

PM lauds ministry, PAF T.M. Report
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday commended the efforts of the Foreign Office, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto and the Pakistan Air Force for successful and safe evacuation of over 1,000 Pakistanis stranded in Sudan. "I commend the Foreign Office team led by FM & other organizations for successfully and safely evacuating over 1,000 Pakistanis stranded in Sudan.

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

Mutaqqi to visit Pakistan
KABUL (Agencies): The Afghan Foreign Ministry announced on Tuesday that the Taliban administration's Foreign Minister Amir Khan Mutaqqi was scheduled to visit Pakistan by the end of this week. The date of the visit was not specified in the statement, but sources in the diplomatic circles confirmed that the foreign minister will reach Pakistan on May 5.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Anwar-ul-Haq called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

PM directs strict action against wheat smugglers

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to take strict action against the smugglers of wheat, sugar and Urea, adversely impacting Pakistan's foreign remittances and usurping the right of its people.

The prime minister, who chaired a meeting to review the measures to curb the smuggling of the said commodities, said he would not rest until the country got rid of the menace of smuggling. He said he would never allow some black sheep to usurp the country's foreign remittances and the right of its people.

He said due to Allah's blessing and the government's efforts, Pakistan had got a bumper wheat crop breaking the record of the last ten years. He said the people of Pakistan had all the rights over the produce achieved consequent to the farmers' hard work and the government's efforts, despite the heavy rains and floods.

The prime minister reiterated that he would never allow the smugglers to create problems for the people. He said the government was also carrying out plans to achieve even more wheat production by next year. He said the government had also started implementing a comprehensive plan to ensure an uninterrupted supply of Urea to the farmers for the next crop.

He resolved that the government would make all-out efforts to make Pakistan reemerge as a wheat exporter country. The prime minister also formed a steering committee under him to curb the smuggling. Prime Minister Shehbaz directed Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah to person-

Pakistan stands by Kashmiris in their freedom struggle

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday reiterated that Pakistan stood by the people of Kashmir in their just struggle for freedom as India could never suppress their voice through oppression. The prime minister, in a meeting with Azad Jammu & Kashmir Prime Minister Anwarul Haq and his delegation, said Pakistan would continue its moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people to make them get their right to self-determination.

He congratulated the AJK PM on assuming the office through a constitutional and democratic process and assured his government's support for AJK's development and resolution of the issues related to the development funds. The prime minister urged the United Nations and the international community to take notice of the illegal unilateral Indian actions of August 5, 2019, calling it an attack on human rights. He said Pakistan always exposed the Indian atrocities in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir at every international forum. The prime minister instructed the authorities concerned for immediate resolution of the issues related to the development funds of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. The delegation comprised AJK ministers including Col (ret'd) Waqar Noor and Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, and Member of Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Latif Akbar.

ally visit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan to meet the provincial authorities and submit a report.

He said the officials involved in the smuggling or showing negligence would be removed and departmental proceedings would be initiated against them. He also instructed to confiscate the goods being smuggled and hold proper investigation to trace out the real culprits. He also called for increasing the number of anti-smuggling courts and building their capacity to cope with the menace, besides ensuring early hearings and strict punishment to the culprits.

The prime minister also asked for taking to task all the mill owners, dealers and warehouse owners involved in the smuggling. He also asked SUPARCO to extend support for moni-

toring the smuggling activities through satellite. He lauded the efforts of the law enforcement agencies for curbing the smuggling. The meeting was briefed in detail about the anti-smuggling efforts on the district and provincial borders.

It was told that the number of joint check posts of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and law and enforcement agencies (LEAs) in Balochistan's bordering districts had been increased to 10, besides the regular joint patrolling being carried out there. The meeting was told that during the last few weeks, around 6,000 tons of smuggling goods were recovered from Khuzdar. Moreover, the smuggling goods weighing 4,342 tons were confiscated just during the last week from convoys of trucks or warehouses.

No regret on dissolving assemblies, says Imran

LAHORE (Agencies): Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has asserted that he has no regret in dissolving Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa assemblies, terming the move party's 'constitutional right', on Tuesday.

Speaking to a private news channel, the former premier reiterated that the Constitution stipulates that elections are held within 90 days of dissolution of an assembly, Imran Khan also lambasted the ruling coalition for not 'implementing the Supreme Court's (SC) orders', warning of country-wide protests. "We stand by the Supreme Court for implementation of Constitution," he added.

He further said that the citizens have lost hope in the country and are leaving for abroad. "The government is paying a huge price just to keep me out of the government," he added. The former premier also criticised Qamar Javed Bajwa, saying that the former chief of army staff (COAS) was controlling the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) during his tenure.

He added that a country cannot function without the supremacy of rule of law. Khan also said that the overseas Pakistanis were not investing in the country due to 'corruption'. The PTI chief added that foreign investment cannot increase until there is stability in the country. He also alleged that PTI's seats were reduced in the 2018 election.

PTI chief Imran Khan also said that they were ready for simultaneous elections if the government dissolves assemblies. Addressing the PTI's public rally on Labour Day in Lahore, Imran Khan announced that his political party is ready for simultaneous elections if the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government dissolves the assemblies tomorrow. "The government should confirm the dissolution of assemblies before May 14 in the next round of talks. We are ready for elections on the same day if assemblies dissolve tomorrow."

SC registrar seeks record of NA sessions

ISLAMABAD (INP): Registrar Supreme Court (SC) Registrar Ishrat Ali on Tuesday sought the record of five National Assembly (NA) sessions. Last month, Speaker NA Raja Pervaiz Ashraf wrote a letter to the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) showing the sentiments of the lawmakers on the legislation of the SC bill.

