakers who were US citizens were also taken to US military bases in Afghanistan to work along the US military. Those transla-



tors not only made extra good money but they also didn't have to pay taxes for those years. According to one such Pakistani who worked with the US forces at Bagram Airbase stated that "now whenever I go to Peshawar in Pakistan, I feel a little scared thinking maybe an Afghan Taliban will recognize me."

Yesterday, *The Frontier Post* asked Matthew Miller, the Spokesperson for US State Department about the number of Afghans who are brought to the US are being detained or their immigration cases are being reconsidered. Matthew Miller replied by stating that anybody who arrives in the US falls under the domain of the

Department of Homeland Security and that they should be contacted for any further details.

The US State Department has very easily shifted the burden on Department of Homeland Security (DHS) but Washington DC based journalists say that State Department can not so easily exonerate themselves from this whole episode.

*The Frontier Post* has contacted the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and to find out about the number of those cases related to those Afghans who are detained or their immigration cases being reconsidered. After response from DHS, this story will be updated accordingly.

## Police fail to arrest Parvez Elahi

LAHORE (INP): Police failed to arrest Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) president Parvez Elahi on Thursday but keeping up their siege around the PTI leader's house at the Zahoor Elahi Road till filing this report.

A heavy police contingent reached Parvez Elahi's residence after the cancellation of his bail by an anti-corruption court. A case was lodged against PTI president at the Ghalib Market police station for interfering in the affairs of the state, while he is also accused of misusing power and irregularities in the development funds. Sources said DIG Operations Sadiq Ali Dogar, SP Operations Model Town Ammara Sherazi, and SSP Operations Sohaib Ashraf along with a heavy contingent of police reached the residence of Parvez Elahi.

The legal team of Parvez Elahi informed the police that he is not present in the house and they will cooperate with the police to search the house after showing the arrest warrant. Meanwhile, the spokesperson of the PTI president said that the police searched the entire house and left empty-handed as Elahi was not present at home.

Sources said all roads leading to Mr Elahi's house were blocked. "Police also searched houses and a private school adjacent to Mr Elahi's residence," sources added. Earlier, an anti-corruption court of Lahore rejected Mr Elahi's bail petition in a case of alleged corruption in development projects.

Mr Elahi's lawyer told the court that the former chief minister was suffering from chest pain and could not appear in the court. The prosecution argued that the medical certificate submitted by Parvez Elahi's counsel in court is fake.

## Abrar, Saif, Raas, Firdous and Khurram quit PTI

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Expressing their regret over the May 9 mayhem, two more Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders — singer-turned-politician Abrarul Haq and Senator Saifullah Nyazee — on Friday announced quitting the party.

The PTI leaders' mass exodus started when the security forces launched a crackdown against the party following the attacks on the civil and military institutions, including the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi and the Lahore Corps Commander's House (Jinnah House). The riots were triggered by PTI Chairman Imran Khan's arrest from Islamabad High Court in the Al-Qadir Trust graft case on May 9 — a day the army dubbed as "Black Day". Addressing a presser in Lahore, Haq said: "I regret standing with Imran Khan."

Former Punjab education minister Murad Raas on Friday announced that he is parting ways with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and former prime minister Imran Khan.

Addressing a press conference in Lahore, he said: "We do not believe in the PTI's politics of violence." Murad Raas further said that he never expected to see a day when he would be quitting PTI. "We never thought we would part ways with the party," he said.

Former Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan on Friday announced to quit Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf over May 9 mayhem.

Addressing a press conference at Islamabad Press Club, Awan strongly condemned the attacks on military installations and demanded strict action against the people involved in the riots. She said he joined politics for a nation-

al cause and added the state is more sacred than politics. Ms. Awan alleged that May 9 conspiracy was hatched from Zaman Park to make the "foreign handlers" happy. Pakistan and Imran Khan cannot move together, she added.

Lashing out at the former prime minister and PTI chief, Firdous Ashiq Awan said Imran Khan 'uses' people for his personal gains. She said she will continue to remain active in politics and will not disappoint the people of his electoral constituency. Earlier in the day, renowned singer Salman Ahmad, a close aide of former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan condemned the May 9 violence.

Salman Ahmad said that the events of May 9, following the arrest of Imran Khan in the Al-Qadir Trust corruption case by NAB, hurt him. He also demanded punishment for those involved in the May 9 mayhem according to the law of the land.

Over two dozen PTI leaders, workers and ticket holders have quit the party after strongly condemning the May 9 vandalism in which rioters torched military installations and public and private buildings causing millions of rupees loss. Earlier on Thursday night, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretary Information Punjab Mussarat Cheema and her husband Jamshed Iqbal Cheema quit the party and politics.

The process of separations from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) continues as former MNA Khurram Shahzad separated from the party on Friday.

Addressing a press conference, the teary-eyed leader condemned the May 9 vandalism. "I entered politics 11 years ago. I have now decided to resign as

deputy secretary general", he said. Mr Shahzad clarified that he was jumping ship without any duress, adding that he will continue to serve the country and was not leaving it. Speaking about his political future, he said, "I will consult companions regarding my political future."

Former adviser to the chief minister on prisons in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Malik Qasim Khan on Friday parted ways with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf over May 9 violent protests.

Addressing a press conference, Mr Khan condemned the violence witnessed on May 9 when PTI supporters staged protests in various cities following the arrest of Imran Khan in the Al-Qadir Trust case. "I cannot spend more time in such a party," he said. He lamented that there was no justice within the PTI, adding that the former prime minister was not a man of commitment.

## Lady judge threat case

ISLAMABAD (INP): Islamabad District and Sessions Court on Friday dismissed PTI Chairman Imran Khan's appeal against the summoning order of the trial court in the lady judge threat case.

Islamabad District and Sessions Judge Tahir Abbas Supra issued a detailed verdict. Earlier, Judicial Magistrate Islamabad Malik Aman upheld former Prime Minister Imran Khan's bailable arrest warrant in a threat to the women judge case. The court accepted Imran Khan's request for exemption from appearance on Thursday and adjourned the hearing till June 8. The court said the warrant at Imran Khan's residence could not be complied with through proper legal procedures.

## Marriyum backs punishment for rioters

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Friday said the advocates and spokespersons of the armed group that attacked national heritage, civilian properties and sensitive installations on May 9 had received fitting response from the United States.

"The punishment of the activists and their leaders for attacking the Capitol Hill in the United States shows the difference between democratic protest and attack on the state," she said in a tweet. The minister said whether it was the US, Britain or Pakistan, no state tolerated the desecration of the national symbols in sheer violation of constitution and law.

Meanwhile Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb also expressed grief and sorrow over the demise of senior journalist Ashraf Mumtaz.

The minister, in a condolence message, prayed to the Almighty Allah to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage and fortitude to the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss with equanimity. She also sympathized with the bereaved family and said she was saddened by hearing the news of the senior journalist's demise. The services rendered by Ashraf Mumtaz in journalism field would always be remembered, she added.

## Imran's medical report reveals use of Alcohol: Patel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Abdul Qadir Patel on Friday said that traces of alcohol and cocaine were revealed in the medical reports of PTI chief Imran Khan while there was no mention of leg fracture in it.

The minister addressing a press conference here, said that after arrest of Imran Khan, his medical test was carried out at PIMS Hospital by a five-member board consisting of senior doctors. Report of the test could not be revealed at the time due to the immunity granted to Imran Khan by the court, he said adding that but it was a public document so it was being placed before the public.

Qadir Patel further said that Imran Khan walked around with a plaster cast on his leg for 5 to 6 months, but there is no mention of any fracture in the report. The minister said that urine samples were also taken for medical purposes and it was in the knowledge of Imran Khan.

The preliminary laboratory report revealed use of toxic substances including alcohol and cocaine, he said adding that detailed report would be presented before the public as well. Qadir Patel said that report by the panel of doctors also put a question mark on Khan's mental condition stating that his conduct and behavior was not like a mentally fit and sound person as a man with in a healthy state of mind could not behave like that.

He said that events of May 9 proved that Imran Khan used the youth for his own interests and he destroyed the norms and traditions of the society as well as key values of decency and tolerance in the politics. Responding to a question, the minister said that the doctors who reported fracture on Imran Khan's leg could be made answerable to relevant forums under charges of unfair practices.

He said that what happened on May 9 never took place before, though former president Asif Ali Zardari was arrested in court and PPP leader Faryal Talpur was shifted from hospital to jail on Eid night.

## No one should object if rioters punished: PM

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that no one should object if the government of Pakistan punished the arsonists of May 9 as per law, the way the United States had done to its citizens for storming the Capitol building on January 6, 2021.

"Today, in the city of Quaid, we all are ashamed of what happened on May 9 in Lahore. Justice requires to punish the perpetrators like the rioters of the Capitol building on January 6, 2021. If that punishment was legal, then no one should object if we do so under our law for the desecration of our martyrs," the PM said.

Addressing the ground-breaking ceremony of K-IV water supply project here, the PM said the politics of political chaos culminated on May 9 in the form of the desecration of the nation's martyrs, Ghazis and security installations. He said the strings of the May 9 riots were attached to abroad and that the desecration of martyrs and installations on the instigation of Imran Khan was the darkest chapter in the nation's history.

Recalling his recent interaction with the family members of martyrs, the PM said their dear ones had rendered sacrifices for the country but the arsonists desecrated their monuments. The prime minister said the person who always blamed others for plunders had resorted to arson when arrested on charges of corruption. "What kind of politics is this," he questioned and said no political leader in the past ever instigated an attack on Jinnah House or military installations, despite having faced many difficulties.

He said the leaders of MQM and PPP - both representing Sindh - gave a message of national unity which was a must for national development. He said the coalition government coped with huge challenges through collective wisdom, including floods, inflation, IMF and also the nefarious designs of chaotic politics which culminated on the darkest day of May 9. Committing to revive Pakistan's lost grandeur, the prime minister lamented the unnecessary delay in

the K-IV project that was meant to provide drinking water to millions of the Karachi people.

Prime Minister Shehbaz asked the relevant ministries to provide uninterrupted funding to ensure project's completion without further delay. He said the project was "most important" for him because the people of Quaid's city, were deprived of the drinking water, despite it being a city with the highest revenue generation and taxation. The prime minister assured that he would put the project at top priority in the upcoming budget and provide maximum funds for its early completion.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said the prime minister was keenly focusing the development of Sindh, particularly Karachi. He said the two major political parties of Karachi voted for the prime minister and his government enjoyed a "super majority" in Sindh. He said the people of Sindh also pinned hopes on the prime minister for the resolution of their issues. Bilawal said K-IV project faced immense delay and that Karachi needed "Shehbaz Speed" for the resolution of its issues.

Regarding the floods, the foreign minister said concerted efforts were needed for the rehabilitation of the people in Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, South Punjab and other areas, including the metropolises. He said around 52 percent of Sindh's educational infrastructure had been damaged by the floods impacting the education of around 47 percent population. Bilawal Bhutto said the leaders of the PPP, MQM and other parties also faced jails and other hardships but they always stood for democracy, without resorting to violence.

Minister for Water Resources Syed Khurshid Shah said the project was of utmost importance to meet Karachi's water needs. He said the first phase would provide 260 million gallons of water to the city. He also requested the prime minister to announce the K-5 project as the K-4 would be insufficient to cope with future needs. Shah said due to the government's efforts and dedication, the country

would neither default nor its economy would destabilize.

Minister for Maritime Affairs Faisal Sabzwari said the K-IV project was also part of the agreement between the MQM and the ruling coalition. He said unnecessary delay in the project led to a huge increase in the cost. He said the whole province including Sindh chief minister had serious reservations about the census. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said starting from 2002, the project was used to be an example of ill-planning and had faced immense delay.

The project would cumulatively cost around Rs200 billion which could have been around Rs100 billion had it been started timely. He said storage of Keenjhar Lake would have to be enhanced as the Irrigation Department has already proposed a project for the water body's expansion. He urged the federal government to ensure the provision of funds for the timely completion of the project.

Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori said under the leadership of prime minister and Foreign Minister Bilawal, the project was moving ahead. He said for the first time, the federal and provincial governments were on the same page to execute the much-delayed project. He said the May 9-like incidents had united the nation and thwarted the designs of the miscreants. In his address, WAPDA Chairman Engr Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd) said K-IV water project would supply 650 million gallons of water to Karachi. The first phase would provide 260 million gallons and 390 million gallons to be supplied in the second phase.

He said under the project, a 111-kilometer-long pipeline would be laid from Keenjhar Lake to Karachi. The first phase would cost Rs126 billion as Rs33 billion had already been spent on the project. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Water Resources Minister Syed Khurshid Shah, Maritime Affairs Minister Faisal Sabzwari, Syed Qaim Ali Shah and others were also present.

## Efforts being made to 'crush' PTI, says Imran

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on Friday asserted that attempts were being made to "crush his party" on the pretext of May 9 events, wherein military installations including Jinnah House in Lahore came under attack.

Addressing the party workers and supporters, the former prime minister lambasted the federal government for "imposing the law of the jungle" in the country, saying that fundamental rights have been eliminated. While condemning the events that took place on May 9 — the day he was arrested in Al-Qadir Trust, Imran Khan asked who will not condemn those incidents.

The PTI chief said he was first alerted about the protests of May 9 by Chief Justice in a Supreme Court hearing. "Who does not condemn? Have we ever said we don't condemn? Will anyone want his own army to be weak?"

He alleged that there was a crackdown under way on his party across Pakistan without any investigation on the burning of the Lahore Corp Commander's House — also known as Jinnah House. "Attempts were being made to crush Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

(PTI) on the pretext of May 9 events," the former premier added.

Khan questioned why his party workers and supporters were being arrested everywhere if the burning of the Corps Commander's House only took place in Lahore. "What have people in Karachi to do with it? Why are you catching people elsewhere?" he asked. He further said that now enforced divorces are happening across Pakistan, adding that politicians were being forced to quit PTI. "It is thought that the party is being weakened by such acts," he said.

Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan has thanked the sitting PML-N led PDM government for adding his name to no-fly list, says he has no plans to travel abroad. He tweeted, "I want to thank the government for putting my name on the ECL as I have no plans to travel abroad, because I neither have any properties or businesses abroad nor even a bank account outside the country."

"If and when I do get an opportunity for a holiday, it will be in our northern mountains, my favourite place on earth" he added. It was worth mentioned here that the government on Thursday placed the names

of PTI Chairman Imran Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi and dozens of other leaders who have or still not quit the party on the "no-fly list" on the grounds that they might flee abroad.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Interior and Legal Affairs Attallah Tarar confirmed to that names of the deposed premier, his wife and several other PTI leaders had been added to the "no-fly list". He refrained from using the term "Exit Control List" (ECL). The SAPM, who has the status of a federal minister, further said former and incumbent PTI leaders including Qasim Suri, Murad Saeed, Hamnadh Azhar, Yasmin

Rashid and Aslam Iqbal were also among those whose names had been added to the list. The names of those, who have recently parted ways with the PTI including Asad Umar and Maleeka Bokhari, have also been included in the list in an attempt to keep them in the country. Though the no-fly list or ECL is a legal tool to restrict the movement of 'dangerous' individuals and stop them from flying abroad, the names of political opponents have continuously been added to it by successive governments for years now.

## Awan 'departs for London'

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Prominent lawyer and PTI leader Babar Awan on Friday left for the London amid the party leaders' mass exodus following a country-wide crackdown in the backdrop of the May 9 mayhem and attack on the civil and military installations, sources told media. According to well-placed sources, the counsel of PTI Chairman Imran has left for London from Islamabad Airport via a foreign airline at 1pm today.

## Drizzle in city, new wet spell from Sunday

LAHORE (APP): Drizzle in the provincial capital on Friday morning turned the weather pleasant, while the Meteorological office has predicted another wet spell from Sunday, which is likely to continue till Wednesday in upper and central parts of the province.

According to a spokesman for the Pakistan Meteorological Department, another westerly wave is likely to enter western and upper parts of the country on Sunday, May 28 and likely to persist till Wednesday, May 31. Under the influence of this weather system, wind-dust thunderstorm with rain is expected in various Punjab districts including Layyah, Bhakkar, DG Khan, Rajanpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalnagar, Multan, Sahiwal, Khanewal, Okara and Pakpattan from May 28 to 30. Wind-dust thunderstorm with rain, and hail-storm at some places and isolated heavy falls are expected in Gujranwala, Sargodha, Sheikhupura, Faisalabad, Jhang, Toba Tek Singh, Nankana, Mandi Bahauddin, Khushab, Mianwali, Narowal, Sialkot, Kasur, Lahore and Jhelum from May 28 to 31 with gaps.

Dust storm and wind storm may cause damage to infrastructure and standing crops in Punjab during these days, and farmers have been advised to remain cautious during the forecast period, he added.

## IRSA releases 183,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 183,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 216,100 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1428.22 feet and was 30.22 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and out-flow in the dam was recorded as 72,300 cusecs and 63,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1120.00 feet, which was 70.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 58,400 cusecs and 35,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 87,900, 63,300, 42,300 and 14,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 41,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 29,000 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

## Power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Friday issued 2-day power suspension programme for Saturday and Sunday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period on Saturday from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Rawalpindi City Circle, Nogi.

# Pakistan gives value to its friendship with China: Governor

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori has said that Pakistan gives value to its friendship with China. He said that the complete cooperation of China in the development of Pakistan was appreciable.

He stated this at a dinner hosted by Prince Jam Qaim Ali in honour of newly

appointed Chinese Consul General Yang Yundong here.

Consul Generals of various countries were also present on the occasion. The Governor discussed with the Chinese Consul General to further strengthen Pak-Sino relations, enhance investment and other issues of mutual interests.

## Makaneole stresses expanding Pak-US relations

LAHORE (APP): US Consul General Lahore William K. Makaneole has said that Pakistan has been and continues to be a valued partner of the United States and his country looks forward to deepening and expanding bilateral relationships over the coming years.

During a four-day visit to districts of Pakpattan, Sahiwal and Bahawalnagar, which concluded on Friday, he said, "Our governments have partnered on a range of issues and our people-to-people ties remain strong."

During his visit, the US diplomat met local govern-

ment representatives and members of the business community to deepen robust partnership between the United States and Pakistan. He also visited the shrines of Baba Fariduddin Ganjshakar, Tajuddin Chishti and the landmark Harappa Museum.

Paying respects at the shrines of famous Sufi saints, Makaneole said, "These shrines symbolise diverse cultural, historical and religious heritage of Punjab and Pakistan."

He said that founded in 2001, the Ambassadors

Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) preserves historical and cultural treasures under threat from environmental pressure or lack of resources. He said the AFCP had invested more than \$7.6 million on 32 cultural preservation projects. The restored sites include Buddhist monasteries, Hindu monuments, Sufi shrines and relics of the Mughal empire.

Consul General Makaneole also visited the Harappa Museum in Sahiwal, a noteworthy archaeological site.

## Govt committed to facilitate youth: Tanveer

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Rana Tanveer Hussain on Friday said that the Government was committed to facilitating the country's youth to pursue their academic goals and play their role in national development.

The Minister was addressing a distribution ceremony organised by Higher Education Commission (HEC) under the Prime Minister's Electric Wheelchair Programme (Phase-III). On this occasion, 37 Electric Wheelchairs were distributed among the students of different universities. Rana Tanveer observed that differently-abled youth are very talented and have a great vision about progress in life.

He said the Government has launched a number of initiatives under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme as youth are the country's asset.

He stressed the need for ensuring maximum facilitation to the youth facing physical challenges. Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed briefed the Minister on

the implementation of various projects under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme. He informed the Minister that HEC has collected data of physically challenged university students particularly those facing mobility issues, visual impairment, and hearing problems. He added that as the next stage of the scheme, these students will be provided with the gadgets and tools required. In her opening remarks, Executive Director HEC Dr. Shaista Sohail shed light on the background and status of the Prime Minister's Electric Wheelchair Scheme.

She said that the distribution of a total of 600 electric wheelchairs among students with different needs was planned in three phases of the scheme, launched in 2017. She said 206 electric wheelchairs were provided to students in the first phase, while 159 wheelchairs were handed over to students in the second phase. She maintained that in the ongoing last phase, 240 wheelchairs are to be provided to the students.

## Steps being taken to pay pension to ex-staffers of KMC

KARACHI (APP): Administrator Karachi Dr. Syed Saifur Rahman on Friday said steps are being taken to provide immediate payment of pension to the retired officers and other staff of KMC and in this context leave encashment, pension fixation and retirement orders should be approved simultaneously and other facilities should be provided. In this regard, the HRM department is coordinating with the focal persons of all the departments, so that the retired employees do not face any problem. He said this while reviewing the work started under the HRM department regarding the timely processing of cases of retired employees and providing them with facilities on the occasion of retirement, said a statement.

The Administrator Karachi said that the department of Internal Audit, Government Audit, Pension and Welfare department and Payroll department have also been directed to provide all possible support in this regard. In all the departments of KMC, the concerned officers dealing with the retirement of employees should be in full contact with the HRM department and all the required documents and records should be provided so that the process can be completed without delay.

Meanwhile, under the direction of Administrator Karachi Dr. Syed Saifur

Rehman, Director of Retirement Affairs of HRM Department, Muhammad Fakhruddin, under the supervision of Senior Director HRM Jameel Farooqui, held a meeting with focal persons dealing with retirement issues from various departments of KM to facilitate the retirement of employee of KMC.

He said that according to the notification of the Sindh government, the file of the concerned employee can be processed six months before retirement and leave encashment, pension, fixation and retirement orders should be approved simultaneously from the HRM department, every possible effort should be made that the no gap should come between employee's salary and pension and the stove of their house should be kept burning, on this occasion the relevant officers of Internal Audit Department, Government Audit, Pension and Welfare and Payroll Department were also present. He said that Administrator Karachi Dr. Syed Saifur Rahman and Municipal Commissioner Syed Shujaat Hussain have given clear instructions that maximum facilities should be provided to the retired employee and their official matters should not be delayed or kept pending, all focal persons should Cooperate in this regard so that hundred percent implementation of the instructions of Administrator Karachi can be ensured.



KARACHI: Renowned Singer and Philanthropist Shehzad Roy calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. Governor Sindh Kamran Tessori was also present in the meeting.

## Talha, Saad, Saudi ambassador discuss facilities for pilgrims

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Senator Muhammad Talha Mehmood accompanying with Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki Friday held a crucial meeting with Aviation Minister Khawaja Saad Rafiq in a significant development aimed at enhancing the pilgrimage experience for Pakistanis.

The meeting focused on providing better facilities to pilgrims during air travel and consulting on the challenges faced during the upcoming Hajj Operation 2023.

The meeting marked a collaborative effort between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to ensure a smooth and comfortable pilgrimage for Pakistanis traveling to the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah.

Talha, expressing his gratitude to the Saudi Ambassador, emphasized the importance of improving facilities for the pilgrims.

He acknowledged the challenges faced by the pilgrims during air trav-

el and stressed the need to find effective solutions to address them.

During the discussion, various aspects of the Hajj Operation 2023 were thoroughly examined, with a specific focus on air travel arrangements. Saad shared valuable insights on the current facilities available for pilgrims and proposed enhancements to further improve their experience.

He highlighted the importance of coordination between the two countries to ensure the successful implementation of these improvements. Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki commended Pakistan's efforts to facilitate its citizens' pilgrimage to the holy sites and assured his full support in making the necessary arrangements.

He emphasized the long-standing friendship and cooperation between the two countries, underscoring the commitment to providing the best possible services to Pakistani pilgrims. The officials discussed various measures to streamline the process of air travel during Hajj Operation 2023,

including reducing waiting times at airports, enhancing baggage handling, and ensuring comfortable seating arrangements.

They also explored ways to further improve communication channels between the relevant authorities of the two countries to swiftly address issues. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to work closely together to implement the proposed improvements effectively.

Both the sides agreed to establish a joint working group that would monitor the progress and ensure smooth execution of the discussed initiatives. The collaborative efforts of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia reflect their dedication to providing the highest standards of facilities and services to pilgrims undertaking the sacred journey of Hajj. As the Hajj Operation 2023 continue, the outcome of this meeting is expected to significantly enhance the overall experience for Pakistani pilgrims, fostering a sense of tranquility and spiritual fulfillment during their pilgrimage.

## Plantation campaigns to be headed by environmentalists in future: official

LAHORE (APP): Tree plantation campaigns would be headed by environmentalists and experts instead of officials or bureaucrats in future for better performance.

This was stated by a senior official of the Punjab Forest Department while talking to APP, here on Friday. He said the Punjab government was continuously pursuing its ambitious plan of planting over trees across the province. The government would work on another plan to clear the river banks to ensure smooth flow of water and natural growth of trees, whose survival rate would be much more than those trees planted in isolation in

different parts of the province.

Giving details of a recent review meeting on the tree plantation campaigns, he revealed that billions of rupees had been spent on such campaigns. The official said that the relevant authorities ignored conducting an empirical study in past about availability of water for growth of trees, and later on groundwater had to be extracted for such plants, putting strain on already depleting reserves.

The incumbent government has noticed that the previous government only focused on plantation of trees without giving attention to trees

important factors that were necessary for survival of the plants including water, light, nutrients and temperature. He said it is necessary to plant right tree at the right place and ensure quality over quantity. This approach may need more initial investment per tree, but it would result in larger-growing, healthier, long-living trees, which would provide environmental, social, and health benefits, he added.

"It is also important to monitor and track survival and growth of trees, planted as part of campaigns; otherwise, it would not prove to be a fruitful exercise," he said adding that unfortunately.

## 100,000 graduates to be given AI training in next five years

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque has said that 100,000 graduates will be given Artificial Intelligence (AI) training in the next five years in collaboration with academia.

In a statement he said, that Artificial Intelligence (AI) use and its promotion in the country is the need of the hour.

He said that Pakistan has to progress in multiple fields in order to move alongside the digital world.

Regarding the introduction of the first National Artificial Intelligence Policy in Pakistan, Amin Ul Haque said that a draft of the National Artificial Intelligence Policy has been uploaded on the website of the Ministry of IT & Telecom. The minister that the draft is open for suggestions from the masses including civil society, experts and relevant industry, and local and international institutions by June 15, 2023, after which it will be finalized in the light of suggestions.

He said that the Ministry of IT is going to set up a Policy Committee comprising industry, academia and AI experts, which will give proposals to tackle different challenges regarding Artificial Intelligence.

He said that this AI Policy will be helpful for protecting data. He said that both foreign and local

investors will be encouraged to invest in AI research & development. He said that modern technology will be helpful in the development of local industries.

اطلاع عام

عوام الناس کو مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ پاکستان ٹیکر 76 ب-5، 5 اور مکران ٹیکر 201 ٹیکر C-1 اور 10 رقبہ KDA 2 کے علاقے میں جو کہ طارق قریبی علاقہ بلاتلین کی قریبی کنٹرولنگ کوہات حال کے نام پر ہیں نے مذکورہ پلاٹ اور مکانات عام طارق قریبی علاقہ پادشاہ گل سنگھ کے ذیلی اسکے کوہات سے جو کہ سرحد رقبہ کوہات کے پاس ویڈیو نمبر 248 اور 249 کی پی ٹی نمبر 4 پر موجود 11/05/2023 کو درج ہے۔ اناری ٹولڈر طارق قریبی نے مذکورہ مکان اور پلاٹ کی فزائسٹری درخواست گزار سے ایس آر جی شخص فارم، بنگ اور اس کے کوئی اعتراض ہو یا مذکورہ مکان پر کوئی اعتراض ہو 15 یوم کے اندر بعد بلا سگ ایفیر KDA کوہات سے تقریبی طور پر بعد ثبوت رابطہ کریں۔ بصورت دیگر مذکورہ مکان اور پلاٹ کو اناری ٹولڈر کے ماحوزہ مذکورہ کے نام فزائسٹری کر دیے جائیں گے۔ اور بعد میں کوئی عذر قابل نہ ہو گا۔ پنجاب وڈ ایریکٹور این ایریا یو ایڈیٹس پبلشمنٹ اتھارٹی کوہات

پاکستان پوسٹ

دفتر پوسٹ ماسٹر جنرل خیبر پختونخوا پشاور

ڈیپٹی منسٹر برائے تعیناتی پرائیویٹ سکیورٹی گارڈز

پوسٹ ماسٹر جنرل خیبر پختونخوا پشاور کو غیر پختونخوا کے مختلف ڈاکخانے جات کے لیے رجسٹرڈ کمپنیاں سے سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز ڈاؤن لوڈ کیا گیا ہے۔ 2004 کے تحت رجسٹرڈ درخواست دہندگان۔

ضروری ضوابط۔ 1۔ تمام سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 2۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز ڈاؤن لوڈ کیا گیا ہے۔ 3۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 4۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 5۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 6۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 7۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 8۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 9۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 10۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 11۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 12۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 13۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 14۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 15۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 16۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 17۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 18۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 19۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 20۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 21۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 22۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 23۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 24۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 25۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 26۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 27۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 28۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 29۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 30۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 31۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 32۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 33۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 34۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 35۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 36۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 37۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 38۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 39۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 40۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 41۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 42۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 43۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 44۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 45۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 46۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 47۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 48۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 49۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 50۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 51۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 52۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 53۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 54۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 55۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 56۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 57۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 58۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 59۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 60۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 61۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 62۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 63۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 64۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 65۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 66۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 67۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 68۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 69۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 70۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 71۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 72۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 73۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 74۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 75۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 76۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 77۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 78۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 79۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 80۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 81۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 82۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 83۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 84۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 85۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 86۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 87۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 88۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 89۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 90۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 91۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 92۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 93۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 94۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 95۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 96۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 97۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 98۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 99۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔ 100۔ سہ ماہی تعیناتی سکیورٹی گارڈز حائز درجہ اولیٰ ہونی چاہئیں۔



LAHORE: Visitors watching artworks during painting exhibition on Sufism in Al Hamar Hall.



**PESHAWAR:** Corps Commander Lieutenant General Sardar Hassan Azhar Hayat addressing during interactive session with ulema and students of the various religious madaris at the concluding session of 'Madaris Youth Leader Summit'.

## Seminar on 'countering violent extremism' held



### F.P. Report

**PESHAWAR:** Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Center for Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism and University of Peshawar agreed upon signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for counter-extremism research and technical support.

A one-day conference on countering violent extremism was organized at Jamia Peshawar under the aegis of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Center for Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism. Besides, Chief Coordination Officer of the Centre Dr. Muhammad Ayaz, Director General Dr. Muhammad Qasim, Peshawar University's Dean of Social Sciences Dr. Johar Ali, Head of Institute of Education and Research Dr. Hafiz Inamullah, Chairman of International Relations Department Prof. Dr. Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, Chairperson of Gender Studies Department Dr. Anush, Principal of Khyber Law College, heads and teachers of various departments of the university participated in the conference.

Chief Coordination Officer Dr. Muhammad Ayaz gave a detailed briefing to the participants on the establishment of the centre, its objectives, and its future plan of action. Highlighting the background of the centre, he said that extremism and violence were among the

serious problems facing the country at the time.

Reform, development, and prosperity in society are not possible without controlling extremism and violence. He said that this center is a unique institution of its kind across the country, where there will be not only research on scientific lines regarding the causes of extremism and its prevention, but it will also provide guidance to the institutions responsible for the elimination of extremism. Dean of Social Sciences Professor Dr. Johar Ali said that the Centre of Excellence will not only provide research support to the students of the University of Peshawar but will also present recommendations in other forums as an institution in the light of this research.

The head of the Institute of Education and Research, Prof. Dr. Hafiz Inamullah, while addressing the conference, said that education on countering violent extremism and promoting peace is very important for school students and teachers. Research in various fields of social sciences has been done, and the centre of excellence on countering violent extremism can start training programs in educational institutions by utilizing this research. Professor Dr. Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, chairman of the International Relations Department of Peshawar University, said that the thinking of university stu-

dents has matured and comparatively it is more difficult to change their thinking, but at the level of primary, middle and high schools, it is easy to change the thinking and bring the students of these levels in a positive direction. So the centre must give more emphasis on these levels.

Prof. Dr. Anush, Chairperson of Department of Gender Studies, suggested that experts from relevant fields should be included in the board of governors of the centre of excellence on countering violent extremism so that expert opinions are also included in decision making process. On this occasion, the director general of the centre, Dr. Muhammad Qasim said that adequate opportunities have been provided to utilise the input provided by the experts in the relevant fields in the rules of the formation of the centre of excellence. To benefit from the research work of the students and faculty of Peshawar University, a memorandum of understanding will be signed between the Centre for Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism and the University of Peshawar.

On this occasion, the principal of Khyber Law College offered to provide technical assistance in drafting rules and preparing other legal documents for the centre of excellence on countering violent extremism.

## High Court acquits alleged murder Humayun Khan

**PESHAWAR:** A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Sahibzada Asadullah acquitted alleged murder by accepting appeal against his conviction of lifetime imprisonment along with Rs1 million fine, on Friday.

According to prosecution, Amjad Khan has shot killed Abdul Rauf while injured Fazal along with his friends in 2010 in the premises Hangu police station over pathway dispute.

Model Court Hangu in 2022 convicted petitioner for lifetime imprisonment along Rs5 lakh in murder while imposed five years of imprisonment along with Rs5 lakh for injuring other.

The counsel Abdul Fayyaz advocate argued that the crime was happened in the night it didn't established that who has opened firing while on the other hand several persons are nominated in the First Information Report.

The counsel further argued that prosecution has failed presence of petitioner at the crime scene while police's evidences are contradictory and requested acquittal of Amjad from his conviction. PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Asadullah acquitted Amjad Khan by accepting appeal after conclusion of arguments.

## Member Senate KMU retired F.P. Report

**PESHAWAR:** Member Senate of Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar Zia ul Haq Sarhadi has retired after completing his three-year tenure as a senator. Meanwhile, vice-chancellor KMU Prof Dr. Zia ul Haq praised the outgoing member of KMU Senate, well-known businessperson, philanthropist, and President of Abasin Column Writers Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Zia ul Haq Sarhadi for his services to the university. He expressed these views on the occasion of presenting the memento and certificate of appreciation of the university in the ceremony organized in connection with the retirement of Zia ul Haq Sarhadi.

Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq said that Zia ul Haq Sarhadi is a sincere, hard-working, and experienced social worker and the services he has rendered during his tenure as a member of the Senate of KMU are commendable. He said that the role played by Zia ul Haq Sarhadi in the uplifting and development of KMU on various occasions apart from the Senate forum is unforgettable. He expressed the expectation that Zia ul Haq Sarhadi will continue his long-standing relationship with KMU despite his retirement from the membership of the Senate and will keep supporting his generous support to KMU with his experience and wise advice.

# KP CM inaugurates Oxygen Generation Plant at Rajar Hospital

### F.P. Report

**PESHAWAR:** The caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Azam Khan on Friday paid a visit to district Charsadda where he inaugurated newly established state of the art Oxygen Generation Plant at Women and Children Hospital Rajar. The plant having the oxygen production capacity of 500 liters per minute has been established at a cost of Rs 105 million with the financial support of United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the oxygen plant, the Chief Minister said the establishment of Oxygen Generation Plant was really a great achievement which will not only ensure uninterrupted supply of medical oxygen to women and children hospital Rajar but would also be helpful to meet the requirement of oxygen at other hospitals of Charsadda and adjacent districts. He said that the plant can also become an important source of revenue generation for Women and Children Hospital Rajar by providing additional oxygen to the private sector hospitals. The chief minister added that thousands of children died due to unavailability of oxygen; and establishing this state of the art oxygen

generation plant was truly a blessing for the children suffering from pneumonia, corona and other such diseases. He maintained that establishment of such plant had become dire need after the outbreak of Corona Pandemic adding that the plant will play an important role to save thousands of precious human lives by ensuring uninterrupted supply of oxygen to the hospitals.

Muhammad Azam Khan thanked UNICEF for extending its assistance in establishing the oxygen generation plant, and termed this a great initiative of UNICEF for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He also revealed that the UNICEF was also working on setting up another such plant in Abbottabad as well. He requested UNICEF to extend its cooperation in establishing an oxygen generation plant in southern region of the province. Later, the chief minister also visited various sections of W&C hospital Rajar and directed the quarries concerned to ensure provision of all the required facilities to the patients in hospital.

Meanwhile, talking to media representatives, the chief minister said that the caretaker provincial government was going all out to steer the province out of current financial crunches adding that billions of rupees of the province are due to the

federal government on account of different federal transfers. He said that erstwhile FATA had been merged into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but the share of newly merged districts in NFC has not yet been provided. "In order to resolve the financial issues of the province, a number of letters have been sent to the Prime Minister of Pakistan and federal finance minister," he told.

Responding to a question on this occasion, the Chief minister said that he had requested the political leaders in a joint session the other day for their cooperation to get the legitimate rights of the province adding that he, along with other political leaders met Prime Minister during his recent visit to Peshawar and briefed him in details about the financial constraints of the province. Federal Finance minister Ishaq Dar and other relevant authorities of federal government were also present in that meeting. He made it clear that it was the first priority of the caretaker provincial government to steer the province out of current financial issues adding that all possible efforts would be made for this purpose. In response to another question, Muhammad Azam Khan said if there had been financial irregularities in the past, it is the responsibility of NAB and other relevant institutions to investigate it.

## New series of rains likely to start in KP from Sunday

### F.P. Report

**PESHAWAR:** New series of rains are likely to start in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from Sunday, an official of the Meteorology Department said here Friday.

Because of the prediction of the heavy rain, the Director General, PDMA instructed district administration to take precautionary measures in view of thundershowers and hailstorm and should ensure the availability of small and heavy machinery by the district administration.

The PDMA also issued necessary instructions for the farmers of sensitive districts. In the instructions, the PDMA advised the farmers to make proper arrangements for their activities keeping in view the forecast as crops are threatened by strong winds and hailstorms.

PDMA in this connection said that storm drains should be monitored from time to time besides ensuring dissemination of advisory to tourists and local communities in sensitive upland areas. PDMA also instructed the concerned quarters to convey the messages of the heavy rain, thundershowers and hailstorm should be delivered in local languages. It should also ensure awareness of adverse effects on standing crops and livestock besides instruction to all concerned line departments to be vigilant in maintaining road links and alternative routes should be provided for traffic to avoid road closure.

The PDMA instructed the district administrations to make special arrangements passengers should be warned in advance on provincial and national highways in sensitive areas besides relevant authorities should transfer people to safe waiting areas.

It should ensure the availability of emergency services personnel at the sensitive points with availability of basic commodities including medical personnel and medicines. PDMA in its advisory directed the district administration to inform the tourists about the weather situation.

The tourists should take special precautions while traveling as a tourist site, said the PDMA letter. The official of the Met Office said that the rains are likely to continue intermittently till May 31 while the PDMA's Emergency Operation Center is fully operational, and the public can contact our helpline 1700 for information and guidance.

## Capacity building workshop concluded

### F.P. Report

**PESHAWAR:** A four days capacity building workshop concluded in which 26 businessmen from clearing and forwarding businesses cluster have successfully completed their training course. The workshop was organized by Khyber Pass Economic Corridor (KPEC) and Empowerment thru Creative integration (ECI).

The purpose of the training was to enhance the capacity and business management skills of clearing & forwarding businesses in the area. Based on the diagnostic study and training need assessment, 500 individuals from selected business clusters in districts Peshawar and Khyber are being trained in business management skills, under the capacity building program.

The training was followed by a certificate distribution ceremony. The ceremony was graced by Imran Zahoor, Project Director, KPEC. He appreciated the activity and highlighted the importance of the business management skills in business growth and sustainability.

Different stakeholders participated in the certificate distribution ceremony including KP Board of Investment, FBR Turkham, Pak-Afghan joint chamber of commerce, KP commercial importers & exporters, Mohmand Chamber of Commerce, Khyber Chamber of Commerce. Moreover, the participants also include an association of clearing and forwarding businesses and representatives of other business clusters in the region.

## Police to form special security unit

### F.P. Report

**PESHAWAR:** After the violent incidents, Peshawar Police have decided to form a special security unit besides establishing a Red Zone Security Circle in the provincial capital Peshawar.

Troops of Special Security Unit will be deployed in Cantt Area Red Zone Area, CCPO Ashfaq Anwar told media men here on Friday soon after attending a meeting regarding formation of Special Security Unit. The in-charge of the Special Security Force will be an officer of SP rank, CCPO Ashfaq Anwar disclosed.

In the first phase, the filing of red zone entrances and important buildings will be completed, Police officials said. After completion of Peshawar profiling, the final security draft will be sent to the Central Police Office, Police Officials said. The Special Security Unit will have modern equipment and will be connected to the operation room, officials said.



**PESHAWAR:** Activists of Pakistan Zindabad Movement KP holding a rally in favour of Pakistan Army. — F.P. photo

## Flour prices rapidly dropped

### F.P. Report

**PESHAWAR:** Reduction in flour prices in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Peshawar with the price of an 80 kg sack of flour has been reduced by Rs 2000. President of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Atta Dealers Association Rambail Khan told media here on Friday.

He disclosed that the 80 kg bag of flour was reduced from Rs. 13000 to Rs. 11000 and said that there would further be reduction in the flour prices. He said in the 20kg bag of flour reduction of Rs.700 recorded in the market. The price of a 20 kg bag of flour has been reduced from Rs 3300 to Rs 2600, he said, adding, "Ban on supply of wheat from Punjab has been relaxed." Flour prices are likely to decrease further in the next few days, Rambail Khan said.

Meanwhile, the price of ginger hit an all time high along with other food items including fruits and vegetables, a survey of the market revealed here Friday.

Despite issuing official rates, the price of the ginger

## Four medical stores sealed

### F.P. Report

**PESHAWAR:** Following instructions issued by Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Shah Fahad, Assistant Commissioner Sayyeda Zainab Naqvi along with drug inspectors Muhammad Zeeshan and Madina Anjum on Friday inspected medical stores at University Road here.

During the operation drug samples from medical stores were inspected however a medical store named Irfan Medicos was sealed for not having the right DSL. Some other medical stores including Sadiq Medical Center, City Medicos, Imran Medicos and Makka Medicos were also found guilty of selling unregistered medicines, using poor packing material and allowing unauthorized salesmen. The inspection team arrested 6 owners of the unregistered medical stores and sealed three other stores. Assistant Commissioner Sayyeda Zainab Naqvi said legal action will be initiated against the arrested medical store owners and salesmen. She further said that no one would be allowed to play with the lives or people and no leniency would be shown in this regard.

hit an all time high as Rs. 800, garlic 380 and lemons Rs. 220. The prices of Onion Rs. 220, 60 tomatoes 40, green pepper 100, peas 250, okra 90 and curry 80 are being sold.

The prices of Potato Rs. 85, Kachalu 220, Eggplant or Tenda, selling up to Rs.80 per kilogram while the prices of the fruits are also beyond the purchasing

power of poor people, apples 400, mangoes 230, peaches 230 rupees per kg while Cher 400, potato 300 and banana 270 rupees per dozen are being sold. There was a reduction in the price of chicken by 5 rupees per kg and the price of live chicken in the market has been fixed at Rs 415 per kg, which was earlier at Rs. 420 per kg.

## School holidays announced

### F.P. Report

**PESHAWAR:** Department of Primary and Secondary Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has issued a

declaration by announcing summer holidays from June 1 to August 31 in Primary Schools of Summer areas. Middle and high schools

of summer areas will have holidays from June 15 to August 31, the notification said. There will be holidays from July 1 to July 31 in winter areas, it says.



**PESHAWAR:** Former MPA Malik Qasim Khan addressing a press conference at Press Club.



## In brief

### Police arrested arms smuggler F.P. Report

KOHAT: Kohat Police foiled an attempt to smuggle arms and ammunition by arresting a arms smuggler in an operation here on Friday. During the operation one arms smuggler was detained near Zero Point on the Indus Highway. The operation was carried out by SHO Jarra Sohail Shah and his Police team. The weapons found in the possession of the arrested smuggler include 2 pistols, 4 chargers and 960 cartridges. A case has been registered against the alleged arms smuggler Shah Nawaz Khan Mehr resident of Sukkur Sindh in the Police Station.

### 3 shot dead in court premises

DADU (INP): Three under custody people were shot dead over agricultural land in premises of court here on Friday. The culprits handed them over to police. The police had brought three under custody accused of Khonhara community to produce them in district court in tehsil Mehar of district Dadu. Armed men of rival group who were in dispute with them over ownership of agricultural land shot dead all three people. The culprits handed them over to police after committing triple murder. The bodies were shifted to hospital for postmortem and police after registering a case into the incidents and started investigation.

### 2,50,000 tourists visited Swat F.P. Report

MINGORA: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) has said that at least two lac, fifty thousand, nine hundred and seventeen tourists visited Swat valley of the province in last one month. In a statement issued here on Friday, the spokesman of KPCTA Saad Bin Owais said that Swat valley and many other locations of Malakand Division area favorite places of the foreign tourists. He said that the foreign tourists prefer the places, where they can do hiking and where camping was possible. The spokesman said that district administration and police had to be informed about the visit of the foreign tourists so that they review the security arrangements. Saad Bin Owais said that a cop was deputed with each foreign tourist. Besides district police at tourist spot, there also exists tourism police having capacity of 50 personnel, he added.

### Woman set on fire for honour

JHANG (INP): Pitiless brothers set their divorced sister on fire for honour in Ahmadpur Sial area of Jhang. The lady expired during treatment in hospital on Friday, police said. According to details, Zareena Bibi alias Masooma was divorced by her husband Irfan over domestic issues and was staying at parent's home. Zareena Bibi left the house of parents and gone away with Muzzamil s/o Ghulam Rasool at her own choice. When she returned back, her brothers Rajab and Aamir along with their accomplices Sabir and Baqir set her on fire by sprinkling kerosene oil. The scorched lady was shifted to Nishtar Hospital Multan where she succumbed to her wounds. Police arrested the culprits involved in the crime and after registering a case started investigation. DPO Jhang said that the accused would be awarded exemplary punishment and no one will be spared.



CHARSADDA: KP Caretaker Chief Minister Muhammad Azam Khan inaugurating Oxygen Generation Plant at Women and Children Hospital.

## Working Focus School performance reviewed

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Federal Minister of Labor and Overseas Pakistanis Sajid Hussain Turi visited Working Focus Grammar Higher Secondary School Sarai Nurang and held review meeting of the institute, on Friday.

Federal Minister also nominated focal person of Pakistan People's Party named Fozia Shireen. The institution established for the children of labourers. He reviewed the school building, educational system and the performance of the staff. The principal of the institution Sahibzada Arif Kamal welcomed him

and gave a briefing about the institution.

On this occasion, the staff told him that lack of service structure, regularization, promotions and pension are their major problems. In his address, the focal person said that these institutions have been established to provide high and quality education to the children of industrial workers.

Unfortunately, these institutions are suffering from various problems, that's why the federal government has appointed focal persons to solve these problems. In order to get direct awareness of these problems and find immedi-

ate solutions. He said that the working class is the backbone of the country's development and their children also have the right to get high and quality education.

Federal Minister said that it is the fortune of this area that such a big institution has been established here children from far away come here to get education here children have better facilities than other educational institutions. He urged the female students to study with heart and make the name of the country and the nation bright. He also assured the staff that practical steps will be taken to solve their problems.

### DG NAB visits Qazi Hussain medical complex Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHERA: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Director General (DG) Zia Ullah visited Medical Teaching Institute (MTI) Qazi Hussain Medical Complex and inspected several wards, on Friday.

Dean Nowshera Medical College Dr. Anwar Khan Wazir and Dr. Iqteedar-U-Din welcomed DG NAB while briefed about operation and facility at the medical complex. DG NAB also visited Emergency and Accidents along with other wards while declared Qazi Hussain Medical Complex better than other MTI hospital across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

During the briefing and visit of wards, director finance Ikram Ullah Khan, Director Admin Abdul Basit, deputy Medical Superintendent and administrative staff accompanied the Dean Nowshera Medical College.

### Polio virus confirmed in Hangu F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The environmental samples taken from different areas of Hangu after the suspected presence of the poliovirus on Friday confirmed the virus prevalence in areas of the district.

After the development, Health Minister Abdul Qadir Patel while talking to news persons on TV said the presence of poliovirus in Hangu is similar to the one in Afghanistan's Nangarhar province.

Terming the presence of the crippling virus in Hangu, Abdul Qadir Patel urged the parents to ensure anti-polio vaccination of their children. He said only vaccination can protect children from the poliovirus and added eliminating this virus from Pakistan is our national priority. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa district Bannu has reported the first case of 2023. Last year, the KP had reported 22 cases.

**Poliovirus found in environmental sample:** Poliovirus has been detected in an environmental sample taken from Hangu district, health ministry said on Friday.

The virus is genetically similar to the virus found in the Nangarhar province of Afghanistan. It is to be noted here that poliovirus was found in an environmental sample taken from the same location last month.



JAMRUD: Officials pray for the departed souls of martyred cops after funeral prayer in Levies Centre Shahkas. — F.P. photo

## Martyrs' Day observed at Chitral Scouts HQs

F.P. Report

CHITRAL: Like other parts of the country, Martyrs' Day was observed in Chitral in a special ceremony that was also held at the Chitral Scouts Headquarters. Commandant Chitral Scouts Col. Sami was the guest at the event.

Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali Khan and District Police Officer Ikramullah Khan were also present with him. Col. Sami, DC Chitral and DPO also offered flowers at the memorial of the martyrs and prayed for their forgiveness.

Col. Sami and other guests also offered floral tributes on behalf of Commander 11 Corps Peshawar and Chief of Army Staff. Officers and youths of Chitral Scouts also saluted the martyrs' shrine while school students also participated in the event. Speaking at the event, Col. Sami said that the purpose of this event is to pay homage to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for mother earth. The families of the martyrs were heartbroken. He said that May 9 should be observed as a black day.

These incidents not only caused financial loss, but the families of the martyrs were also hurt. He said that those who played the role of anti-national elements. While doing damage to the national property, they will be picked and punished one by one. He said that by

damaging the national property or desecrating the pictures of the martyrs, anti-national elements benefit. He said that the younger generation should develop the ability to analyze social media or false news and develop the courage to call wrong a wrong and right a right.

On this occasion, the participants shouted slogans of Pakistan Zindabad. After that, Col. Sami, in an informal conversation, urged the officers, youths and students to protect their country. Be prepared at all times.

He said that we are all Muslims and we should please Allah Almighty and the only way to please Him is to follow the path given by Him. "We should do our work very honestly and students should study with heart and grow up to serve the country and the nation. The ceremony was concluded with prayerful words.

**Donor conference held for support of orphans:** A donor conference was organized to support orphan children under the care of Aghosh, center, an institution for the education and lookafter of orphans in Chitral.

People belonging to all walks of life participated in this conference. The main objective of the donor conference was to attract the attention of the philanthropists towards the support of these orphans.

Addressing the confer-

ence, the district president of Al-Khidmat Foundation Abdul Haq said our volunteers help the affected people at every time of trouble alongside the government institutions. He said that Al-Khidmat Foundation works in seven different sectors.

He said that there are 47 orphans under the care of Al-Khidmat's Aghosh Center, where education and care, food, clothing, medical treatment and accommodation are provided free of cost to these children. Similarly, under the Family Support Program, 53 orphan boys and girls are being sponsored and educated at home.

Secretary General of Al-Khidmat Foundation Pakistan Syed Waqas Anjum Jafari, President of Al-Khidmat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Khalid Waqas, Central Education Director Jibrin Baloch and Maghfirat Shah expressed their views and said that we not only need donors but owner so that this orphanage could be upgraded like a settled house. President Chitral AlKhidmat Foundation Abdul Haq thanked all the philanthropist, donors who accepted the responsibility of sponsoring one to four orphans.

Waliur Rehman, a volunteer of this organization, also appealed to the people for help. The Donor Conference concluded with a prayer by Maulana Jamshed that was joined by a large number of people.

## Inquiry initiated against tree-cutting at govt school

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: Taking notice of cutting of trees from school, Chief Executive Officer Education Hafizabad Sohail Azhar Khan has held enquiry against Headmaster Government Elementary School Chak Kharal.

According to details, CEO Education Hafizabad Sohail Azhar Khan received information that Headmaster Government High School Chak Kharal Asmat Ullah Bhatti got cut trees from the school without any permission and sold the trees.

CEO has appointed Principal Government Higher Secondary School Vanike Tarar Mushtaq Ahmad as enquiry officer while Deputy Headmaster government High School No. 1, Hafizabad Muhammad Asif Bhatti would assist the enquiry officer. CEO warned that government policies, agenda and directions would be implemented in the district in letter and spirit.

**Ten farmers booked for creating pollution:** On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad Umar Farooq Warriach District

Administration and Environment Department started crackdown to contain spread of smog in the district and 10 cases against farmers have been registered with different police stations to put on fire remains of crops in the district.

According to official sources, special teams consisting of officers of district administration and environment department are engage in monitoring and patrolling in the district particularly alongside Motorways to overcome spread of environmental pollution.



QUETTA: Secretary General of ANP Mian Iftikhar Hussain addressing a press conference.

## Govt committed to eliminate curse of cheating in exams: Ejaz

QUETTA (INP): Chairman Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary education Quetta Mir Ejaz Azeem Baloch on Friday said that cheating in exam was a nuisance which would bleak the future of new generation.

"The provincial government is leaving no stone unturned to eliminate this disease," he said during his visit to examination centers of schools and examine the ongoing FA/FSC annual exams

here. The chairman BBISE emphasized that we have to strive hard to protect the children of the province from plagiarism and equip them with wealth of knowledge.

"Under the real-time online attendance check of the examination staff, and students participating in the examinations, our endeavor are to implement the reform plans and bring maximum convenience to the public regarding board affairs at their doorsteps. He noted

that a separate department of IT will be established soon in the Balochistan Board to make exams more transparent.

In addition, e-marking will be introduced from 2023, which will be a modern technology according to the requirements of the modern age," he added. Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education is always ready to resolve the issues faced by the students.

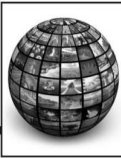
## ANF arrests four drug peddlers

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) on Friday claimed to have arrested four drug peddlers in separate operations in different cities of the country.

Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) officials seized 818kg of hashish concealed in two vehicles with fake official number plates. Officials also seized 26.46kg of opium in another raid.

The operations have been carried out in Quetta, Peshawar and Attock. Cases have been registered against the arrested suspects under the Anti-Narcotics Act, the officials said.



## Russia signs deal to deploy tactical N-weapons in Belarus

TALLINN, Estonia (AP): Russia and Belarus signed a deal formalizing the deployment of Moscow's tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of its ally, although control of the weapons remains in the Kremlin. Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the deployment of the shorter-range weapons in Belarus earlier this year in a move widely seen as a warning to the West as it stepped up military support for Ukraine.

When the weapons would be deployed wasn't announced, but Putin has said the construction of storage facilities in Belarus for them would be completed by July 1. Also unclear is how many nuclear weapons would be kept in Belarus. The US government believes Russia has about 2,000 tactical nuclear weapons, which include bombs that can be carried by aircraft, warheads for short-range missiles and artillery rounds. Tactical nuclear weapons are intended to destroy enemy troops and weapons on the battlefield. They have a relatively short range and a much lower yield than nuclear warheads fitted to long-range strategic missiles that are capable of obliterating whole cities.

Speaking in Moscow, Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko said "the movement of the nuclear weapons has begun," but was not clear whether any actually had arrived in his country. Lukashenko, who sparked rumors of being seriously ill when he cut short a Victory Day appearance in Red Square on May 9 before resurfacing in public May 15, was attending a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council with Putin and leaders of Armenia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The signing of the deal came as Russia prepared for a counteroffensive by Ukraine. Both Russian and Belarusian officials also framed the step as driven by hostilities from the West. "Deployment of nonstrategic nuclear weapons is an effective response to the aggressive policy of countries unfriendly to us,"



Belarusian Defense Minister Viktor Khrenin said in Minsk at a meeting with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Shoigu. "In the context of an extremely sharp escalation of threats on the western borders of Russia and Belarus, a decision was made to take countermeasures in the military-nuclear sphere," Shoigu added.

Putin has argued that by deploying its tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, Russia was following the lead of the United States, noting that the US has nuclear weapons based in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey. Exiled Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya condemned the move. "We must do everything to prevent Putin's plan to deploy nuclear weapons in Belarus, as this will ensure Russia's control over Belarus for years to come," Tsikhanouskaya told The Associated Press. "This will further jeopardize the security of Ukraine and all of Europe." Independent Belarusian military analyst Aliaksandr Alesin said about two-thirds of Russia's arsenal of medium-range nuclear-tipped missiles were held in Belarus during the Cold War, adding that there are dozens of Soviet-era storage facilities

that could still be used.

Soviet nuclear weapons stationed in Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan were moved to Russia in a US-brokered deal after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. "Documents in Minsk on the return of nuclear weapons were defiantly signed just at the moment when Ukraine declared a counteroffensive and Western countries are handing over weapons to Kyiv," Alesin told the AP. "This Belarusian nuclear balcony should spoil the mood for politicians in the West, since nuclear missiles are capable of covering Ukraine, all of Poland, the Baltic states and parts of Germany." Khrenin also announced plans to "build up the combat potential of the regional grouping of Russia and Belarusian troops," including the transfer to Minsk of the Iskander-M missile system, capable of carrying a nuclear charge, and the S-400 anti-aircraft missile system. Russia and Belarus have an alliance agreement under which the Kremlin subsidizes the Belarusian economy, via loans and discounted Russian oil and gas. Russia used Belarusian territory as a staging ground for invading neighboring Ukraine and has maintained a contingent of troops and weapons there.

## of Rwanda's most wanted genocide suspects held

CAPE TOWN (AP): One of the most wanted suspects in Rwanda's genocide, a man suspected of orchestrating the killing of more than 2,000 people, has been arrested in South Africa after 22 years on the run, a special tribunal set up by the United Nations said. The International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT) said Fulgence Kayishema was arrested in Paarl, a small town in a wine-making region about 30 miles east of Cape Town.

He was captured in a joint operation by the tribunal's fugitive tracking team and South African authorities, the tribunal said. More than 800,000 people were killed in Rwanda's genocide, which took place over the course of three months in 1994 when ethnic Hutus turned on the minority Tutsis, slaughtering them and moderate Hutus who tried to protect them. Kayishema was indicted by the UN's International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in 2001 and charged with genocide, complicity in genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide and crimes against humanity for killings and other crimes. He had been at large since 2001, the tribunal said. The tribunal said he is alleged to have organized the killings of more than 2,000 ethnic Tutsi refugees - men, women and children - at a Catholic church during the genocide. "Fulgence Kayishema was a fugitive for more than 20 years. His arrest ensures that he will finally face justice for his alleged crimes," IRMCT chief prosecutor Serge Brammertz said in a statement.

## HK-flagged vessel blocks Egypt's vital Suez Canal

CAIRO (AP): A Hong Kong-flagged ship briefly blocked Egypt's vital Suez Canal, authorities said, the latest such incident in the busy waterway. According to Leth Agencies, a canal services company that oversees the waterway, the Xin Hai Tong 23 ran aground before dawn at the southern entrance to the canal, blocking four vessels. The ship was refloated by the Suez Canal Authority a few hours later, the company said, and normal traffic was restored.

However, Egypt's state-run Suez Canal Authority said the vessel had broken down during its transit through the canal due to engine failure. It said the ship was towed away from the area by three tug boats. The two conflicting accounts as to how the incident unfolded could not be reconciled. The bulk carrier, measuring about 190 meters (625 feet) by 32 meters (105 feet), had set off for Suez from the Saudi Red Sea port of Duba. Later in the day, it was at sea about 3.2 kilometers (2 miles) south of the canal, according to Marine Traffic, a vessel tracking firm.

Incident is the latest in a flurry of ships running aground in the Suez Canal or getting stuck in the crucial waterway over the past few years. In January, a vessel owned by Greek firm Primera Shipping Inc. broke down at the 38 kilometer (24-mile) mark of the canal, near the Egyptian city of Qantara. In March a Liberia-flagged ship ran aground in the two-lane part of the waterway. Both vessels were refloated hours later. The most prominent case was that of the skyscraper-sized container ship, the Panama-flagged Ever Given, which ran aground in a single-lane stretch of the canal in March 2021, blocking the waterway. A massive salvage effort by a flotilla of tugboats, helped by the tides, freed it six days later, ending the crisis and allowing hundreds of waiting ships to pass through the canal. Opened in 1869, the Suez Canal provides a vital link for oil, natural gas and cargo of Egypt's top foreign currency earners. In 2015, President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi's government completed a major expansion of the canal, allowing it to accommodate the world's largest vessels.

## S Korea launches commercial-grade satellite

SEOUL (AP): South Korea successfully launched a commercial-grade satellite for the first time as part of its growing space development program, as rival North Korea is pushing to place its first military spy satellite into orbit.

The two Koreas, technically in a state of war, have no military reconnaissance satellites of their own and both are eager to possess them. The South Korean launch will likely assist its efforts to develop a space-based surveillance system. The domestically built three-stage Nuri rocket lifted off from a launch facility on a southern island with a payload of eight satellites, including a main commercial-grade satellite whose mission is to verify radar imaging technology and observe cosmic radiation in a near-Earth orbit. Science Minister Lee Jong Ho later told a televised news conference that the launch was successful, saying it proved the rocket's reliability and South Korea's potential to operate various satellites and explore space. Lee said seven of the eight satellites including the main one were successfully released from the rocket. He said more time is required to confirm the release of the eighth satellite. "Today, we confirmed that dreams can come true," South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol wrote on Facebook. "I hope our future generations have a great dream and challenge while looking at the Nuri rocket soaring into space."

The launch boosted South Korea's hopes of catching up with Asian neighbors such as China, Japan and India in a regional space race. Lee, the science minister, said South

Korea plans to conduct three more Nuri rocket launches by 2027 and will seek to develop more advanced launch vehicles. The launch was initially scheduled but was postponed at the last minute due to a technical problem.

Last year, South Korea used a Nuri rocket to place a "performance verification satellite" in orbit, becoming the world's 10th nation to send a satellite into space with its own technology. But that launch was primarily designed to test the rocket. Many experts say launch will also help South Korea accumulate technologies and knowhow to operate military spy satellites and build long-range missiles. South Korea is expected to launch its first spy satellite later this year. It currently relies on US spy satellites to monitor North Korean facilities.

Lee Choon Geun, an honorary research fellow at South Korea's Science and Technology Policy Institute, noted that the satellite launched is designed to be placed in a sun-synchronous orbit, which is typically used for reconnaissance satellites. South Korea already has missiles capable of reaching all of North Korea. But experts say it needs longer-range missiles to prepare for future security threats from potential adversaries China and Russia. Tensions on the Korean Peninsula remain high following North Korea's barrage of missiles tests since the beginning of last year. Some of the tests demonstrated its potential ability to launch nuclear strikes on the mainland US and South Korea and Japan.

North Korean leader

Kim Jong Un is seeking to develop more sophisticated weapons systems, including a spy satellite, to cope with what he calls intensifying US and South Korean hostilities. Analysts say Kim wants to use an expanded weapons arsenal to win greater concessions from Washington in future dealings. "North Korea must be so concerned about the South Korean satellite launch because much of Kim Jong Un's interest now is in possessing a spy satellite," said Moon Seong Mook, an analyst for the Seoul-based Korea Research Institute for National Strategy. "He has a strong desire to launch a spy satellite before South Korea does." Recent commercial satellite imagery of North Korea's main launch center in the northwest shows activities that suggest "a new level of urgency in making the site ready to accommodate satellite launches," 38 North, a North Korea-focused website, said. It said the images indicate progress on a new launch pad is moving forward "at a remarkable pace."

Last week, Kim examined a finished spy satellite and approved a plan for its launch during a visit to the country's aerospace agency. The spy satellite disclosed in North Korean state media doesn't appear sophisticated enough to produce high-resolution imagery. But Lee, the expert at the Science and Technology Policy Institute, said it is likely to be capable of monitoring deployment of US strategic assets such as an aircraft carrier and the movements of South Korean warships and fighter jets.

## Man arrested in Japan after four killed

TOKYO (Agencies): A 31-year-old man has been arrested in rural Japan after four people were killed in a rare gun and knife attack involving a 12-hour standoff with police. The suspect was taken into custody on suspicion of murder after barricading himself in his father's home near the city of Nakano, northwest of the capital Tokyo, at about 4.30am (19:30 GMT) on Friday.

The attack began when a local man working on a farm saw a woman "running from the road shouting, 'help me'," he told national broadcaster NHK. "Behind her was a man wearing camouflage and carrying a large knife, who stabbed her in the back," the 72-year-old witness added. The suspect is accused of shooting dead two police officers who arrived at the scene after the witness called emergency services.

The two officers, who were allegedly shot in their car, and the woman were taken to hospital where they were pronounced dead within hours. Another elderly woman also died after an apparent attack. She had been lying on the ground outside the house and police had been unable to get to her, media said. The rampage in a rural area of the western region was a rare instance of violent crime in Japan, which has a low murder rate and some of the world's toughest gun laws. No motive has yet emerged in the killings, nor has the suspect been formally identified, although several local media reported that he is the son of the speaker of Nakano's city assembly. "We pray for the souls of the deceased and express our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families," top government

spokesman Hirokazu Matsuno told reporters. "Police are investigating to uncover the whole picture of the incident, including how the crime developed and its background." Few other details were known about the attack, including the suspect's motive. Nagano prefectural police are due to hold a press conference later on Friday.

Japan was left reeling in July last year when former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was shot while he was campaigning. Last month, a man was arrested for allegedly throwing a "smoke bomb" towards Prime Minister Fumio Kishida as he campaigned in the western city of Wakayama. Kishida was unharmed and a man arrested at the scene will undergo a three-month psychiatric examination, a regional court said this week.

## UN peacekeeping on 75th anniversary: Successes, failures and challenges

UNITED NATIONS (AP): On the 75th anniversary of UN peacekeeping, the United Nations chief said that peacekeepers are increasingly working in places where there is no peace and praised the more than 4,200 who have given their lives to the cause of peace since the UN authorized its first military deployment in 1948.

It was a day to look back at the successes of peacekeeping from Liberia to Cambodia and its major failures in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, but also to the challenges ahead, including dealing with more violent environments, fake news campaigns, and a divided world that is preventing peacekeeping's ultimate goal: successfully restoring stable governments. And it was a day to honor the more than 2 million peacekeepers from 125 countries who have served in 71 operations since the UN Security Council sent those first military observers to supervise implementation of Israeli-Arab armistice agreements following their war.

At a ceremony honoring the fallen peacekeepers, UN Secretary-General Antonio

Guterres asked the hundreds of uniformed military officers and diplomats to stand for a moment of silence in their memory and then presented medals for the 103 peacekeepers killed in 2022 to ambassadors from their 39 home countries. And at the start of a UN Security Council meeting on peace in Africa shortly after, all those in the chamber stood in tribute to peacekeepers who paid the ultimate price. The secretary-general told the ceremony, after laying a wreath at the Peacekeepers Memorial on the lawn at UN headquarters, that what began 75 years ago "as a bold experiment" in the Mideast "is now a flagship enterprise of our organization." For civilians caught in conflict, he said, peacekeepers are "a beacon of hope and protection." But peacekeepers trying to help countries move away from conflict are now "on the front lines in some of the world's most dangerous places," he said.

Guterres stressed the need for "a new generation" of regional operations to end conflicts and combat terrorism that are mandated and financed by the UN's 193 member nations. That has

been a major goal of the African Union for years, and the continent's nations are urging quick action to make this happen. At the Security Council meeting, there was widespread support for Guterres' view but differences on how the UN should do this.

UN political chief Rosemary DiCarlo told the council that putting AU peace operations "on solid footing is increasingly pressing" and the case for adequate financing is "beyond solid." The UN therefore hopes the council will provide financing from UN member states for AU-led peace operations, she said. Adeoye Bankole, the African Union commissioner for political affairs, peace and security, welcomed "the very constructive and positive thrust" of the secretary-general's comments. "We cannot continue to use traditional peacekeeping methods in the face of the complex nature and scope of conflicts that traverse our beloved continent, particularly violent extremism, ideology of hate, terrorism, rebellion and insurgency," he said.

UN peacekeeping operations have grown dramati-

cally. At the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, there were 11,000 UN peacekeepers. By 2014, there were 130,000 in 16 far-flung peacekeeping operations. Today, 87,000 men and women serve in 12 conflict areas in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. There have been two kinds of successes, UN peacekeeping chief Jean-Pierre Lacroix said in an interview with The Associated Press. Those are the long list of countries that have returned to a reasonable degree of stability with the support of UN peacekeeping, including Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Mozambique, Angola and Cambodia, and the countries where peacekeepers are not only monitoring but preserving ceasefires like in southern Lebanon and Cyprus. As for failures, he pointed to the failure of UN peacekeepers to prevent the 1994 Rwanda genocide, which killed at least 800,000 ethnic Tutsis and Hutus, and the 1995 massacre of at least 8,000 mostly Muslim men and boys at Srebrenica during the war in Bosnia. Europe's only acknowledged genocide since the Holocaust during World War II.

## Killer whales damage boat in orca incident

MADRID (Agencies): Killer whales severely damaged a sailing boat off the coast of southern Spain, the local maritime rescue service has said, adding to dozens of attacks by orcas on vessels recorded so far this year off Spanish and Portuguese coasts. The incident follows at least 20 interactions this month alone in the Strait of Gibraltar between small vessels and the highly social apex predators. In 2022, there were 207 reported interactions, GTOA data showed. Although known as killer whales, endangered orcas are part of the dolphin family. They can measure up to 8 metres (26 ft) and weigh up to six tonnes as adults.

Earlier this month, the sailing yacht Alboran Champagne suffered a similar impact from three orcas half a nautical mile (less than 1km) off Barbate. The ship could not be towed as it was completely flooded and was left adrift to sink. A study published in 2021 on orca interactions with vessels in the Strait of Gibraltar said that several orcas began showing disruptive behaviour towards boats in 2020 - most were sailing vessels but also involved fishing boats and motorboats.

The Mustique was towed to the port of

Barbate, in the Spanish province of Cadiz, for repairs. The incident follows at least 20 interactions this month alone in the Strait of Gibraltar between small vessels and the highly social apex predators. In 2022, there were 207 reported interactions, GTOA data showed. Although known as killer whales, endangered orcas are part of the dolphin family. They can measure up to 8 metres (26 ft) and weigh up to six tonnes as adults.

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The animals bumped, pushed and turned the

boats," the report stated, noting that 14 individual orcas, most of them juveniles, had been identified engaging in such behaviour. "The behaviour of orcas when interacting with boats is not identified as aggressive," the report states.

"We are not yet certain what the origin of these interactions is, but it is still suspected that it could be a curious and playful behaviour, which could be self-induced, or on the other hand it could be a behaviour induced by an aversive incident and therefore a precautionary behaviour," the report states. Guidelines issued by the Spanish Transport Ministry stipulate that whenever ships observe any alteration in the behaviour of orcas - such as sudden changes of direction or speed - they should leave the area as soon as possible and avoid further disturbance to the animals during the manoeuvres. Every interaction between a ship and an orca must be reported to authorities, the ministry added.

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## Digital era and data privacy

**R**ECENTLY, *The Frontier Post* Correspondent in Washington DC put forth a media query to the US State Department Spokesperson about Starlink, a satellite-based internet company, owned by American billionaire Elon Musk. Interestingly, the Spokesperson did not immediately respond on the topic and borrowed time to get back on the query.

Apparently, the query was not a simple question regarding US diplomacy but involved a wide range of issues relating to the American Technological giant SpaceX's billions of dollars in business in most parts of the world, data security, businesses and public privacy, and other issues pertaining to the national security of the countries across the globe. At the time, American aerospace giant SpaceX is providing satellite internet services to more than 53 countries through its flagship Starlink project since 2019. American Techgiant is currently aiming to launch its global mobile phone service the next year. Presently, securing data and enabling communication channels to operate efficiently and in a cost-effective manner is one of the challenging tasks for every other nation around the world. Although each nation has a desire and equal space rights, yet achieving the required capability and technical expertise poses a marvelous task while IT and Communication became lucrative sectors for professionals and entrepreneurs across the globe.

The importance of digitalization has grown many folds as the online sale has increased almost a thousand times in the post-COVID-19 world. Meanwhile, the importance of data security also become mandatory for businesses and industries while the majority of Western companies have made it essential for their staff to have a two-step authentication system to access their basic email address. Private firms have increased their data protection and internet security to maintain their dominance in the industry domain. The recent data leakage from the NADRA data warehouse and Pentagon data pilferage are the outcomes of global data sharing and weak implementation of internet security protocols. Internet connection and data security are essential needs of businesses and industries to match their pace of development with the ongoing technological revolution in the world. The Chinese government has timely recognized the importance of the Internet and data security, therefore, Beijing focused on building a digital corridor along with its flagship Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to build solid and sustainable infrastructural growth.

Unfortunately, Pakistani leaders could not timely grasp the importance of modern-day technological innovations, and resultantly Pakistan suffered serious setbacks in IT, Communication, and computer technologies, and our young professionals are compelled to work for foreign firms. Recently, Starlink Internet Services has officially registered itself with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) to provide internet services in the country through satellite. The Pakistani authorities must work to get optimum benefit through establishing Starlink's quickest and least expensive satellite internet services throughout the country. Besides Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) other government institutions must collaborate with Starkink to effectively tackle security issues and data privacy that might pose challenges to National cyber security mechanisms and regulatory policies in the aftermath of the communication revolution that is likely to take place in the coming days. In fact, the policy of reluctance by Pakistani policymakers regarding the latest innovations including IT, online marketplace, freelancing, and Cryptocurrency had cost significant economic and technological losses to the country, while Pakistani talent could not grasp the full benefit from those lucrative fields because of no provision of essential infrastructure, banking, and regulatory mechanisms. However, the incumbent rulers must focus on these avenues which will surely untapped huge economic and monetary prospects in the future.

## Military courts and global rationale

**R**ECENTLY, an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore has ordered the Camp Jail superintendent to hand over 16 people to the Army for initiation of trials in military courts for their alleged involvement in the May 9 violence and attack on the corps commander's residence commonly known as Jinnah House. According to the initial investigation, the accused persons which also includes a former PTI's MPA are prime facie found involved with the commission of offenses under the provisions of the Official Secrets Act, 1923, and the Pakistani Army Act 1952.

The Pakistani nation had witnessed unprecedented lawlessness and vandalism on May 9, by the violent protestors allegedly belonging to the Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf (PTI) following the arrest of the PTI Chairman Imran Khan. The violent mobs vandalized public and state properties and Military Central Headquarters commonly known as the GHQ in Rawalpindi, corps commander's residence in Lahore even did not spare the war memorials and Shuhadas' monuments across the country. The army had termed the events of May 9 a dark chapter and announced its intent to try the protesters under relevant military laws to ensure justice so no other dare to teorya such heinous acts in the future.

Pakistani authorities are of the view that the Army Act of 1952 empowers the government to establish military courts primarily to try members of the military or enemies of the state. Meanwhile, civilians accused of offenses such as spying, waging war against the armed forces or law enforcement agencies, attacking military installations, or inciting mutiny, can be tried in military courts.

However, there is a wide difference on the issue of military courts with in the ruling coalition partners, while the PTI has challenged trial of its workers/supporters by the military courts in the supreme court of Pakistan. The Amnesty International also expressed its concerns over the decision to try May 9 rioters under the Army Act, and termed it a clear violation of international law. Meanwhile, other human rights groups including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has condemned Pakistan's plans to prosecute civilians involved in May 9 protests under the Army Act.

In fact, Pakistan has extensive judicial system in place along with special ATC courts to deal with terrorism related cases while additional courts, speicelized investigation and prosecution staff can be employed to ensure delivery of 100% justice. However, constitution of military courts would caused multiple legal, constitutional, political and raputational issues for the country. There will be global repercussions of this issue including negative affect over Pakistan's GSP plus status in the EU.The military has already faced social media propaganda due to politicians, hence disassociating this prestigious national institution from the ongoing political tussle would be great service to the nation.

# The CIA is looking for Russians with an ax to grind

**H**APPY people don't spy; angry people do. Last week, the CIA launched an initiative to find them. Specifically, the United States spy agency set out to find disgruntled citizens of Russia with access to sensitive information they could share with the US.

The CIA has created a new channel on the Telegram social media app, popular with Russians, on which it posted a video appealing to Russians with access to sensitive information to contact the agency, and provided instructions on how to do so securely. The two-minute, Russian-language production has also appeared on YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. The outreach aims to appeal to Russian sentiments and culture, and takes advantage of the current dire internal political and economic challenges in the country. The narrator tells viewers that, "People around you may not want to hear the truth, but we do. You are not powerless," the narrator says. "Connect with us in a safe way."

This direct appeal is an unusual approach, but one which could prove effective in reaching a Russian populace with few options to express their discontent. Russians angry with the Kremlin's state-sanctioned corruption and abuse, with no way to act openly, are left with few alternatives other than finding external support. In the past, Russians who have spied for the CIA have largely done so over ideological differences with the government and out of patriotic devotion to a Russian or Soviet state they feared was being badly mismanaged - not, for the most part, for mercenary reasons. These "agents," as they are known in the CIA, often have greater loyalty to Russia than to what they viewed as the illegitimate governments they were ruled by.

Some needed to channel their disillusionment or

guilt at being part of the corrupt system. But many more were pushed to spy against their government - despite the risks - for more personal reasons, acting out of anger against the Kremlin for failings or actions that impacted them or their families. There are any number of Russians with access to sensitive intelligence who are angry at the repression and kleptocracy that has flourished under President Vladimir Putin, and who are con-

Douglas London

country falls to ruin, the CIA tries to convince these Russians that partnering with the agency provides a way that they take back some degree of control.

I'm quite deliberate about the word "partnering," since espionage is truly a joint effort rather than an employee relationship or one of indentured servitude. Affirmation, empowerment and hope are powerful motivators for

tion ultimately awakened by circumstances and opportunity. Once moved by whatever crisis that compelled them to act, Russian spies often seek to validate their handlers' discretion and professionalism before pulling the trigger. The CIA video seeks to bridge that final obstacle, appealing to prospective agents much as an empathetic and non-judgmental friend might. (Incidentally,

Perhaps, but the CIA has taken precautions against its recruits being detected. The agency's video showed images of individuals using their own mobile phones, but also tutored viewers in the mechanics of using the TOR app, otherwise known as "the onion browser." TOR, which can be configured for use even in countries that seek to block it, allows a user to surf the dark web in a way that cannot be traced back to them. Once contact is made, the

Ukraine invasion, CIA contact with Russian officials offering to cooperate "was encouraging enough to launch this latest effort."

The CIA's messaging and instructions suggests its goal is likely intended to expand the potential agent pool beyond Russian intelligence officers, probably aiming to Russians in the military, scientific, economic, policy and technical fields, among others. Russian intelligence officers have the savvy and training to make clandestine approaches to the CIA that prospective agents from other parts of society lack. What does all this do for the US, besides possibly embarrassing Putin, who is immune to shame and already perpetually angry with the West? It could yield important new troves of information and the intelligence gleaned might not just inform Washington's decision-making, it could help expose Russian lies, illuminate truth and remind Putin of the fragility of his grip. To fight Russian disinformation and inhibit Moscow's would-be allies, the Biden administration weaponized intelligence. This was reflected by its unprecedented declassification of highly sensitive information which arguably was effective in galvanizing international support for Ukraine at the outset of the war, undermining Russian false flagscenarios, exposing Iran's lethal support to Moscow and discouraging China from providing Putin with weapons.

In the shadowy world of espionage, the CIA's open advertising might seem counterintuitive. But the intelligence business relies on a steady stream of new sources.

Human Intelligence is about people and relationships. The CIA can only thrive by adapting to the times and the people it seeks to engage. History shows that one well-placed spy can very well lead to outcomes that change the world.

CNN

***These "agents," as they are known in the CIA, often have greater loyalty to Russia than to what they viewed as the illegitimate governments they were ruled by. Some needed to channel their disillusionment or guilt at being part of the corrupt system. But many more were pushed to spy against their government - despite the risks - for more personal reasons, acting out of anger against the Kremlin for failings or actions that impacted them or their families. There are any number of Russians with access to sensitive intelligence who are angry at the repression and kleptocracy that has flourished under President Vladimir Putin, and who are concerned about the future. But the decision to spy requires a trigger, or "precipitating crisis," as veteran CIA psychologist Ursula Wilder writes. Potential spies also need the opportunity. Putin provided the means. The CIA video avoids criticizing Russia or Putin and makes no mention of Ukraine -- at least, not directly. It provides potential Russian agents affirmation, empowerment and hope. Rather than idly standing by while their country falls to ruin, the CIA tries to convince these Russians that partnering with the agency provides a way that they take back some degree of control.***

cerned about the future. But the decision to spy requires a trigger, or "precipitating crisis," as veteran CIA psychologist Ursula Wilder writes. Potential spies also need the opportunity. Putin provided the crisis, the CIA is offering the opportunity, and today's technology is providing the means.

The CIA video avoids criticizing Russia or Putin and makes no mention of Ukraine -- at least, not directly. It provides potential Russian agents affirmation, empowerment and hope. Rather than idly standing by while their

many who come into the agency's service. Money is rarely the key factor for Russian agents, with notable exceptions. Financial compensation is often a tool to achieve a goal rather than an end - a way to pay medical bills, the kids' tuition, or purchase necessities for one's family. Russian agents have historically required relatively little cultivation or manipulation beyond assurances that they would be handled securely, and their secrets used appropriately.

Some had long considered the prospect, their inclina-

the FBI posted its own video appeal to Russians on Twitter in April, aimed more narrowly at diplomats and Russian personnel based in Washington, DC.)

Moscow has made it clear that it is aware of US efforts to recruit its nationals for espionage - and is determined to thwart them. "I am convinced that our special services are properly monitoring this space," said Dmitry Peskov, spokesman for Putin. The Russian Foreign Affairs Ministry called it "a very convenient resource for tracking applicants."

## No, Chinese hypersonic missiles have not made US aircraft carriers obsolete

Lewis Page

**S**O, Chinese wargamers have claimed that China's latest long-ranging hypersonic ballistic missiles can destroy a US aircraft carrier group from thousands of miles away. Top-secret US intelligence reports revealed in the Discord leaks also state that the latest Dongfeng-27 (DF-27) hypersonic glide missile was successfully tested in February, and that it can threaten targets well out into the Pacific.

Well, that's it, surely? Aircraft carriers are obsolete. Taiwan can't expect any help when the Chinese invasion comes. America will shortly be compelled to abandon its democratic allies up and down the China coast from Japan to Australia. There may be a few things to think about, however, before scrapping the US Navy surface fleet and beginning the pullout from the First and Second Island Chains.

First is that the "ballistic missiles can destroy US aircraft carriers from afar" is actually an idea that has been kicking around for decades. The Western media with its short attention span is perennially amazed by it, but it's a very old story. It gets a lot of traction in military circles, because about two-thirds of the Western military, the people from the armies and the air forces, dislike aircraft carriers and wish they didn't exist. In fact the first anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM) was developed almost 50 years ago. The Soviets deployed the R-27K in 1975. This could be fired from a submarine at targets a few hundred miles away. It had a manoeuvring re-entry vehicle with a radar tracker that could locate a ship within an area of sea 50km across, and steer itself so as to strike within a few hundred yards of it. Even US aircraft carriers aren't big enough that you can hit them reliably with this sort of accuracy, but the R-27K had a one-megaton nuclear warhead. Close would have been good enough. So why did the USA keep

on building aircraft carriers, launching no less than 11 of the huge, expensive monsters since then?

The first part of the answer is that it is no simple matter to pin down where a US carrier is to within 50km. You can send out long-ranging reconnaissance planes to look for it, but a US carrier group expecting trouble keeps a Hawkeye radar-surveillance plane airborne around the clock. Thanks to the inescapable curvature of the Earth, the Hawkeye - being high up in the sky - will detect a reconnaissance plane long before the recce plane can find the carrier. Shortly thereafter, the carrier's fighter jets will make sure the intruder gets no closer. The old-time Soviets came up with various schemes to solve the problem of locating US carrier groups. One plan called for simply overwhelming the carrier's defences with waves of heavy bombers, though even the Soviets would probably have struggled to find enough aircraft for this. The Soviets also sought to use satellites to find their enemy. The problem here is that most kinds of satellite offer only a so-called "drinking straw" view of the Earth beneath. If the satellite's operators know where to look the spacecraft can produce a very detailed picture, easily good enough to identify an aircraft carrier, but knowing where to look is the whole problem.

One potential solution is to build a satellite with radar, which from space could potentially sweep huge areas of ocean. The trouble here is that a long-ranging radar at orbital altitude needs a lot of energy, and satellites don't normally have much available because the solar panels which power them don't produce much. This led the Soviets to build radar satellites which were nuclear powered: not just with relatively humdrum radioisotope generators, but actual small nuclear reactors. Between 1967 and 1988 the Soviets put

33 nuclear powered radar-ocean-reconnaissance satellites (Rorsats) into space. Most of the reactor cores are still up there: they were parked in high "storage" orbits before the main spacecraft descended at the end of their lives. This didn't always work: two reactors ended up in the sea and another one scattered itself all over some remote parts of Canada. One of the "stored" satellites appeared to suffer some kind of accident and broke up into a cloud of debris in 2014. Despite the Rorsat programme, the USA never decided that aircraft carriers were obsolete, and kept on building them. One reason for this confidence would probably be that there are an awful lot of ships in the sea, and while radar may locate them all it won't tell you which blip is the US carrier you're looking for. Another may have been that the Rorsats reportedly had serious reliability issues apart from their buggy reactor-disposal systems, and were often offline. In any case, the programme ended with the fall of the Soviet empire.

Today we're talking about China, which has had a dislike of US aircraft carriers since the Taiwan crisis of 1995-1996. During this affair, Beijing attempted to use its military muscle to influence Taiwanese internal politics, specifically the 1996 election - one of the earliest proper ones held there, as Taiwan transitioned to democratic government. China fired missiles and rattled its sabre, but failed to frighten the Taiwanese into voting for the pro-Beijing candidate due to a massive display of US naval power, including two carrier battle groups which were able to cruise in and out of the Taiwan Strait with impunity. China immediately began its long naval buildup, which is continuing at pace today, and began its quest for a missile like the Russians' old R-27K. This involved no particularly new tech-

nology. Weapons were shown off in parades as early as 1999 which could do what the R-27K could, and probably had more accurate seeker heads able to make a direct hit on a ship and damage or sink it without resorting to a nuclear warhead. Early tests of such Chinese systems reportedly happened in the mid-noughties, and the "news" that aircraft carriers had been rendered obsolete started to come round regularly from then on. In 2010 it was announced that the D anti-ship version of the venerable DF-21 ballistic missile was operational, and in 2013 internet satellite-picture aficionados were amused to find that there was a mockup US aircraft carrier sitting in the middle of the Gobi Desert: a target for DF-21D tests.

There can't be any doubt that China now has missiles which can range thousands of miles and hit moving targets such as ships - if China knows roughly where the target ship is, and if nothing gets in the way. China is certainly working on finding the carriers. It has launched various satellites which may help, including radar ones, but they are up against the same inverse-power physical laws of radar return as the Soviet Rorsats were, and none of the Chinese spacecraft so far are nuclear powered so they probably aren't as capable. China is also attempting to make groundbased radar which can reach beyond the horizon: this too is a very old idea and many such projects have been carried out by many nations ever since radar was invented. Sometimes it is admitted during testing that the system doesn't work, as with the US/UK "Cobra Mist" of the 1960s: sometimes the system supposedly goes "operational" only to be quietly scrapped later. Meanwhile people keep on building and using airborne radar aircraft, which actually work. Perhaps the Chinese have finally

cracked over-the-horizon radar at last, but it doesn't seem likely.

China is also trying new things which might solve the find-the-carrier problem. Drone watchers were intrigued last month to see recent satellite photos showing China's WZ-8 hypersonic drone parked at an airbase in eastern China. The WZ-8, first unveiled in a military parade in 2019, is rocket powered. It's dropped from a heavy bomber to streak across an area of interest at up to Mach 7, high up. It reportedly carries both radar and optical sensors, and so it might be able to finger a carrier for targeting by missiles: though most analysts think it will be more useful for probing fixed bases. As we shall see, a carrier group would probably be able to destroy a WZ-8 before it had seen much. All in all then, it's fair to say that China's find-the-carrier abilities are unlikely to be really much better than the Soviets' were - if as good. It would be easy, of course, to construct a wargame that said different, as the "researchers" making the news this week did. And maybe the WZ-8 or some other special sauce really has, finally, solved the problem that the world's bad guys have been working on ever since the 1950s. If that's true, are aircraft carriers obsolete, as so many people want to believe?

There's another factor to consider. It's surely true that US Navy carrier fighters would be unable to stop ballistic DF-21D warheads plummeting down from the edge of space. But every US aircraft carrier is accompanied by cruisers and destroyers carrying the powerful Aegis weapons system, which fires a range of different Standard Missiles (SMs). Aegis and Standard have had anti-ballistic-missile capabilities for a long time. The SM-3 can actually knock down targets travelling in space above the atmosphere, which doesn't bode well for the ability of low-orbiting Chinese spy satellites to survive a pass over a US carrier group during a

shooting war. Later versions of the SM-2, and the new SM-6, can knock down ballistic missile warheads in their terminal phase as they plunge down through the atmosphere. It has turned out in Ukraine that land-based US Patriot interceptors are an effective defence against Russia's vaunted "Kinzhal" missile, which strikes at Mach 10. The Standard is thought to be at least as good, so it seems likely that it can pick off WZ-8 probe drones and incoming DF-21Ds.

The suggestion is that the new Chinese DF-27, with hypersonic glide warheads which can swerve about as they come, will be more difficult to defend against. But throughout the aircraft-carriers-are-obsolete saga it has been clear that China's capability is always portrayed as being more advanced than it actually is: and US interceptor tech usually turns out to be able to do things people thought it couldn't, as in Kyiv last week. The DF-27, in fact, is probably still in test and development. The Chinese wargamers probably made some optimistic assumptions about it, and about China's ability to actually locate US warships. It wouldn't be a surprise in the real world to find that the SM-6 can actually deal with at least some kinds of hypersonics in their terminal phase. And by the time the DF-27 is in service, and China has finally learned to find aircraft carriers, the current US Glide Phase Interceptor and Hypersonic and Ballistic Tracking Space Sensor projects will have delivered the new generation of counter-hypersonic weaponry. The new interceptor is being specifically designed to be fired by Aegis warships, too. So aircraft carriers will still not be obsolete. Indeed, it seems pretty certain that Xi Jinping doesn't personally believe that his own missiles have rendered aircraft carriers useless. We know that for sure, because he is building his own aircraft carriers as fast as he can.

The Telegraph

# Biden’s booster plan for the Asia-Pacific hits a hurdle

Andrew Hammond

JOE Biden began his presidency with the Asia-Pacific region as the focal point of his foreign policy. Yet, almost two and a half years later, the continuing conflict in Ukraine has dramatically recast his international priorities. With the war in Europe now more than 450 days old, the biggest international legacy that Biden will leave as president - especially if he fails to win a second term - will probably be his determined defense of Ukraine. There is also his wider statecraft, which has seen the rebuilding of the fragile Western alliance after the Trump presidency. However, he has not lost sight of a longer-term ambition to intensify the US "pivot" to Asia. For, while Russia remains the major immediate threat to Washington's security interests, this conflict has done little to alter the administration's view that China remains the paramount longer-term challenge.

And this is why the curtailing last Sunday of his trip to Asia-Pacific - which was headlined by the G7 Summit hosted by Japan but no longer included his planned trip to Australia - has been so galling for him. It has also badly disappointed the US' regional allies, which perceive it as giving a fillip to China. His trip was cut short because of continuing US domestic political brinkmanship over the so-called debt ceiling. This closed, at least temporarily, a precious window of opportunity to reset the regional balance in US foreign pol-

icy. And it is unclear whether Biden will have a chance to reschedule his Australia trip before next year's presidential election.

The president's big Asia-Pacific trip had been intended to see a determined effort to double down on US attention on the region. This would reemphasize the US pivot, which is primarily focused on balancing China's rise to power, including by increasing America's military presence and forming security alliances. However, this goal was set back by the cancellation of Biden's attendance at the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue Summit in Australia. This is a blow for him for multiple reasons, including his hope of serenading Indian President Narendra Modi, whose government may well be reelected for a third term early next year. Washington remains concerned that Modi continues to play a diplomatic balancing act between the West and Russia, having refused to condemn the invasion of Ukraine.

While the Quad - made up of the US, Australia, India and Japan - was initiated in 2007, it has come into much greater focus in the last few years. Some have dismissed the importance of the group, but its relevance as an emerging anti-China alliance has been buttressed by the formation of the UK-US-Australia trilateral security partnership to defend "shared interests in the Indo-Pacific," with Beijing again the unmentioned key focal point. The main goal of the Quad

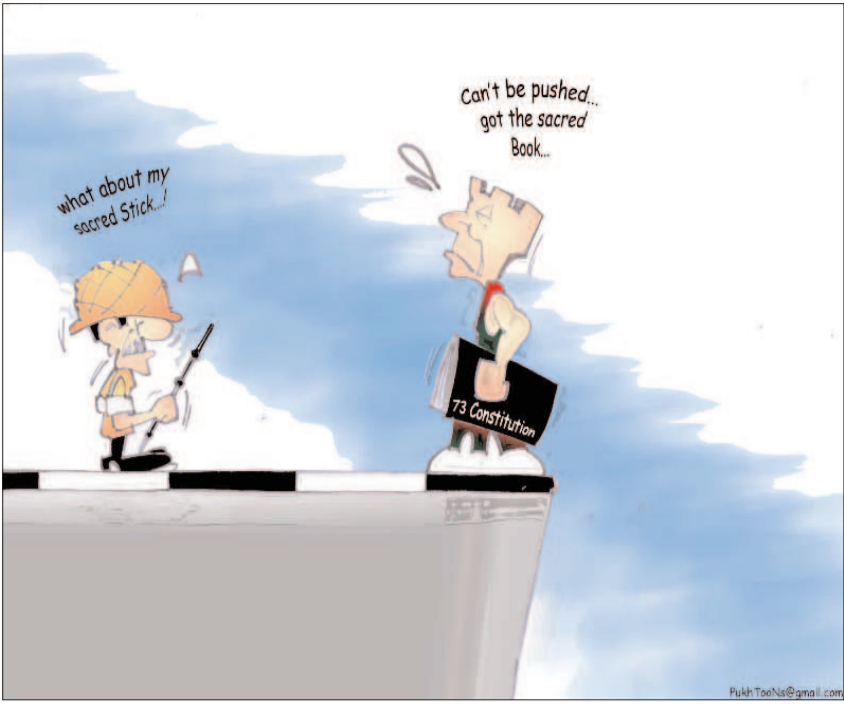
meeting was to advance a shared vision for a free and open Asia-Pacific, with all four nations in agreement about China. The emerging fault lines in this growing challenge are often cited as being Taiwan and the continuing tensions in the South China Sea, where it is not just Japan and the US, but also other countries such as Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Brunei, that are in dispute with China regarding these waters, through which some \$5 trillion of shipborne trade passes each year.

However, the problem for the US and its allies is broader, as was to be shown by Biden's now-cancelled visit to Papua New Guinea, in between the Japan and Australia legs of his trip, where he was scheduled to meet 18 Pacific Island leaders. Biden was expected to sign defense and surveillance agreements with Papua New Guinea to renew the strategic importance of the nation, which is the South Pacific's most populous nation. The US goal is to deter Pacific Island nations - which span 40 million sq. km of ocean - from forming deeper security ties with China. Disappointed as Biden will be by the cancellation of the Australia and Papua New Guinea legs of his trip, he put extra emphasis on the G7 in Japan. At the summit on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, there was a broad range of measures announced regarding China. Indeed, one of the most

striking elements of the final communiqué was the focus on economic coercion, which, it argued, "undermines the policies and positions of G7 members as well as partners around the world." For instance, when Lithuania allowed Taiwan to open a representative office in the capital Vilnius in 2021, many of the Eastern European nation's goods were banned from entering China.

The G7 announced a new toolkit to "increase collective assessment, preparedness, deterrence and response." This includes a "coordination platform" to help nations assist each other by increasing trade or funding to any country that is in dispute with China. Meanwhile, the Japanese hosts also discussed with Biden whether he might look to reconsider US participation in the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership. This is the trade and investment deal originally intended to lock Washington into a deeper partnership with its allies in the Asia-Pacific region.

It is plausible that Biden may eventually seek to bring the US into this pact, whose members account for about 13 percent of global gross domestic product and have a combined population of about 500 million. However, any such move would very likely need to wait until his second term of office, given the political unpopularity of international trade in some key US states, which he will be conscious of before his reelection campaign in 2024.



## Geopolitics driving West’s renewed virus game

**M**ANY meetings are being held and speeches delivered during the 76th World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, from May 21 to 30, focusing on the global health agenda. However, one of the main developments preceding the 76th WHA was US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's call to include Taiwan in the annual meeting as an observer, which threatened to shift the focus from the main event.

Since Blinken knows full well that the island's authorities cannot attend the WHA even as observers because of the one-China principle, which the United Nations, the WHO and the United State acknowledge, his call was meant to intensify international political rivalry rather than taking forward the theme of this year's assembly - "WHO at 75: Saving Lives, Driving Health for All". The world is still struggling to recover from the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. But instead of helping the global recovery, some countries are trying to renew the debate on the origin of the novel coronavirus. In particular, some people in the United States-led West has been hyping up the possibility of the virus leaking from a lab in China, ignoring the conclusion of the WHO-China investigation that nearly ruled out such a possibility. As such, the renewed Western claim is the result of the geopolitical games the US has been indulging in, rather than being a genuine effort to find the truth and promote further research in order to better

Furkan Halit Yolcu

prepare the world to deal with pandemics in the future.

Those in the West making such wild claims seem to have a hidden agenda, as they conveniently ignore the opinions of countless scientists based on empirical evidence. Their haphazard reasoning undermines the credibility of the scientific process, fostering a toxic atmosphere rife with conspiracy theories and unsubstantiated claims. Besides, those propagating the lab leak theory have never talked about scrutinizing the high-security labs like the one in the army base of Fort Detrick in Maryland. The Fort Detrick facility has been accused of a safety breach and potentially releasing dangerous pathogens into the atmosphere. But instead of seeking an investigation into these accusations, the proponents of the lab leak theory do exactly the opposite, ignoring the unexplained increase in lung diseases in the vicinity of Fort Detrick. If this is not double standard, what is? In contrast to the US approach, China has exhibited transparency in its handling of the pandemic right from the early days.

China's cooperation with international organizations and other countries became clearer when it invited a team of international experts associated with the WHO to investigate the origin of the virus. That was a commendable attempt to find an answer through scientific means. China has also shown solidarity with the international community in the face of the global

devastation caused by the pandemic. It has donated millions of COVID-19 vaccines to a number of developing countries, and supported efforts to stem the spread of the virus in areas with limited access to the vaccines. Such humanitarian actions reflect China's commitment to help improve global health and recognize that fighting the pandemic requires collective action. The West's renewed focus on the lab leak claim is nothing but a geopolitical maneuver. As the US perceives China to be a challenge to its global hegemony, it is coercing its allies to consolidate the US-led anti-China forces to check China's peaceful rise.

Since some Western powers, especially the US, feel threatened by China's growing global influence, they seek to smear China and damage its international image. In short, the renewed allegations against China in relation to the virus need to be critically examined in the context of geopolitical dynamics and political motivations. Scientific consensus and comprehensive research by the WHO support the finding that COVID-19 is a zoonotic disease. So the Western countries must address their contradictions and allow transparent investigations into their military and lab facilities. Global cooperation is essential to helping the international community to be well prepared to handle medical emergencies in the future, so the US-led bloc should not sacrifice the truth at the altar of geopolitical maneuvering.

The China Daily

## Battle for Bakhmut could be a turning point in Russia-Ukraine war

Dr. Diana Galeeva

**R**ECENT months have seen a flowering of attempted diplomatic solutions to the Ukraine conflict. China proposed its own solution, followed by Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's mooted "peace coalition," in addition to the peace initiative launched by six African nations and the spiritual diplomacy of Pope Francis. Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky continues to rally global support, last week traveling to Jeddah to ask for support from the leaders at the Arab League Summit and then giving a speech at the G7 Summit, where he called on world leaders to prevent future wars by guaranteeing new weapons and sanctions against Moscow. So, where are we when it comes to the fighting and potential quieting of live conflict?

In the early weeks of the conflict, Russia rapidly advanced and took many areas of Ukraine, including some suburbs of Kyiv and many areas in the northeast around Sumy. Russian forces bombarded Kharkiv, controlled territories in the east and south as far as Kherson and surrounded the city of Mariupol. However, thanks to the strong Western military support for Ukraine that had arrived by last October, the picture changed significantly. Russia withdrew from the north and failed to take Kyiv. Ukraine pushed Russia back from Kharkiv and counterattacked around Kherson. Currently, Ukraine is in control of Kherson and has largely surrounded the Russian advance in the east.

The most-discussed recent battle has been the one for Bakhmut, which has been called the war's longest-running sustained fight. This city sits in a geographically

important location and is seen as key to securing the whole of the Donbas (the collective name for the eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk).

The assault on Bakhmut city was started by Wagner Group fighters last October. By the beginning of 2023, Ukrainian troops had withdrawn from the town of Soledar, located to the north of Bakhmut. On May 8, Kyiv confirmed its forces had withdrawn from Popasna, about 24 km east of the city. Wider attention was drawn to this battlefield when Yevgeny Prigozhin, the chief of the Wagner mercenary group, appeared in an emotional video, accusing Russian generals of a range of supply and coordination failures and threatening his group's withdrawal from Bakhmut by May 10.

Blaming Russia's Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and the army's Chief of General Staff Valery Gerasimov for the losses of Wagner personnel due to a lack of ammunition, he promised to leave the besieged eastern Ukrainian city. Despite this, the Wagner Group was still in Bakhmut when Prigozhin's May 10 deadline passed. Even though the Wagner Group did not withdraw, Prigozhin again complained about ammunition supplies. "We're scraping by with a minimal quantity of shells," he said in an audio statement. Further, on the evening of May 10, there were new updates on the situation on the ground, when a Ukrainian unit stated that it had routed a Russian infantry brigade on front-line territory near Bakhmut. A day later, Col. Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi commented that Russian units in some parts of Bakhmut had retreated by 2 km because of counterattacks.

Last Friday, Ukraine stated that it had repelled attacks by Russian forces aiming to recapture ground around Bakhmut. The next day, Prigozhin claimed that the Wagner Group had captured the city. There are different views about whether this will prove to be a turning point in the war, but it clearly depends now on Ukraine's counteroffensive. President Zelensky, who stated that Bakhmut "is not occupied" by Russia, has already secured fresh military aid through his attendance at the G7 Summit. US President Joe Biden declared a new military aid package worth \$375 million, in addition to the \$1.2 billion already committed at the beginning of this month. Meanwhile, Canada and Latvia agreed to jointly train Ukrainian soldiers on Latvian soil, beginning on May 15. This adds to Canada's existing training efforts in Poland and the UK.

This week, after the events in Bakhmut, either Ukrainian saboteurs or armed Russian opposition groups entered Russia from Ukraine via Belgorod. In response, Moscow declared a "counterterrorism operation," giving special powers to officials, as Russians stated that drones were shot down by anti-aircraft weapons. Ukraine denies responsibility and has said the attackers were Russian citizens from two paramilitary groups, the Liberty of Russia Legion and the Russian Volunteer Corps. Russia said that the purpose of this action was to draw attention away from Bakhmut, "to minimize the political effect of the loss of Artyomovsk (Bakhmut) by the Ukrainian side," according to Presidential Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov.

Among the prevailing points of

debate is the importance of this sub-conflict for the Kremlin. On the one hand, Bakhmut is a much lesser prize than the attempted seizure of Kyiv, but on the other it is a key zone in terms of Russia's objective of maintaining control of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, especially after the referendums and legislative annexations of 2022. By contrast, Ukraine's stance is clear. It will only consider a peace plan if it meets its central condition: The reestablishment of its pre-2014 borders, including the consolidation of Crimea within its own territories. This makes this current moment and the expected counteroffensive so important. The outcome may define what is possible politically, as well as militarily, for either side in terms of a final settlement.

Zelensky has repeatedly sought military support from Ukraine's Western allies, so naturally much of the discussion has focused on these talks. Several states have committed considerable funds and resources to this effort, showing their investment in the outcome. However, it is also important to take into account the Russian economy and the stances taken by so-far neutral actors in their relations with Moscow. These national interests - notwithstanding acknowledgements of Ukrainian suffering and in some cases offering humanitarian aid - include the potential economic opportunities created by the sanctions against Russia. The situation around Bakhmut may influence the course of future collaborations and markets. It is certainly of interest to keep an eye on the delicate balancing act being performed here between courting global opinion and Western relations, while also securing nationally advantageous future links.

## How regional deal-making might affect Hezbollah and Lebanon

Khaled Abou Zahr

**H**EZBOLLAH on Sunday staged war games at the border with Israel and asserted its readiness to confront Tel Aviv. Tensions have indeed been building up, ranging from rockets fired by Hamas to Israeli strikes in northern Syria, as well as in Gaza. Yet, this time, the message of this military display was not only addressed to Israel, as many analysts claimed, but also to the Lebanese. Despite Hezbollah claiming it was in relation to the annual celebration of the May 25, 2000, withdrawal of Israel from Lebanon, it was as much, if not more so, a reminder of May 7, 2008, when Hezbollah invaded Beirut and threatened all its opponents.

This show of force constitutes the biggest risk to the unity and future of Lebanon. Looking at the images and the journalists covering the military display, I am not even sure the missiles were pointing south; instead they may have been facing to the north: Lebanon. And so, those who advocate a strong, centralized Lebanese state were looking the other way and pretending to care about the issue of bikinis or burkinis on Saïda beach. Meanwhile, they condemn federalism as a threat to the unity of the country. So, how does Hezbollah's violation of central sovereignty play out in their views? Where are the Lebanese Armed Forces? How is such a group allowed to decide unilaterally on war and peace? And if Hezbollah already has de facto autonomous decision-making powers, why not give the same privi-

lege to all?

This display was an insult from Hezbollah to the entire Lebanese state. If proof were needed, this once again showed that Hezbollah's agenda is not for Lebanon but clearly for the regime in Tehran. The timing of this message was also meant to make a statement that the political future of Lebanon is in its hands. The decision on who should be the next president, the next accused, the next everything, is their prerogative.

This comes as the Syrian regime is pushing for more influence in Lebanon. And incidentally, on this topic, we can notice a contradiction within the French foreign policy. While the French president's team supports Suleiman Frangieh, a candidate with both the colors of Bashar Assad and Hezbollah, the French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna stated that Assad should be put on trial due to the "hundreds of thousands of deaths" and "chemical arms use" during the country's civil war. Yet, Hezbollah's troops collaborated in this massacre, they came to the rescue of Assad on the orders of Tehran, and they are still stationed in Syria with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. So, if Assad needs to be brought to justice, why engage with his allies on the political front in Lebanon? Should they not also be brought to justice for their crimes?

In reality, Hezbollah, just like Assad, has always been given international legitimacy, whether publicly or in the backstages of

intelligence deal-making. Even Israel contributed to this recognition, especially after its withdrawal from Lebanon. The Israelis helped Hezbollah build up its international status. But, then again, this is a reflection of what is happening in Lebanon. If you want to talk to the real decision-maker, you will talk to Hezbollah. In the end, it controls and it decides. This week's mini military display was also a reminder to everyone that the south is under Hezbollah's control, not Hamas' and not even the army's.

Nevertheless, the broader recent synchronization between Hezbollah and Hamas is interesting. Hezbollah and hence Iran are working hard to add to the number of cards they hold in any deal that could come in the future. This reminded me of an interview given by a former intelligence officer at the beginning of the 2006 war. His analysis was that the ignition for the devastating attack by the Israelis was Hassan Nasrallah's speech taking responsibility for the coordinated attacks and kidnappings in both Lebanon and Gaza. It was a red line or a message that Israel would not allow both of these files to be in the hands of Hezbollah and Iran.

Yet, since 2006, Israel has in fact contributed to the status Hezbollah holds. This is why Lebanon's political future is linked to the regional deal-making. It is not only because minority political leadership cannot agree and invites interference. It is mainly because

Hezbollah and Iran are putting Lebanon within the greater basket of deal-making currently taking place in the region. To escape this, Lebanon needs a different political system.

Sunday's display was also a way for Hezbollah to preempt the remaining difficult question: What place can Hezbollah, in its current form, hold within the new Middle East that is beginning to shape up? This is a Middle East in which a series of reconciliations have come from within the region itself, not from international initiatives by Europe or the US. Whether between Turkiye and Egypt, Iran and Saudi Arabia or even Israel and the Abraham Accords signatory states, we are noticing the region taking action. This is a major shift within the region's dynamics and will, without any doubt, impact the future of Hezbollah and Lebanon.

When asked about the future of Lebanon, I have always answered that nothing will change unless either the situation stabilizes in Syria or the Lebanese build a new political system, such as federalism. In the first scenario, it is about stakeholders understanding that investing in Lebanon before having stability in Syria is a zero-sum geopolitical game because the Lebanese do not have agency. The second option is about Lebanon achieving this agency, just like the rest of the region, with a new political system. Hezbollah is pushing for the wrong option. However, this time around, it will not play to its advantage.

Arab News

## What is going on with Musk and Ron DeSantis?

Robert Reich

**T**HE real significance of Ron DeSantis's presidential announcement on Twitter had little to do with DeSantis but everything to do with Musk. It's that Twitter, under Musk, has fully embraced the political right. Why is Musk doing this? He acts as if he wants to be the darling of libertarian bros. But he's really aiming to lead democracy's foes.

Musk wants to crush unions and declare the United States a free-to-make-as-much-as-you-can-on-the-backs-of-working-stiffs zone. He calls himself a "free speech absolutist", but that's utter baloney. He wants to elevate the speech of people like DeSantis but suppress the speech of workers who want to unionize. He's even gone along with Turkey's recent ban on anti-regime comments in the run-up to the Turkish election. DeSantis is not exactly a libertarian himself, of course - unless you define a libertarian as someone who bans books, forces women to give birth, threatens to take trans youth away from parents who approve of them getting gender-affirming care, prohibits teachers from mentioning gender identity or sexual orientation, bars teachers from talking about America's history of racism, and wreaks vengeance even on Mickey Mouse for opposing his authoritarian poli-

cies. What unites Musk and DeSantis isn't libertarianism at all. It's authoritarianism. Twitter started to become a rightwing media hotspot when Musk lifted bans on thousands of accounts that had spread disinformation about the pandemic and the 2020 elections. More recently, Tucker Carlson has said he would revive his show on Twitter after losing his Fox News slot (Musk has denied that Twitter has signed a deal with Carlson). It's also been reported that the Daily Wire, a rightwing, anti-democracy media outlet, will make Twitter the home for all its podcasts.

Unquestionably, Twitter is benefiting from the dissatisfaction of the anti-democracy movement with Fox News. Musk can credibly claim to be outside the mainstream rightwing media world of Rupert Murdoch. But the reason Musk wants to be a force on the right is because he wants to be in control. That's been his business MO since the start. It's why he refused a seat on Twitter's board and instead mounted a hostile takeover. It's why he hates unions. And now Musk wants to control everything else. He wants to dominate the right wing of American politics. Not content to be the (or among the) richest on the planet, not satisfied with taking over one of the biggest media machines in

the world, Musk now wants to impose his will on America and the world directly.

Remind you of any other billionaire? Say, the former guy? Musk said on Tuesday he isn't formally backing any Republican candidate. But he is backing Republicans. And you can bet his eye is focused like a laser on the biggest Republican of all. Right now, Musk wants to send Donald Trump a message that he - Musk - has the power to make life difficult for Trump if Trump so much as hints at making life difficult for Musk. Musk knows that the best way to deal with a bully is to bully him. Show him you are even bigger than he is. Have more billions of dollars than he does. Have more millions of Twitter followers than he does.

And show him you have power over him by helping Republicans who are opposing him. Which is why Musk is helping DeSantis. And why, earlier this week, Musk retweeted a campaign kickoff video for Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina. Musk is only 51. Trump is 77. Trump may be the next president, but Musk will outlast him. The US constitution bars Musk from becoming president, as he was born in Pretoria, South Africa. But there's no end to the power he can wield over America and the world in coming decades. And make no mistake. Musk plans to wield it.

### Important Notice

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## Weekly inflation decrease by 0.42 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a decrease of 0.42 per cent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on May 25, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 254.05 points as compared to 255.12 points during the past week, according to the PBS data.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 45.49 per cent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 is covering 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups.

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs17,732 witnessed a 0.43 per cent decrease and went down to 260.77 points from last week's 261.65 points.

Meanwhile, the SPI for the consumption group Rs17,732-22,888, Rs22,889-29,517, Rs29,518-44,175, and above Rs44,175 witnessed a decrease of 0.38 per cent, 0.39 per cent, 0.41 per cent and 0.44 per cent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 18 (35.30%) items increased, 16 (31.37%) items decreased and 17 (33.33%)

items remained stable.

The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week (WoW), included Chicken (8.91%), Wheat Flour (3.33%), Eggs (3.03%), Garlic (2.83%), Tomatoes (2.61%), Onions (2.22%), Bananas (2.04%), Pulse Moong (1.51%), Pulse Masoor (1.26%), Cooking Oil 5 Litre (1.01%) and non-food item, LPG (3.44%). The items that recorded an increase in their average prices on a week-on-week (wow) basis, included Energy Saver (4.91%), Long Cloth (2.75%), Rice

Basmati Broken (1.86%), Cooked Beef (1.32%), Mutton (1.22%), Milk Fresh (1.20%), Shirting (1.14%)

and Beef (1.03%). The commodities that witnessed a decrease in price on Year-on-Year (YOY) basis, included Tomatoes (43.49%) and Onions (33.74%).

On a Year-on-Year (YoY) basis, the commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices included Cigarettes (138.50%), Tea Lipton (114.93%), Wheat Flour (110.17%), Gas Charges for Q1 (108.38%), Gents Sponge Chappal (100.33%), Bananas (99.58%), Potatoes (98.10%), Rice Basmati Broken (81.24%), Rice Irri-6/9 (79.96%), Petrol (79.85%), Diesel (78.68%), Eggs (69.55%), Pulse Moong (63.18%), Bread (63.17%) and Pulse Mash (55.93%).



LAHORE: A vendor is displaying and selling watermelons to attract the customers at his roadside setup.

## PSX loses 65.14 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Friday witnessed a bearish trend losing 65.14 points, with a negative change of 0.16 per cent, closing at 40,964.54 against 41,029.68 points on the previous day.

A total of 186,481,280 shares valuing Rs 6.767 bil-

lion were traded during the day as compared to 125,344,925 shares valuing Rs 4.059 billion the previous day. As many as 325 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 119 of them recorded gains and 176 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 30 companies remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were WorldCall Limited with 10,337,204 shares at Rs 1.10 per share, Maple Leaf with 9,791,080 shares at Rs 27.84 per share, and National Bank XD with 6,677,000 shares at Rs 20.31 per share.

Bata (Pak) witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 88.67 per share price,

whereas the runner-up was Siemens Pak with a Rs 47.44 rise in its per share price to Rs 679.95. Al-Abbas Sugar witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 29.75 per share closing at Rs 430.00, followed by Indus Motor Co. with a Rs 16.09 decline to close at Rs 921.92.

## Rupee gains 59 paisas against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee gained 59 paisas against the US Dollar (USD) in the interbank trading on Friday and closed at Rs285.15 against the previous day's closing of Rs285.74.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollars in

the open market were recorded at Rs308 and Rs311, respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 53 paisas to close at Rs306.11 against the last day's closing of Rs306.64; according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs2.04, where-

as a decrease of Rs1.59 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs352.07 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs353.66. The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal declined by 16 paisas and 11 paisas to close at Rs77.65 and Rs76.03; respectively.

## Shipping Activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, Express Rome, Olita, Sea Adore and Spirit of Sea-Trek carrying Containers, Canola seeds, Gas oil and Coal, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Grain and Fertilizer Terminal, FOTCO Oil Terminal and Pakistan International Bulk Terminal respectively.

Meanwhile another ship, Doctor-O is also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the same period to load 8,200 tonnes of Cement.

A total of 05 ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, BMC Crystal and Express Rome left the Port on Friday morning on Thursday. A cargo volume of 44,554 tonnes, comprising 27,656 tonnes imports Cargo and 16,898 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 1,608 Containers (614 TEUs Imports and 994 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them a bulk cargo carrier Doctor-O & two more ships, RDO Fortune and Jipro Neftis schedule to load/offload Cement, Containers and Palm oil are expected to take berths at Multi-Purpose Terminal, Qasim International Terminal and Liquid Cargo Terminal respectively on Friday & three more Container ships, Ambien Bay, MSC Denisse and CMA CGM Figaro are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Saturday & another Containers Ship, Maersk Chesapeake is due to arrive on Sunday.

## ‘Govt has promised to solve business community problems’

FAISALABAD (APP): Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) President Dr Khurram Tariq said on Friday the government's economic team members promised with him that all efforts would be made to solve problems of the business community to revive economy and control inflation.

He was talking to the FCCI members on his return from Islamabad. He explained that in his meetings with Federal Minister for Industries and Production Murtaza Mehmood, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Finance Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Tariq Pasha, Commerce Secretary Muhammad Sulah Ahmed Farooqi, Member Customs (Policy) Madam Surriya Ahmad Butt and tax officials in

Islamabad, he presented various budget proposals. He was assured by the government officials that the budget suggestions would be discussed at the highest forum and viable proposals would be incorporated in the budget.

Dr Khurram Tariq said that textile was the most important segment of our economy which was not only earning precious foreign exchange but was also providing jobs to millions of workers. He lamented that despite the depreciation of Pak Rupee, textile exports were declining, which was a matter of serious concern, not only for the government but also for the private sector. He said all concerned must make collaborative efforts to steer the sector from the crisis.

He also underlined the importance of the SME sector in the economy and said

that this segment had potential to revive the economy in a short span of time, provided it was facilitated and encouraged with proper incentives and policy measures. He demanded the government must immediately announce industrial and SME policies enabling these sectors to take progressive measures in near future. He demanded that SME units with less than Rs 150 million turnover might be exempted from balloting for computerised audit. He said that their audit should be completed within six months instead of a period of five years.

He opposed putting additional financial burden on the existing taxpayers and demanded expansion in the tax net. He said every year a specific target of new taxpayers should be fixed with a deadline to achieve it without any failure.

## 67% wheat procurement target achieved: Food Security Commissioner

ISLAMABAD (APP): Wheat procurement target for the crop season 2023-24 has been completed by 67 percent with the grain collection drive full swing across the crop producing areas to meet the domestic requirements of staple food and build its strategic reserves for maintaining demand and supply chain through out the year.

Earlier, the government had fixed wheat procurement targets for the current crop season at 6.8 million metric tons at an official support price of Rs3,900 per 40 kg to ensure a proper rate of return to local farmers across the crop-

producing areas in the country, which was revised upward and fixed at 7.800 million tons, Food Security Commissioner in the Ministry of National Food Security and Research Imtiaz Ali Gopang told APP on Friday.

So far, over 5.262 million tons of wheat has been procured by the respective food departments of the provincial government and Pakistan Agriculture Storage and Supplies Corporation (PASSCO) as against the set targets of 7.800 million tons, he said.

He said that about 81 percent of wheat procurement targets in Punjab

Province was achieved as it procured over 3.636 million tons of wheat as against the target of 4.5 million tons.

Meanwhile, Sindh Province has so far procured about 683,919 metric tons of wheat as against the set targets of 1.4 million tons, and completed 49 percent of its assigned targets for the current season, he added.

Under wheat procurement drive for season 2023-24, the Balochistan and PASSCO have achieved 50 percent of their fixed procurement targets as Balochistan has procured 50,000 metric tons out of

100,000 metric tons and 889,735 metric tons respectively, he added.

The Food Security Commissioner further informed that He said the wheat crop was sown over 9 million hectares to fulfill the local staple food requirements as well as for keeping the strategic reserves. Owing to the incentives introduced by the incumbent government to mitigate the adverse impact of catastrophic floods and torrential rains during the last moon soon season and to revive the local agriculture sector, the output of Rabi crops witnessed significant growth, he added.

## European stock markets struggle on US debt nerves

LONDON (AFP/APP): Europe's stock markets struggled Friday with investors nervous as a deadline to avert a calamitous US default draws closer. After an initial rebound, London and Paris stocks ran out of steam as the session progressed, while Frankfurt slipped into the red.

"With the clock ticking on those debt ceiling negotiations and Congress having closed up for a long weekend break, there's, without doubt, a degree of caution building over what happens next," noted Scope Markets analyst Joshua Mahony. Asian equities mostly rose, however, on hopes that lawmakers are edging closer to a deal to hike the US debt ceiling.

Markets have taken a hit in recent days on worries about the slow pace of negotiations in Washington, even after President Joe Biden and House Speaker Kevin McCarthy expressed optimism earlier in the week. On Thursday, Biden reiterated his pledge that "there will be no default" despite the wrangling, adding that talks with McCarthy, who leads the Republican negotiators, had been "productive".

The speaker also expressed his determination to get an agreement to raise the borrowing limit by June 1, when the Treasury has warned the government is expected to run out of cash to service its debts.

"We know where our differences lie," he said. "We do not have an agreement yet. We knew this would not be easy. It's hard, but we're working. And we're gonna continue to work till we get this done." Reports said the two camps were edging towards a deal that would lift the debt ceiling and cap spending for two years. Pressure for a deal was ramped up after Fitch placed the country's AAA-ranked credit on "rating watch negative" owing to the standoff.

There is still plenty of rancor on Capitol Hill, with some Republicans questioning whether the United States is even likely to default at all, despite warnings about the potential economic chaos it would cause.

Democratic minority leader Hakeem Jeffries said Republicans had abandoned their jobs in Washington to go on holiday.

"And these Republicans, they're

going to say that Joe Biden refused to sit down with them," he added.

- Key figures around 1040 GMT - London - FTSE 100: FLAT at 7,573.05 points

Paris - CAC 40: FLAT at 7,227.75 Frankfurt - DAX: DOWN 0.2 percent at 15,766.48

EURO STOXX 50: FLAT at 4,271.32

Tokyo - Nikkei 225: UP 0.4 percent at 30,916.31 (close)

Hong Kong - Hang Seng Index: Closed for a holiday

Shanghai - Composite: UP 0.4 percent at 3,212.50 (close)

New York - Dow: DOWN 0.1 percent at 32,764.65 (close)

Euro/dollar: UP at \$1.0729 from \$1.0725 on Thursday

Pound/dollar: UP at \$1.2351 from \$1.2321

Dollar/yen: DOWN at 139.79 yen from 140.06 yen

Euro/pound: DOWN at 86.86 pence from 87.04 pence

West Texas Intermediate: UP 0.8 percent at \$72.42 per barrel

Brent North Sea crude: UP 0.6 percent at \$76.75 per barrel

## Nation indebted to martyrs' sacrifices: President ICCI

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on Friday paid tribute to martyrs of the armed forces who laid their lives in the line of duty to safeguard the country's frontiers.

"Martyrs are our pride and the entire nation is indebted to their sacrifices," he said while addressing a ceremony, jointly organized by the ICCI and the Capital Development Authority (CDA) in connection with the Youm-e-Takreem Shuhada-e-Pakistan here at the Pakistan Monument. He said the way the Pakistani nation celebrated the Martyrs' Day and paid tribute to their

valour had proven that "we have never forgotten and will never forget the martyrs and ghazis who protected the motherland."

He said the ICCI always stood by its armed forces and law enforcement departments whenever there were testing times. "The entire business community of Pakistan believes that Pakistan and our institutions are inseparable." CDA Chairman Captain (Retd.) Nur-ul-Amin Mengal said the purpose of marking Martyrs' Day was to remember the sacrifices of the brave soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the sake of the country.

"We need to tell and teach this bright side of our history to the

younger generation. Martyrs and Ghazis of Pakistan are the real capital of the nation. We are proud of the sacrifices rendered by our army, police and people in wars against the enemy and in the fight against terrorism. Thanks to the sacrifices of these brave people, we have defeated the monster of terrorism."

The ceremony participants expressed strong determination to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Armed Forces and foil all nefarious designs of the anti-state elements.

They asked to give exemplary punishment to the perpetrators of the May 9 tragedy after their trial under the Army Act.

## British Airways cancels dozens of Heathrow flights after IT problem

LONDON (BBC): There has been a second day of disruption for travellers at Heathrow after British Airways cancelled dozens more short-haul flights following Thursday's IT problems.

BA said cancellations were still happening due to the "knock-on effect of a technical issue" resulting in staff being in the wrong location.

A total of 175 flights have been axed, affecting more than 20,000 passengers. It comes on the busiest day for UK air travel since 2019.

According to data firm Cirium, 83 BA flights, or around 8% of its planned Friday services, were cancelled. This followed the cancellation of 92 flights on Thursday, out of 860 that were scheduled.

Most of the cancellations are for European and domestic flights, but there have also been delays to other services, while some passengers have been unable to check in online.

Meanwhile, traffic has started building up in Dover as delays are expected on roads and ports over the bank holiday and school half-term break.



PESHAWAR: An artisan gives the final touch to a wooden made truck for decoration at his workplace.



## In brief

## PFF Futsal National Cup

LAHORE (APP): The draws of the First PFF Futsal National Cup 2023 have been finalized here on Friday at Football House and the event will be played from 30 May. A total of 24 teams have been classified into six groups to fight for glory. Following is the formation of the groups, Group A: SA Gardens Football Club, Q Park Rangers Futsal Club, Golden FC and Animal Life Care Football Club. Group B: Al Zaki Football Club, LST Futsal Club, Shahid Football Club and Griffin Youth Futsal Club. Group C: Grim Jows FC, Train with Kaka, Sialkot City Football Club and Al Faisal Football Club. Group D: Lahore Athletic, SA Gardens Academy, Forward Futsal Club and Brothers FC. Group E: Smurfs Football Club, ABLFC, Youngster Zaidi Club and Outlaws FC. Group F: ICWA Futsal Club, Real Lahore FC, Legacy Soccer academy and PESS Football Club BWP. The opener of the tournament will be played between SA Gardens Football Club and Animal Life Care Football Club. The final and semi-final of the first PFF National Futsal Cup will be played on 4 June at SA Gardens play field. Moreover, the first PFF Women Futsal National Cup 2023 kicks off on 2 June at the venue of SA gardens. The four participating teams are, Train with Kaka, Bulls FC, MRF Futsal Club and Real Lahore FC. The inaugural match of first PFF Women Futsal National Cup 2023 will take place between Train with Kaka and Real Lahore FC.

## Dominant Celtics continue comeback

B O S T O N (Agencies): Jaylen Brown said the Boston Celtics "set the tone from start to finish" as they continued their comeback in the Eastern Conference finals with a second straight win over the Miami Heat. They scored 16 three-pointers in a dominant 110-97 win to cut their deficit in the series to 3-2. No NBA team has ever previously rallied from 3-0 down to win a best-of-seven play-off series. "The only thing that can stop us is us," said Brown. With 21 points, Brown was one of four Boston players to score in double digits with Derrick White top-scoring on 24. Marcus Smart added 23 while Jayson Tatum also made 21. "Tonight we were the tougher playing team," Brown added. "We set the tone from start to finish." Duncan Robinson made 18 points for Miami but talisman Jimmy Butler struggled to find his rhythm, contributing only 14 points and sitting out most of the fourth quarter. Three-time NBA champions Miami need only one more win to reach a seventh NBA Finals and a first since 2020, and will have the opportunity in game six on their home court on Saturday. "We've just got to play better," said Butler. "Start the game off better, on the starters, make it more difficult for them. They are in a rhythm since the beginning of the game. But we are always going to stay positive, knowing that we can and we will win this series. We'll just have to close it out at home." The Denver Nuggets await in the NBA Finals, which are expected to start on 1 June.



ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor of Rawalpindi Women University, Prof. Dr. Anila Kamal giving winning trophy to Army rowing team in the 34th National Games Rowing event at Islamabad. —INP Photo

## Peshawar, Bannu, Swat Green record wins in PM 'Youth Talent Hunt Hockey League'

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Region, Bannu and Swat Green Regions recorded victories on the second day of the ongoing Prime Minister (PM) 'Youth Talent Hunt Men Hockey League' being played here at historical Islamia College University Hockey Ground on Friday. Vice Chancellor (VC) of Islamia College University Professor Dr Gul Majeed Khan graced the occasion as chief guest.

Director General (DG) of sports and Higher education Commission (HEC) Islamabad and Coordinator for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Bahre Karam Assistant Registrar Shabbir Khan, Director Distance Studies Dr Noor Zada, Director Sports Islamia College University Ali Hoti, Secretary KP Hockey Association Hidayat Ullah Khan, international hockey players including Waqas Ahmad, Zia Ur Rehman Benori, international hockey umpire Haroon Rashid, officials, players and a large number of spectators were also present on this occasion and witnessed the thrill-packed matches.

Before the start of the matches, the chief guests were introduced to the teams. A total of six teams, two from Swat Regions including Swat Greens and Swat White, Peshawar,

Mardan, Bannu, and Hazara are taking part in the League organized by the Directorate of Sports University of Peshawar.

In the first match, Swat Green stunned a strong Mardan team by 2-1. Mardan took the lead in the 13th minute through inside right Aimal Khan on the field attempt. After taking the lead, Mardan kept up the pressure to double the lead and they got three easy goal-scoring chances besides taking two consecutive penalty corners but all in vain.

On the other hand, the Swat Green front line made some good attacking moves as a result it was in the 23rd minute when Shamsher Ali tied the tally 1-1 by scoring a beautiful goal from the top of the D circle before dodging three defenders.

The two teams were tied 1-1 at the end of the first two quarters. It was the third and fourth quarters when both Swat Greens and Mardan kept up the pressure on each other's defense with some fine moves also witnessed.

It was in the fourth quarter when Swat Greens scored the decisive goal through super-fit Abbas Ahmad. Abbas got a left winger Irfan Ullah cross and connected it nicely by making the tally 2-1. Mardan players tried their hardest to

level the tally but failed and thus Swat Greens won the match by 2-1.

In the second match, Peshawar defeated Swat White by 5-1 in a one-sided affair. Surprisingly, Swat White took the lead in the very 7th minute through Faizan Khan and till the end of the first and second quarters, Swat White was leading by 1-0.

It was the third and fourth quarters when Peshawar after a goal down, managed their position and scored five goals but thanks to inside right Muhammad Suleman who netted three consecutive goals including the first hat-trick of the League. Saleem Khan and Umar Farooq scored one goal each to make the tally 5-1.

In the third match of the day's proceedings, Bannu Region defeated Hazara Region by 2-0. For Bannu Usman and Tahir scored one goal each on the field attempt while Hazara Region got five penalty corners but all in vain. Bannu fully dominated the proceedings and did not give any room to Hazara Region forwards to strike back.

Haroon Rashid, Subhan Khan, Murad Ali and Falak Naz supervised the matches while Sajid Khan, Zir Ur Rehman and Manzoor Khan acted as judges.

## ICC reveals prize money for World Test C'ship winner

DUBAI (INP): International Cricket Council (ICC) on Friday announced the prize money for the World Test Championship 2021-23 cycle with a total fund of \$3.8 million to be shared between the nine teams.

The winner of the World Test Championship (WTC) final between India and Australia will get a whopping amount of \$1.6 million while the losing team will still earn \$800,000.

The Grand Finale at The Oval in London from 7

June will not only decide the Test champions for the next two years but also the fate of a major chunk of around 63 per cent of the total prize pool of the outgoing WTC cycle.

The remaining seven teams will share \$1.4 million in a manner that South Africa earns \$450,000 for finishing third in the WTC standings, England bags \$350,000 for finishing fourth, Sri Lanka gets \$200,000 for finishing fifth. The bottom four teams, including Pakistan,

pocket \$100,000 each.

It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan finished seventh on the standings of the outgoing World Test Championship Cycle with a below-par percentage of 38.1. Babar Azam-led side won only four Tests, lost six and drew four out of their total 14 fixtures in the cycle.

Interestingly, the prize money has not been changed from the last inaugural edition of the championship (2019-21) with a total purse of \$3.8 million.

## Pak Army bags National Games rowing event title

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Army has grabbed the rowing event of the National Games while Wapda and Pakistan Navy bagged second and third positions, respectively.

Pakistan Army bagged the title of champion with 16 gold and 12 silver medals.

Wapda secured second position with 8 gold, 10 silver and 6 bronze medals while Pakistan Navy clinched the third position with 3 gold, 6 silver and 11 bronze medals.

Pakistan Railways secured the fourth position with a gold medal and Higher education Commission secured fifth position with 9 bronze medals. Rawalpindi Women's University Vice Chancellor Anila Kamal distributed trophies and medals among the players of the teams. Chairman of Pakistan Rowing Federation Rizwan ul Haq was also present on the occasion.

Army attains first spot in National Games Karate

QUETTA (APP): In the

men's and women's karate events of the National Games, Pakistan Army achieved first position with three gold medals, WAPDA secured second position with three golds and Balochistan gained third position with two silvers.

According to the details, in the final competitions of the men's and women's karate event in the ongoing 34th National Games in Quetta, Pakistan Army attained first position with 3 gold, 2 silver and 1 bronze.

WAPDA bagged 3 gold and 2 silver medals while Balochistan took 3rd position by winning 2 silver and 2 bronze medals.

While HEC got five medals, Punjab gained three and Railway achieved one bronze medal.

**Victorious Pakistan army dominates national games with taekwondo triumph:** Pakistan Army emerged as the top performer in the 34th National Games, clinching a remarkable 31 gold, six silver medals across different categories of men's and

women's taekwondo events.

The Air Force secured the second position, showcasing their prowess with an impressive tally of three gold medals, six silver medals, and 11 bronze medals.

WAPDA maintained a strong hold on the third position, earning two gold medals, 17 silver medals, and 15 bronze medals.

The Higher education Commission (HEC) claimed the fourth spot, securing one gold medal, four silver medals, and 10 bronze medals.

Sindh held on to the fifth position with two silver and one bronze medal.

Balochistan stood sixth position with one silver and seven bronzes while Punjab achieved seventh position with one silver and three bronzes.

Similarly, Pakistan Railways got 11 bronze medals, KPK gained 10 bronze medals, Islamabad secured 3 bronze medals and Police attained 3 bronze medals in 34th National Games so far.

## Peshawar Zalmi Talent Hunt 2023 ends successfully in Hayatabad Sports complex



## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The first and important stage of the Zalmi talent hunt 2023 organized by the Pakistan Super League franchise Peshawar Zalmi has ended, more than ten thousand young cricketers have registered in the four-day trials at the Hayatabad Sports Complex Peshawar.

Peshawar Zalmi President Inzamam ul Haq, Director Cricket Mohammad Akram, Zalmi star Kamran Akmal were among the selection panel that tested the talent of the

young cricketers participating in the open trials and selected the best players.

Pakistan and Peshawar Zalmi captain Babar Azam also reached Peshawar on the third day of the trials and encouraged the young cricketers. Zalmi and Pakistan Rising Star Mohammad Haris were also present at the trials and encouraged the young cricketers.

The young cricketers were given an opportunity to show their skills by organizing matches between Inzamam ul Haq XI, Babar Azam XI,

Kamran Akmal XI and Darren Sammy XI. After the end of these matches, the fifteen best young cricketers have been finalized.

Peshawar Zalmi Director of Cricket Muhammad Akram said that Peshawar Zalmi will provide all possible facilities to the fifteen young cricketers.

Young cricketers will get training and coaching at the National Cricket Academy and the most talented young cricketers can also be given an opportunity in the emerging category of PSL 9.

## Salah 'devastated' at missing out on Champions League

M A N C H E S T E R (Agencies): Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah said he is "devastated" the club have missed out on a spot in next season's Champions League and added "there's absolutely no excuse for this".

Salah posted his comments on social media shortly after Liverpool's failure to finish in the top four was confirmed by Manchester United beating Chelsea.

Liverpool will finish fifth and play in next season's Europa League. "We let you [fans] and ourselves down," said Egypt international Salah, 30.

Liverpool won seven of their past eight games in a late push for fourth place but, ultimately, could not make up for their inconsistent form for much of the season before that run.

United only needed a point at home to Chelsea in the penultimate game of their season to confirm their Champions League place and join champions Manchester City, second-placed Arsenal and Newcastle United as England's top competition next season.

"We had everything we



needed to make it to next year's Champions League and we failed," said Salah, who was part of the Liverpool team that won the tournament in 2018-19 and lost last year's final to Real Madrid.

"We are Liverpool and qualifying to the competition is the bare minimum. I am sorry but it's too soon for an uplifting or optimistic post."

Liverpool started the campaign off promisingly by beating Manchester City in the Community Shield but then won only two of their opening eight Premier League games.

They struggled away from home in the top flight before their recent upturn in form, with three of their eight away defeats coming

at relegation-battling Nottingham Forest, Wolves and Bournemouth, while they were only beaten by struggling Leeds United at home in the league.

Liverpool were comfortably beaten by Real Madrid in the last 16 of this season's Champions League, while they went out at the fourth-round stage of both the FA Cup and League Cup to Brighton and Manchester City respectively.

Salah, who signed a lucrative new three-year contract with Liverpool last summer, has scored 19 league goals this season, with six coming in 14 games before the 2022 World Cup and 13 in 23 games following the tournament.

"I saw Salah in the canteen and he is smiling".

Manager Jurgen Klopp says Liverpool "did not deliver what everybody wanted" this season but that there are reasons for optimism after a strong end to the campaign.

"This season has not been historically good. But since we had a training camp in Dubai after the World Cup, not everything has been perfect but the points we have collected have been pretty good," he said. "If we could have done that all season, we'd be in a different place. So, of course there are reasons for optimism."

"The atmosphere our people created in the last home game [against Aston Villa], the way the club said farewell to the players who are leaving, all of these things are the basis for a fantastic future."

Asked about Salah's social media post, Klopp added: "In the world of social media, so many bad things happen but that wasn't one of them."

"It was a normal description of his situation. I just saw him in the canteen and he is smiling; I didn't ask him why, but that is his mood."

## Alcaraz says he is just 'one of the favourites' ahead of French Open

PARIS (Reuters): World number one Carlos Alcaraz, who will be fighting for his first French Open title, does not consider himself favourite to win, saying his main priority is to enjoy the tournament beyond defending his ranking.

Having been placed in the same half of the draw as 22-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic on Thursday, the 20-year-old Spaniard said he was keen to manage his own expectations.

"I'm going to try to do my best and that's all I'm thinking about," Alcaraz said on Thursday at a promotional event where he played with children ahead of the tournament.

"I'm not the favourite, but of course I can say I'm one of them. I don't have a lot of pressure, as I said before I just enjoy myself and try not to think about the pressure... I come here to enjoy, to show my best tennis. And of course I'll try to do a good result, but it's not the only thing I think about," he added.

In the absence of 14-time and defending champion Rafael Nadal, who will miss the claycourt tournament through injury, the focus is on Alcaraz and Djokovic.

"I don't know if it's that up-for-grabs (the title). I don't know who could beat Carlos (Alcaraz), there aren't many who can beat Carlos or (Novak) Djokovic. They are not easy to beat. I do not know if (Holger) Rune or (Daniil) Medvedev are going to do well," said coach Toni Nadal, who also talked about his nephew's absence.

"Unfortunately, my nephew can't come. He's injured and has to recover to be competitive... but I hope that, in 2024, he'll be well enough to try to come here," he added. Alcaraz could face some potentially challenging duels on his way to a possible semi-final against world number three Djokovic, with 2021 runner-up Stefanos Tsitsipas, Lorenzo Musetti and Felix Auger-Aliassime in the top quarter of the draw.



## In brief

### World No-Tobacco Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): World No-Tobacco Day will be marked on May 31 across the globe, including Pakistan, to draw attention to the health problems that tobacco use can cause. People, non-governmental organizations and governments unite on this day, which is held on May 31 each year, to sensitise people about health problems associated with tobacco use. They conduct various activities in connection to this day, including public marches and demonstrations, often with vivid banners, advertising campaigns and educational programs, and meetings for anti-tobacco campaigners. Some campaigners and activists may go in public places to encourage people to stop smoking. Moreover, laws restricting smoking in particular areas may come into effect and wide-reaching health campaigns may be launched. Tobacco is a product of the fresh leaves of nicotiana plants. It is used as an aid in spiritual ceremonies and as a recreational drug. Medical research made it clear during the 1900s that tobacco use increased the likelihood of many illnesses, including heart attacks, strokes, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), emphysema and many forms of cancer.

### Special squads for signal violators

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Police have constituted special squads to curb traffic signal violations and ensure the implementation of laws without any discrimination. Following the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, special squads have been constituted to take stern action against those violating traffic signals. The traffic congestion unit would also assist these squads in their tasks and ensure a smooth flow of traffic on roads. According to a police spokesman, efforts are afoot for a disciplined traffic system in the city. He has also appealed to the citizens to follow rules for maintaining smooth traffic flow in the city. He said that cops had been directed to ensure the implementation of traffic rules irrespective of status and rank. "They have been also asked to demonstrate patience and a courteous attitude while issuing traffic violation tickets to road users."

### 10 held over violation

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Gungmandi Police arrested 10 persons over violation of the Sound System Act, said a police spokesman on Friday. He informed that the accused namely Qadir, Umair, Raees, Waqas, Noor, Hamza, Hamad Aftab, Anis, Tayyab, and Ahmed, who were rounded up during a raid, were playing loud music and creating disturbance for other residents of the area. On a complaint of local residents, a police team rushed to the spot and nabbed the accused. They also recovered sound system, sheesha, hookahs and other items.

### Police net 11 drug peddlers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers and bootleggers conducted raids in different areas and rounded up 11 accused on recovery of over 4430 grams charas and 40 liters liquor, said a police spokesman here on Friday. He informed that New Town, Cantt, Naseerabad, and Gujjar Khan police held Abdul Haseeb, Honey, Ibrahim, Hasan Ayaz, Ali Khan and Ali Jibran and recovered 4430 grams charas.



ISLAMABAD: First Lady Begum Samina Alvi being appraised about the one-stop registration services of NADRA for persons with disabilities, at the Council on Rights of Persons with Disabilities Secretariat.

## NDMA advisory puts provincial depts on guard against impending wind-dust, thunderstorm rain

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Friday issued an advisory to all the federal and provincial departments concerned to ensure precautionary measures against wind-dust and thunderstorm rain forecast in the Upper and Central parts of the country.

The NDMA in light of the Met Office weather forecast issued the advisory stating Wind-Dust and Thunderstorm-Rain was expected in upper and central parts of the country with temperatures remaining normal to below normal (May 28 - 31).

It added that Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) forecast that a westerly wave was likely to enter the western and upper parts of the country on May 28 and would likely persist until May 31.

Under the influence of this weather system, wind-dust, thunderstorm and rain was expected in Punjab, Balochistan, and Sindh.

However, wind-dust, thunderstorms, rain, few hailstorms and isolated heavy walls with occasional gaps

were expected in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Gilgit Baltistan (GB), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Punjab and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) urban and rural areas during the period. In the light of the forecast shared by PMD, following impacts namely dust or windstorm may cause damage to loose structures such as under-construction buildings, hoardings and tall trees etc., strong winds may cause damage to standing crops, heavy rainfall may cause landslides or avalanches and disrupt traffic flow, heavy hailstorms and thunderstorms can endanger lives (human & livestock) and property. The provincial disaster management authorities and others were required to undertake measures as per respective mandates.

The local administrations to assess and plan deployment of additional resources and exercise control over traffic leading to and in vicinity of vulnerable or choke, points, tourist spots and attractions.

The local administration will secure loose infrastructure such as buildings under construction and advertise-

ment hoardings etc to prevent losses/ damages and save precious lives.

Moreover, engage local communities at traditionally, historically dangerous, hazard-prone sites to enable round the clock monitoring and establish feedback mechanism for early warnings and alerts for at-risk population. It also demanded to coordinate with relevant district and municipal administrations to ensure mitigation & preparedness measures for landslides, flash flooding, hill torrents and to secure or remove billboards or hoardings in view of thunderstorms, high winds and hailstorms.

The farmers should also be advised to take all necessary precautionary measures to safeguard their crops, i.e. timely harvesting, safe storage or any other precaution from adverse effects of dust-wind-thunderstorms and hailstorms. The cattle and sheep herders should be advised to undertake necessary mitigative and precautionary measures to protect their livestock, i.e. safe sheltering or any other precaution from adverse effects of dust-wind-thunderstorms and hailstorm.

## Mpox patient to be discharged soon: Health Ministry

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination on Friday said that the Mpox patient who was tested positive upon arrival, is now stable and recovering.

According to an official of the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, the patient is almost recovered and

would be discharged within a day or two.

He said that a 50-year-old person who was tested positive for Mpox upon arrival at Islamabad International Airport Islamabad on May 22, 2023, is likely to have contracted the Mpox infection during his frequent travelling around the world.

In a statement, Director General Health Dr. Baseer

Achakzai said the epidemiological investigation revealed that the affected person is a frequent traveller, who moved between Kuwait, Islamabad, Faisalabad, Makkah and Islamabad within the span of a week while he spent only two days in Saudi Arabia. "It is quite possible that the patient acquired Mpox infection during his travel", DG Health Dr Achakzai maintained.

## 272 cops pass-out from Sihala training centre

RAWALPINDI (APP): Some 78 Sub-Inspectors and 194 Assistant Sub-Inspectors were passed-out in a ceremony held on Friday at Police Training College Sihala, Rawalpindi.

Additional Inspector General, Training Punjab, Tariq Chohan was the chief guest at the passing out parade. Commandant Ashfaq Ahmed Khan, Deputy Inspector General congratulated the passed-out officers while a well-trained contingent of the officers presented a guard

of honor to the chief guest. Deputy Commandant College, Muhammad Ashfaq Alam, Course Commander SP, Hina Naik Bakht, SP Shoaib Aqeel, SP Abdul Razzaq and other officers were present on the occasion. AIG Training Punjab addressing the participants said, "We have to perform our duties with hard work and honesty to restore the respect of the police force in the society."

Tariq Chohan said that the citizens should be given prompt justice while respecting their self-respect.

The problems of senior citizens and women as well as poor and destitute people should be solved on priority, he added. Commandant Sihala College said that the officers going into the field should serve humanity with renewed passion and dedication. Now, after completing the course at the college, all the officers should play a visible role to change "Thana culture" at the police station level, Ashfaq Ahmad Khan said. He asked the officers to ensure merit and investigate the cases with honesty.

## ANF foils four bids to smuggle 844 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations managed to recover 844 kg drugs and arrested four drug smugglers, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday.

He informed that in an operation near Attock Chhachh Interchange, ANF recovered 2460 grams opium and rounded up three accused residents of Attock and Swabi. In another operation near Peshawar-Charsada Road, ANF seized 24 kg opium and 18 kg charas.

In the third operation, ANF acting on a tip-off conducted a raid and foiled a bid to smuggle drugs from Quetta to Sindh.

During the operation, ANF team tried to stop a Vigo pick-up vehicle bearing a fake government number plate and driver wearing fake uniform. After chasing the vehicle, ANF managed to intercept the vehicle near Quetta-Sibi Road and recovered 700 kg charas besides netting an accused resident of Quetta.

After preliminary investigation and pointation of the accused, ANF recovered 100 kg charas from a car with a fake government number plate from Toghi Road, Quetta. Separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.

## ‘Govt to re-launch PM laptop scheme for youth this year’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to PM (SAPM) on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima said that the government will re-launch the laptop scheme for the youth this year under the umbrella of the Prime Minister (PM) Youth Program (PMYM).

Shaza Fatima stated this during a news conference here on Friday. She said, "Under the scheme, one hundred thousand laptops will be provided to the youth this year." Regretting that the previous government halted this scheme, she pointed out that laptops provided under the PM Youth Program enabled the youth to continue their education and jobs during COVID-19. "Government has also initiated National Innovation Award to promote startup culture among the youth," added Shaza Fatima.

The Special Assistant further said, "The

government is also giving special emphasis to the promotion of healthy activities amongst the youth."

As part of these endeavors, she pointed out that about fifty-four thousand children became part of different games over the last one year.

Fatima recalled that hockey trials were conducted in twenty-five regions and volleyball trials in twenty-eight regions.

She said that former PM Nawaz Sharif launched this scheme in 2013.

She said, "The Muslim League (N) has empowered the youth in every era."

She said that in 2013, Nawaz Sharif started the youth programme.

She said that many projects were started for the better future of the youth.

Unfortunately, the laptop scheme was discontinued in 2018.

## PM's Task Force celebrates Bhudda's birthday

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Task Force on Gandhara Tourism on Friday celebrated religious teacher Buddha's Purnima (birthday) to pay him homage and enlighten his life's legacy.

The event, held at the Islamabad Museum, was attended and graced by officials, art lovers and other dignitaries, said a press release.

Visualizing the immense potential in tourism around Gandhara civilization, the Prime Minister Task Force is making all-out efforts to promote Gandhara tourism in the country, under the Chairmanship of Minister of State Dr Ramesh Kumar Vankwani, Pakistan is home to a multitude of heritage sites, monuments and historic buildings which demon-

strates the diverse layers of history of this region. The rich Gandhara heritage of Pakistan is an iconic phenomenon in the entire world as Gandhara art is a great and major attraction for Buddhists from all over the world. Gandhara, which is located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, has emerged as a center of Buddhist learning, art, and culture and played a significant role in the history of Buddhism. Buddhism's teaching has transcended borders and cultures, promoting compassion, mindfulness, and inner peace.

Under King Ashoka's patronage, Gandhara became a hub of monasteries, stupas, and educational institutions, attracting scholars and artists. The unique Gandharan art style

blended diverse cultural influences, conveying the essence of Buddhism to people of various backgrounds.

The Gandhara's archaeological sites, such as Takht-i-Bahi and Taxila are showcasing remarkable Buddhist artifacts, representing the region's rich legacy. Furthermore, Gandhara was a center of intellectual discourse with scholars engaging in profound debates and contributing to the expansion of Buddhist philosophy.

It is worth mentioning here that Prime Minister Task Force had already directed the relevant departments to compile a report on provincial rich heritage sites of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism, particularly in KP to promote tourism in the country.

## Comprehensive strategy needed to avert food insecurity

ISLAMABAD (APP): With growing threats of climate change and its population hovering around 230 million, Pakistan is under recognizable pressure of food insecurity as well as employment generation for the survival of its people.

Amidst changing world dynamics in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war, Pakistan's agricultural production has also gained more importance to maintain food security and address issues like hunger and malnutrition to develop a healthy and prosperous society and achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of zero hunger. Although the country has a bumper wheat crop this year, its agriculture sector still faced challenges like changing weather patterns, depleting groundwater table, increasing urbanization and lack of value chain infrastructure. According to a World Bank (WB) study, the majority of Pakistan's population in rural areas reside below the poverty line which necessitates raising agricultural productivity to generate more income opportunities for them to improve the rural economy. Torrential rains and floods like last year are also a challenge for the policymakers to avert the effects of such future catastrophes for securing crops and livestock of people associated with agricultural sector. Keeping in view all these issues, the government is working on a multi-pronged strategy by ensuring supply of certified seeds of major crops like wheat, rice, cotton, sugarcane and maize.

"The government has launched a track and trace seed policy to provide certified seeds of cash crops like wheat, cotton and rice to farmers," said Imtiaz Ali Gopang, Food Security Commissioner, Ministry of National Food Security and Research. He informed that under this initiative, during 2022-23, paddy seed availability was 67,289 metric tons, about 148% of the total seed required for the Kharif 2023-24 crop. Moreover, certified seeds availability for maize crops during 2022-23 was

around 28,029.31 metric tons (85%) of the total requirement, he added.

Gopang said for sowing maize in 2023-24, its seed availability was 24,667 metric tons including 7,154.55 metric tons local and 17,521 metric tons of imported seed which was around 75% of the total requirement. "The government was also ensuring the provision of seeds for pulses and oil seeds to enhance their per-acre output." "Efforts are also being made to facilitate local growers in adopting innovative cultivation techniques like conserving cultivable land, water, soil and energy for producing cost-effective food cereals to fulfill dietary needs of people on affordable prices," he mentioned.

The government has also fixed support prices of wheat and cotton to facilitate and encourage farmers, besides announcing Prime Minister Kissan Package scheme to provide farmers loans up to Rs30 million on seven percent markup for seven years time. The ECC had approved a wheat procurement target of 1.80 million metric tons at the rate of Rs 3,900 per 40 kilograms by Pakistan Agricultural Storage & Services Corporation (PASSCO) for the year 2023. A committee was also formed to review proper wheat usage and storage mechanism including the development of silos to ensure the availability of grain at sustainable prices. Cotton Commissioner Dr Zahid has also informed that the ECC has fixed cotton (Phutti) intervention price at Rs 8,500 per 40 kg for current sowing to revive its production, bring stability to the domestic market and ensure a fair return to farmers. "We expect, this initiative would help bring more areas under cotton cultivation." "The public and private sector seed agencies of Punjab and Sindh have procured 15,983 metric tons and 1,686 metric tons of seed respectively," he informed. He said departments concerned were also working on research and development to produce high-yielding seed varieties of different crops.

Meanwhile, Chairman Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) Dr Ghulam Muhammad Ali

informed that due to advancements in seed production technology, local output of major cash crops witnessed a manifold increase with minor crops like oil seeds, pulses and vegetables also witnessing growth.

"PARC, in collaboration with Korean Program on International Agriculture (KOPIA), would establish 35 aeroponic greenhouses to produce first-generation seed potato tubers for large-scale cultivation to produce virus-free potato seed," he stated. "With this initiative, more than 30 per cent of potato seed requirements could be met from tissue culture labs established at National Agriculture Research Center (NARC)." Dr Mansoor, Project Director Pulses Enhancement Program of PARC mentioned developing six commercial varieties of beans to help reduce reliance on imported pulses. "These are the first commercial varieties of beans produced in Pakistan that will boost pulses cultivation locally and enhance their output."

He said PARC under the Public Sector Development Program had also launched a five-year research project to increase national average produce of pulses like chickpea, mung bean, mash, lentils and beans by 30% to meet local demand. Although the government has introduced numerous measures to boost the agricultural sector with different government departments, it was also working on multiple high-yield seed varieties. These measures must transform into a visible change in the lives of poor farmers as well as provision of sufficient food for people.

There is also a dire need to control unbridled population growth, enhance productivity and raise awareness on the prudent use of commodities avoiding wastage in daily life, especially during wedding ceremonies. A comprehensive strategy for price controlling, the exploitative role of middlemen and hoarding of commodities for illegal profit gains must also be in place besides charity initiatives to reach out to hunger-stricken rural and urban poor.



ISLAMABAD: A flock of piegon eating food at F-10.

9,000 file asylum applications

KABUL (Agencies): The European Census Bureau has said that asylum interests to the EU member states at the beginning of the current year has increased by 40 percent compared to last year. According to the European Census Bureau reports, more than 9,000 Afghan citizens have applied for asylum applications in the EU member state over the past month – a record-high number of asylum applications by any single country.

Heavy rains kill 13 people

KHOST (Agencies): Thirteen people were killed and eight others were injured due to persistent heavy rains and flash floods over the past couple of days in Afghanistan, Taliban officials said. Shafiuallah Rahimi, the spokesman of the state ministry for natural disaster management, said that at least 13 people were killed and 8 others were injured by heavy rains across the country. Mr. Rahimi in a recorded video said that floods happened in Laghman, Paktia, Khost, Daikundi, Maidan Wardak, Qandahar.

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

Norway Refugee Council Chief says European Envoys should return to Kabul



KABUL (TOLONews): The Secretary General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, Jan Egeland, said that he is lobbying for his country's ambassador -- as well other European ambassadors -- to return to Afghanistan.

In an interview with TOLONews' Hamid Bahram, Egeland said that Norway has recognized Afghanistan "for a very

long time" and that regimes have come and gone but Oslo has recognized the country. "In diplomacy. You don't recognize regimes or governments -- you recognize countries. My country -- Norway -- has recognized Afghanistan for a very long time... regimes have come and gone, governments have come and gone but we recognized Afghanistan and

our ambassador should come very soon. I am lobbying for that. I am lobbying for the European ambassadors to come back... I am glad to see the European Union already. They should come and engage with the Taliban authorities," he said.

Egeland, who also visited Kandahar, said that the Islamic Emirate's official told him that the ban of

girls' education will be lifted with "guidelines."

"They told me two things. Number one that the ban on female education and female work in humanitarian organizations is going to be lifted through the issue of guidelines and that these guidelines were nearly finished. So we are hoping to see the guidelines very soon, so we can restart work with the female colleagues across Afghanistan and girls can come back to secondary school to other schools--to universities," Egeland said.

He suggested that the suspension of aid due to the "Taliban's policies" is politicizing humanitarian assistance. "When people say I dislike the Taliban ... so we have to withdraw money from Afghanistan, I think that is politicizing aid because the aid is there to for the poorest of the poor, for the hungry, etc... they should engage with the Taliban leadership and tell them like I do that we disagree. Engagement is much better than withdrawal of aid to the poorest," he said.

Fourth EU-Central Asia meeting on Afghanistan held in Ashgabat

KABUL (Agencies): An EU-Central Asia meeting on Afghanistan was organized by EU Special Representative for Central Asia Terhi Hakala and EU special envoy for Afghanistan Tomas Niklasson and hosted by the Turkmenistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"EU-CA reaffirmed commitment to support Afghan people, discussed ongoing security challenges, and agreed that respect for human rights, economic stabilization is key," the EUSR for Central Asia said on Twitter.

Meanwhile, the delegation of the EU in Turkmenistan released a joint statement saying that the meeting provided an opportunity for an in-depth exchange on developments and the economic situation in Afghanistan and allowed for a discussion on continued cooperation in assisting the people of Afghanistan and intensification of cooperation in areas of common interest. "During the meeting they also had an exchange with UNAMA SRSG Roza Otunbayeva and via video link with the World Bank Country Director for Afghanistan, Melinda Good, as well as World Bank Country Director for Kazakhstan, Andrei Mikhnev," the statement said.

According to the statement, the special repre-



sentatives and envoys reaffirmed their strong commitment to the people of Afghanistan and to seeing Afghanistan develop into a stable, peaceful and prosperous country with long-term prospects for lasting peace. The participants "underlined the importance of the establishment of an inclusive and representative government and of upholding civil, political, social economic and cultural rights of all Afghans."

They also urged the Islamic Emirate to lift all bans on Afghan girls and

women that restrict their rights to education, work and participation in public life. "These bans -- beyond being serious human rights violations -- are having detrimental effects on the ability of the international community to deliver humanitarian aid to the Afghan people, and need to be lifted for the Afghan economy to prosper, and ultimately for Afghanistan to achieve long-term stability and peace," the statement said.

The statement also said that the envoys discussed prospects and challenges for the economic stabilization

and recovery of Afghanistan. They noted the "importance of favorable conditions for economic activity, the financial and banking sector and the restoration of social-economic infrastructure in Afghanistan," which would "allow for further assistance by the international community."

"The participants called on the Taliban to prevent the Afghan territory from being used as a safe haven for hosting, planning, training, financing or exporting terrorism and violent extremism to other countries," the statement reads.

Watchdogs call for investigation into restrictions on Afghan women

KABUL (TOLONews): Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists in a joint report said the "Taliban's severe restrictions and unlawful crackdown on women and girls' rights should be investigated as possible crimes under international law."

The report presents a "detailed legal analysis of how the Taliban's draconian restrictions on the rights of Afghanistan's women and girls, together with the use of imprisonment, enforced disappearance,

torture and other ill-treatment, could amount to the crime against humanity of gender persecution under Article 7(1)(h) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC)."

Girls above grade six have been banned from attending school since the Islamic Emirate came to power. Last December, the interim government in two decrees banned women from going to universities and working at NGOs.

Female students have repeatedly urged the interim government to reopen

their schools and universities. "We call on the Islamic Emirate to provide work opportunities for women and to reopen universities and schools for girls," said Raihan, a student.

"Some of the families have the responsibility of their families. They need to pay the expenses themselves," said Diba Poya, a student. The Islamic Emirate said that rights women for women are preserved within an Islamic structure. "We deny it. They should understand the realities.

The women maintain dignity within the isamic Emirate's umbrella. They are saved from aggression and harassment. Of course, they also work within the government's body. Thousands of our women and our sisters are working in health and education centers and also in other sectors," Mujahid said.

The international community has made ensuring human rights one the main conditions to consider in recognizing the interim Afghan government.

Afghan Charge d'Affaires meets Pakistan's special envoy for Afghanistan

KABUL (Agencies): Sardar Ahmad Shakib, the Afghanistan Embassy's Charge d'affaires in Pakistan met on Friday with Asif Ali Khan Durrani, Islamabad's new special envoy for Afghanistan.

According to a tweet from the Afghan embassy in Islamabad, the meeting was held at the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad.

The Afghan embassy said with the appointment of a new Pakistani representative, Durrani, the current issues between the two neighbouring countries will be resolved, and the bilateral relations would be improved. Durani was appointed as the new special envoy for Afghanistan after two and a half months after his predecessor stepped down.

He is a politician who served as Ambassador to Iran, Afghanistan and the United Arab Emirates.



His appointment comes as Pakistanis struggle to deal with complicated issues like growing security threats and attacks, many of which are carried out by the outlawed Tehreek-e-

Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The Pakistani officials have repeatedly claimed that TTP leaders have safe heaven on Afghanistan soil and coordinate attacks on

Pakistan. However, the Taliban authorities rejected such claims and said they would not allow any individual or group to use Afghan soil against neighbouring countries.

UNAMA head, Turmenistan FM meet in Ashgabat

KABUL (TOLONews): The foreign minister of Turkmenistan, Vepa Hajiyeve, held talks with head of UNAMA, Roza Otunbayeva, who is on a working visit to Ashgabat to participate in the meeting of Special Representatives for Afghanistan in the format "Central Asia - European Union", the Foreign Ministry of Turkmenistan said in a statement.

According to the statement, during the meeting the parties discussed topical issues of regional security. Hajiyeve noted that Turkmenistan is extremely interested in the security and stability of the neighboring country, as well as its socio-economic development. In this context, attention was focused on the importance of broad interaction between countries and the UN on Afghanistan issues, first of all, maintaining close inter-



action with UNAMA. It was emphasized that Turkmenistan is one of the states of Central Asia, which, following its status of permanent neutrality, is actively working in the context of

international efforts to stabilize the political and socio-economic situation in Afghanistan. It was also noted that Turkmenistan contributes to the economic recovery of the neighboring country

through the implementation of such projects as the construction of the TAPI gas pipeline, the construction of the TAP power line, the repair of railways, the construction of new tracks, etc.

Mutual interactions of countries with IEA menas recognition, Muttaqi says

KABUL (Agencies): Taliban's acting Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi has said the current government is inclusive and mutual interactions of the world countries with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan literally means recognizing the regime.

The press office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Taliban in an announcement on Thursday (May 25) said that Minister Muttaqi expressed these remarks in a meeting hosted by the political deputy of the prime minister at Sapedar palace.

Pointing to the friendly relations of the neighboring countries and regional governments, Muttaqi said that



Afghanistan has good relations with countries including Iran, Pakistan and Central Asian states.

Minister Muttaqi further added that several countries have reopened their embassies in Kabul and Afghan diplomats are serving in the Afghan diplomatic mis-

sions in those countries. The meeting was hosted by the Taliban's deputy prime minister at Sapedar palace in Kabul in which several cabinet members and influential figures from different segments of the society had participated.

These remarks come as no single country has officially

recognized the Taliban's de facto regime as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. The international community emphasizes on establishing an all-inclusive government in which people from different segments of society including religious groups, ethnic minorities, women and youth could see themselves represented. Furthermore, the rights of all people of Afghanistan including women and girls should be respected and protected. On the contrary, the Taliban leadership keeps claiming that their government is already inclusive and that the international community should not interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan under the pretext of human rights and all.

KABUL (Agencies): The Taliban's severe restrictions on women and their rights should be investigated as possible crimes against human rights, two top rights groups said on Friday.

In a recent report, Amnesty International and the International Commission for Jurists (ICJ) highlighted how Taliban restrictions on Afghan women's rights and "imprisonment, enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment" may qualify as gender persecution under the International Criminal Court.

The report entitled 'The Taliban's War on Women: The Crime against humanity of gender persecution in Afghanistan' presents a detailed legal analysis of how the Taliban's draconian restrictions on the rights of Afghanistan's women and girls, together with the use of imprisonment, enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment, could amount to the crime against humanity of gender persecution under Article 7(1) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Since the Taliban seized control in August 2021, rights



have been severely curtailed, and the government has grown more totalitarian. As a result, women's and girls' access to education, work, travel and public appearance have all been constrained.

Both organizations urged the International Criminal Court to pursue legal action and include this crime in their ongoing inquiry into what is occurring in Afghanistan. Additionally, they urged the country "to exercise universal jurisdiction" to prosecute the Taliban in accordance with international law. The report indicated that the Taliban

have been holding, forcibly vanishing, and torturing women and girls who have participated in nonviolent protests. It also said the Taliban made them sign "agreements" or "confessions", promising not to protest again. "These are international crimes. They are organized, widespread, systematic," said Agnes Callamard, Amnesty International secretary general. Meanwhile, she called on the international community to dismantle "this system of gender oppression and persecution."

Amnesty has recorded

instances of forcefully marrying women and girls to Taliban members and attempts to do so. According to the report, people who rejected such unions were "subjected to abduction, intimidation, threats, and torture." The report cited the cases of two women: a 33-year-old female journalist and social activist who was forcibly married to a Taliban commander the following month and a 15-year-old girl who was forced to marry a Taliban figure in the northeastern province of Takhar in August 2021 despite the objections of her family.



KARACHI: Foreign Minister and Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing the ground breaking ceremony of Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme (I-IV Project).

## PM urges businessmen to help govt in overcoming challenges

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday urged businessmen to help the government in overcoming the multiple challenges facing the country and take lead in creating jobs and enhancing exports.

Speaking to a gathering of businessmen and investors here, he said Pakistan was faced with multiple challenges and the economy could only make progress in the presence of political stability. He said common man wanted facilities of health and education, service delivery and resolution of everyday problems. He said in the last one year inflation went high in the country and at the international level, adding the inflation was acutely high even when he formed the government a year ago.

He pointed out that political instability was cause of present difficult economic conditions. The last government broke agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and then the country was devastated by the biggest climate-induced floods of the century, he mentioned. The prime minister said the federal government spent Rs 100 billion – Rs 72 billion through the Benazir Support Programme and Rs 20 billion through National Disaster Management Authority – for rehabilitation of flood affectees besides the billions of rupees spent by provincial governments for the same purpose.

Another reason of economic hardship was the rise in international oil prices and the substantial increase in the oil import bill, he remarked. During COVID pandemic, he said the gas prices were low in the international market but the previous government did not sign agreements for the purchase of gas. Shehbaz said International Monetary Fund imposed stringent conditions for its loan programme and still his government met all of those conditions and many friendly countries came forward and bridged the financing gaps faced by Pakistan without putting any conditions.

Brotherly countries wished Pakistan to make progress and Chinese government and even their commercial banks rolled over the loans, he said adding the government sincerely tried to avail the IMF programme and the Chinese Prime Minister also cooperated with

Pakistan. “We are trying to sign an agreement with IMF as soon as possible.” He credited businessmen with the continuous economic growth seen over the last decades, adding however, now a major chunk of the investment was made in real estate projects and high rises and the exports had come down.

Talking about political situation, he said in the last one year the country had seen political instability and division in every section of society had shaken the foundation of Pakistan and a particular mindset was created which was harmful for the nation. What happened on May 9 was unthinkable, Shehbaz Sharif said adding Pakistan was created by Quaid e Azam with great objectives and millions of people migrated and reached Pakistan in battered conditions. Benazir Bhutto was martyred, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was judicially murdered and Nawaz Sharif was mistreated but Pakistan never faced such instability. “Even enemy cannot think what happened on May 9.” He said our armed forces faced the enemy with bravery in the wars and now it was unfortunate to see that on May 9, barbaric acts were committed and monuments of our martyrs were desecrated.

**PM asks exporters to come up with innovative ideas for boosting exports:** Prime Minister (PM) Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday stressed the country's exporters to come up with innovative and unique ideas to boost exports which would ultimately help the country earn valuable foreign exchanges.

“Despite various challenges, we have very robust, very futuristic, and extremely hardworking entrepreneurs that have gradually built Pakistan's export culture,” he said while addressing a ceremony at the Textile Expo here. He said with genuine government support combined with the entrepreneurs' extraordinary intellect and hard work, the provision of quality export goods to foreign customers would be ensured.

Welcoming the foreign delegates, the PM said he was happy to learn that over 400 foreign delegates from 60 countries were visiting on the occasion showed Pakistan was a valuable destination for foreign guests, buyers, and traders. Shehbaz Sharif also appreciated the industrial-

ists, exporters, and experts who had contributed immensely to promoting Pakistan's textile and leather exports.

He said Pakistan's industry had now been transformed and converted to air jet looms, spinning, and waving. Commerce Minister, Secretary Commerce, and Zubair Motiwala, he said had done a commendable job by arranging this expo which would help promote the country's exports. The PM said the textile sector constituted 60% of total exports while 40% labour force was absorbed in this sector. “It is no doubt one of the largest sectors of Pakistan's economy,” he added.

He pointed out that despite financial challenges and other difficulties, the government was committed to providing genuine support to all the export sectors including textile, leather, and sports to help increase the country's export volume. He recalled that a few decades ago, Pakistan was ahead of its neighbors in textile exports, however unfortunately it lost the grounds. “But I have no doubt in mind that we can still recover from these setbacks and take hands off the clock back to 1990s and excel in our exports,” he said adding that Naveed Qamar, its team, and the finance minister combined could turn the table. The PM said Naveed Qamar had put in place the national compliance cell which was the need of the hour and “we are obviously grateful to the European Union for GSP plus status and again I am aware of the fact that all reviews have been done, and we ... respect all international requirements in this behalf whether it is good governance, human rights or any other requirement”.

He maintained the government believed in the rule of law and merit, and come what may, the government would toe the line of constitution and policies. Commerce Minister Syed Naveed Qamar on the occasion said Pakistan offered numerous opportunities for investment to foreign investors. He stressed the need to provide more incentives to the exporters to boost the exports of the country. He also assured the entrepreneurs of the government's full support saying that it would provide a conducive environment for them to help Pakistan not only to build up the country's foreign exchange reserves but also to lessen their dependence on international lenders.

## May-9 incidents planned, says Khawaja Asif

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said that the unfortunate incidents of May 9 were part of a planned, targeted and organised attempt of insurrection against the state.

Talking to the media after visiting the burnt Jinnah House [corps commander's house in Lahore] here on Friday, he said that on May 9, the violent groups deliberately attacked the installations, memorials, symbols and residences of an institution in a well organised manner. He said that public reaction was always spontaneous, and all kinds of public or private properties were hit by them. But on the black day of May 9, only army's properties, setups, statues of martyrs, vehicles, buildings and soldiers were targeted.

Khawaja Asif said that the situation created a question as to why such a reaction was not witnessed after the so-called assassination attack on Imran Khan. And why such a reaction was shown when he was merely taken into legal custody, adding that it showed that the attacks on May 9 were planned somewhere else. Elaborating the background of the unprecedented reaction, he said that after his constitutional removal from the office of the prime minister through a successful no-confidence motion, Imran Khan had continuously been targeting Pakistan Army and its leadership in his speeches. He said that it appeared that the people, who had burnt portraits and the piano of Quaid-e-Azam, were not mentally or ideologically Pakistani people, despite having the nationality.

The minister said that the miscreants intentionally demolished, insulted and destroyed Army's assets and even did not spare Shuhada, who sacrificed their lives for protection of the nation and the country. He said that there could be hundreds of differences with the institutions and politicians, but the red-line, which was crossed on May 9, had never been even thought of crossing in the last 76 years of the national history despite several bigger reactions taking place

these years. He said that in the current planned rebellion attempt, no civil building including the Governor's House and assembly buildings was touched and only army installations were targeted in the same pattern in every city including Lahore, Mardan, Chakdara, Peshawar, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi and other cities, which showed that the miscreants were given identified targets and they were trained for launching attacks on the state.

The minister said that a message was attempted to be given to the world and enemy that installations and residences of the Pakistan Army were vulnerable. He said that the man had crossed all limits now after removal from the seat. He said that legal action would be taken against all culprits involved in the insurrection. To a question about political leaders of the PTI involved in violence, Khawaja Asif said that majority of people inducted in the PTI were “newborn” politicians and they were prepared in the last 10 to 12 years for the PTI so they did not feel hesitation in leaving the party.

To another question, the minister expressed his hope that the establishment would now never be part of the politics, adding that now when they wanted to quit their role in politics, Imran was again trying to instigate them to participate in politics. To another question, he said that Imran did not condemn the May 9 incidents for 12 days, and when he did so, even then he conditionally condemned it.

To a question about formation of a commission to probe some audio leaks, he said that a group of judges had taken the issue into their own hands and decided to probe their own audios also. Replying to a question, he said that Imran himself was the main character of the rebellion conspiracy; however, people, who were involved in the conspiracy, should be tried. To a question about the future-role of the establishment in the politics, he hoped that it would not happen again; however, he added that a new social contract was needed to be signed among all stakeholders.

## 82 PTI activists gets bail from ATC

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: As many as 82 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activists obtained bails from Special Anti-terrorism and Session courts of Peshawar for their alleged involvement in 9th& 10th May violent protests following arrests of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, on Friday.

According to details, Special Anti-terrorism Court Judge Dr. Amir Nazeer ordered release of 44 PTI's activists on bails involved vandalism and damaging of public properties while also attacked Fagirabad police station by opening firing on 10th May.

The counsel argued that the applicants are neither nominated directly for the vandalism nor they confessed destruction and damages of public properties during protest on 10th May while prosecution also failed to produced sufficient evidences against petitioners.

Moreover, Additional District and Session Judge (AD&SJ) Peshawar Atta Ullah Jan ordered release of 38 accused allegedly involved in vandalism and damaging of private properties on 9th& 10th May during violent protests.

According to prosecution, the accused are booked in two First Information Reports at Fagirabad police station for vandalism and causing damages to Shama Cinema along with other private properties.

Police has nominated petitioners after vandalism and damages to both public & private properties on 9th and 10th May and latterly arrested them. The petitioners had approached court following their arrest for bails which were accepted by court of law on the ground of insufficient evidences and ordered release of accused.

Although, PTI former Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Arbab Jahan Dad approached Special Anti-terrorism court for obtaining bail after his arrest in vandalism and damaging public & private properties on 9th and 10th May while court adjourned hearing for today (Saturday).

According to prosecution, former MPA was nominated by Khan Razaq police station for vandalism, damaging public and private properties on 9th& 10th May. However, police had arrested Arbab Jahan Dad from Murree while latterly filed bail petition before Special (ATC) Peshawar while court issued notices to respondents for today (Saturday).

Meanwhile, alleged culprit named Musa involved in burning of Radio Pakistan Peshawar Station after arrest of PTI's chairman Imran Khan in corruption case by National Accountability Bureau also approached Special Anti-terrorism Court No#1 for bail. Police has arrested alleged culprit named Musa from Pakha Ghulam in burning of Radio Pakistan Peshawar Center whom First Information Report registered at East Police Station Peshawar Cant.

## WB approves \$21m for Balochistan

WASHINGTON, DC (Agencies): World Bank has granted approval for a substantial amount of \$21 million to aid the rehabilitation and recovery of areas that have been severely affected by floods in Balochistan.

The allocated funds will primarily be utilized to enhance the water drainage infrastructure in Balochistan. By improving the existing infrastructure, the region's ability to effectively manage water resources and mitigate the risks associated with floods will be significantly enhanced. The press release further emphasizes that the improved infrastructure will play a vital role in reducing the vulnerability to flood-related damages.

It is pertinent to mention here that, last year, a devastated flood hit Pakistan in which more than 322 people lost their life alone in Balochistan province, according to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) reported. According to the PDMA, over 500,000 cattle have been reported dead, and 185,000 homes have been damaged amid the calamity. 65,000 homes were completely demolished while 120,000 were partially damaged, the PDMA told.

# Writ of state to be established at every cost: Bilawal

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Foreign Minister and Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, while stressing the importance of upholding the state writ and advancing the democratic system in all circumstances, has warned that if serious crimes like setting fire to Jinnah House Lahore, demolishing martyrs' memorials and attacking military installations are neglected, then running this country will become not only difficult, but impossible. He also questioned that if the conspiracy of May 9 events had been hatched either in Bilawal House, Raiwand or Nine Zero, what would have been the reaction to it?

Talking about Karachi, Chairman PPP said that if the government pays attention to this metropolis according to its potential, then not only the IMF could be bid farewell, but the whole nation could also stand on its own feet.

According to the statement issued by Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP, while addressing the groundbreaking ceremony of the K-IV project, he said that when the police went to comply with the court notice in March this year, Zaman Park had been turned into a battleground. He said that even during PTI's long march, participants had arms, but the government did not take action, adding that the Prime Minister could have banned PTI on the basis of foreign funding case and Al-Qadir Trust case if he wanted. "But we didn't want the impression of political vendetta and setting a bad precedent," he added.

Pointing out the retaliatory actions against the PPP during Imran Khan regime, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that Sharjeel Memon was arrested from the premises of Sindh High Court, while Shirazi family was pressured not to contest elections on PPP ticket. "It will tell future history whether there was one Pakistan or two Pakistans," he added.

Expressing dissatisfaction, the Foreign Minister while addressing Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that WAPDA is the most unpopular entity in the country, due to which his party's MNAs and MPAs couldn't go to their constituencies. Marking the slow pace of the K4 project, he said that since Qaim Ali Shah was the Chief Minister of Sindh, he had been receiving briefings on the same project several times. He told that despite being the foreign minister of the country, he buys water tankers for his house. "Mr Prime Minister, Shahbaz Speed is needed regarding the K-IV project also," he demanded.

Moreover, Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif, Governor Sindh, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, Federal Minister Syed Khurshed Ahmad Shah and others also addressed the ceremony. Referring to the situation after the last year's floods in the country and the sufferings of the victims, Chairman PPP said that the people sitting in Islamabad have no idea of the devastation caused by the floods. He said that the rehabilitation work is not going at the speed it should be, while the federal government's support is needed in the construction project of the victims' houses, adding that desalination system has to be brought for the people of Balochistan and Sindh. "When we stand with farmers, they manage the entire economy, and the recent season's wheat bumper crop is an example of that," he contended.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing the Prime Minister said that we are looking at you, you should form your own team to solve these problems being faced by Sindh including Karachi, adding that the prime minister has the support of the two major parties of Sindh, and all partners of the coalition government want to solve the problems of the country together. "When we all continue to work together, all of Pakistan's problems can be solved," he concluded.

## Audio leaks: SC stays proceedings of commission

ISLAMABAD (Agencies):

The Supreme Court Friday stayed the proceedings of a high-powered judicial commission formed to probe the audio leaks related to the judiciary. It also suspended the federal government's notification on the commission's constitution.

The order was issued by a five-member SC bench headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Shahid Waheed. The bench issued the order while hearing separate petitions filed by Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Abid Shahid Zuberi, SCBA Secretary Muqtedir Akhtar Shabbir, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan and Advocate Riaz Hanif Rahi requesting to declare the commission's formation illegal. The order noted that the SCBA president's lawyer pointed out the commission had already started functioning and issued an order on May 22 that its proceedings would be made public. The commission's next meeting was scheduled for May 27 (today).

"In the circumstances, till the next date of hearing, the operation of the impugned notification No.SRO.596(I)/2023 dated 19.05.2023 issued by the Federal Government is suspended as is the order dated 22.05.2023 made by the Commission and in consequence thereof proceedings of the Commission are stayed," it stated. The federal government had last week constituted a judicial commission to probe the veracity of recent audio leaks and their impact on the independence of the judiciary.

The government constituted a three-member judicial commission, headed by a senior judge of the Supreme Court Justice Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Islamabad High Court Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Balochistan High Court Chief Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan. The government said the audio leaks raised serious apprehensions about the independence of the judiciary in the public interest; therefore, it has constituted the commission under Section 3 of the Pakistan Commissions of the Inquiry Act, 1971.

During the hearing earlier in the day, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan requested the CJ to recuse himself from the case and leave the matter to the next senior-most judge. "It is

requested that the chief justice should not be a part of this bench," AGP Awan said. Responding to the AGP, CJP Bandial said: "You should not interfere with our administrative authority."

The top Supreme Court judge added that while he respects the request made by Awan, the post of the chief justice is constitutional. "I knew you would raise this objection. The judiciary is not subservient to the government. There is a division of authority in the Constitution," he remarked. The country's top judge also lamented the government's "hasty" decision to enact legislation regulating the chief justice's powers.

"How can the government use judges for its own motives," CJP Bandial asked the AGP. CJP Bandial also questioned the formation of the judicial panel without his consultation. He said that while consulting the chief justice is not mentioned in the Inquiry Commission Act 1956, it is a "practice" for the CJP to nominate a judge for the commission. "Three such notifications were withdrawn previously when the chief justice was not approached. Five decisions of the Supreme Court also exist in this regard," the CJP said.

## 7 FIRs regarding May 9 to be tried in mily courts: Sana

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah shedding light on the May 9 violent protests and providing key statistics regarding the ensuing investigations and arrests Friday revealed that a total of 499 First Information Reports (FIRs) were registered in connection with the incidents, and out of those, only six or seven cases would be tried in military courts.

Addressing a press conference here, he said that the trial of 33 individuals involved in the May 9 mayhem had been shifted to the military courts. They were involved in attacking army installations during the protests that followed the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan, he added. The minister informed that of the 33 individuals, 19 belonged to Punjab, while the remaining 14 were from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).

Addressing the concerns raised about the enforcement of the Military Act on civilians, he clarified that military would investigate the cases but not take cognizance of them. He said that they would determine whether the Army Act or the Official Secrets Act applied in each situation. He said the Official Secrets Act and the Military

Act were applicable to the violation of every defense and military location. He questioned that how and why the attack on Jinnah House, which was not just residence of military officials but a camp office of the Corps Commander and housed highly sensitive information and data, should be considered a political protest, adding it was the matter of national defence.

He said the matter came within the jurisdiction of the Military Act, which was enforced in 1952, as the miscreants took important items such as laptops that might contain sensitive data, and there were chances that this data and information might get into the hands of the country's enemies. The minister said over 5,000 individuals were apprehended, with approximately 80% of them already had released on bail.

He added that out of the total arrests, 3,944 were made under the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), while 88 cases were specifically registered under the same act. The minister said Imran Khan had been engaged in divisive politics and spreading false narratives for last many years. The PTI chief was responsible for the chaos, adding "I warn of potential disaster if Imran Khan's actions were left

unchecked". The minister said that toxic politics had infiltrated Pakistani society and was spreading its detrimental effects like an infectious virus.

He noted that this divisive political strategy had been facilitated both internally and externally, with the intention of sowing seeds of hatred and cynicism among the people. The minister said that contrary to the PTI chief's claims, the public had never supported his toxic politics, as witnessed from the scarce number of participants in his political gathering. Only a group of trained terrorists, who had been given special training at Zaman Park for launching attacks on state institutions and military installations, were with Imran Khan throughout the period, he added.

He also ruled out the possibility of PTI leaders quitting the party under pressure by questioning that if they were being pressurized to leave the party, why they were telling all the facts about the May 9 incidents. Sanaullah said "If they are quitting because of the hot conditions in the jail, what should we do? When we were in jails, the condition was the same; if they cannot bear, it is not our fault."