As per details, the SC registrar's office has sought record of NA sessions held on April 6, 10, 17, 26 and 27. The minutes of NA standing committee on Finance have also been sought by the SC office. Earlier, the NA speaker's office reportedly refused to provide the record on verbal orders but despite written orders, the said record has not been given to the SC registrar's office.

(Continued on Back Page)

The Frontier Post

PTI-govt not agree on election date

Consensus reached on holding polls on same day across country: Dar, Qureshi told media separately

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Members of the ruling coalition and opposition PTI concluded the third round of crucial election talks at the Parliament House on Tuesday, with Finance Minister Ishaq Dar from the government's negotiating team saying that a consensus was reached on holding elections on the same day across the country under a caretaker setup.

Separately, PTI's Shah Mahmood Qureshi also confirmed this development, saying that they had "shown flexibility for the sake of national consensus". But, he also announced that the PTI would approach the Supreme Court, brief it on the negotiations and request for elections in Punjab to be held on May 14.

Speaking to the media after today's meeting, Dar said, "There was no longer any confusion about whether there should be separate elections in one or two provinces [...]

and the two sides have agreed that holding elections in the country on the same day was for the betterment."

He added that another positive outcome of the talks was that elections would be held under caretaker setups.

However, he added, a consensus

was yet to be reached on the date of the elections. "We have narrowed down on the date ... but we have yet to reach an agreement," he said, adding that both sides would consult their leaderships on the matter. He termed the consensus on one-day elections "a big success".

A three-member delegation of the PTI led by Shah Mahmood Qureshi and comprising Fawad Chaudhary and Senator Ali Zafar has arrived at the Parliament House in Islamabad to hold talks with the government's team. The government team comprises former prime minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, Law Minister Senator Azam Nazir Tarar, Minister for Railways Khawaja Saad Rafique, Minister for Commerce Naveed Qamar, Minister for National Food Security and Research Tariq Bashir Cheema, and Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan Kishwar Zahra.

Earlier, Speaking to the media upon his arrival at Parliament House today, Qureshi said "the PTI's conditions will be known to all after today's talks". To a question about "mistakes" from both sides during the course of the negotiations, Qureshi maintained that the PTI had

made none. "We are proceeding seriously and honestly," he said. Earlier, members of the PTI's negotiating team held a meeting to determine the plan of action and strategy for the meeting.

Meanwhile, President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday advising the politicians to let sense prevail, expressed the hoped that the ongoing talks between the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and the ruling coalition would bring in some positive outcome.

The president, in an interview with a private television channel said there was a trust deficit among the politicians and urged them to adopt the characteristic of forgiveness to improve the situation. He said if the politicians create mutual understanding and the judiciary remained steadfast, no one could breach the constitution. He said it were the politicians who mobilized the masses to protect the constitution. Calling it a "criminal enticement" the president discouraged the practice of paralysing the constitution for sake of power. Coming to his social works, the president said unfortunately around 32percent or 27 million children were out of school in Pakistan comparing just one percent in India and Bangladesh which he said was a major crisis.

Asif for body to examine 'higher court decisions'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Tuesday called for setting up a special committee of the Parliament to examine the decisions of the superior judiciary since 1947.

Speaking in the National Assembly here, the minister said the government had great respect for the judiciary but every institution should work within its constitutional ambit. He said, "We have to ensure the protection of the elected prime minister. It is the prime obligation of this august House to act as a bulwark against any unconstitutional facilitation."

The minister said "the victimization of elected prime ministers should be stopped and all those who have violated the Constitution should be made accountable". The special committee should also examine the martyrdom of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and disqualification of elected prime ministers Yousaf Raza Gillani and Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, he added.

He said the Parliament, being the supreme institution and defender of the Constitution, would not "allow any extra-constitutional move, and surrender its supremacy and authority". Khawaja Asif said the people sent their representatives to the Parliament, who always served the masses. They (the

parliamentarians) should get united for the sanctity and dignity of the House by setting aside their differences.

"The Supreme Court has sought the details about the Parliament's proceedings, which, however, were accessible to everyone. The apex court's directives should be adhered to and the House should also seek the proceedings of that bench in which two judges earlier rescued themselves but later they were included in it," he added. He requested the speaker to write to the SC for the "provision of proceedings of the bench".

He said talks were being held with the opposition, but it was also not "the domain of higher courts to arrange negotiations and it is nowhere mentioned in the Constitution". He said the judiciary had given authority to the then-dictator General (ret'd) Pervez Musharraf for constitutional amendments.

He said the PPP and the PML-N had a political rivalry in the past but their leaders Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Shaif inked the CoD, and two successive elected governments completed their constitutional terms under the CoD. Speaking on a point of order, Member of the National Assembly from Balochistan Mohammad Aslam Bhootani also

endorsed the point of view of Khawaja Asif. All the institutions should work in their domains and "respect the Parliament being a mother of all the institutions", he added.

Public Accounts Committee Chairman Noor Alam Khan, while speaking on the occasion, said as per the Constitution, the proceedings of the House could not be shared with anyone. "No court can demand proceedings of the House," he added, urging the members to stand up for the Parliament's sovereignty. Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Shazia Marri said the Parliament was not responsible for the current political crisis. Being the supreme body the Parliament could not be dictated, she added.

Referring to the purported audio leak of the son of the former Chief Justice of Pakistan, in which he allegedly demanded money from candidates for a party tickets for contesting the elections, she said, "There is a need to follow and respect the Constitution." Moulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali of Jamaat Islami said as per the Constitution, the Parliament was the supreme body. The Constitution, framed by the Parliament had defined the domains of all institutions, he added.

Court seeks report about raids on Elahi's House

LAHORE (PPI): Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday directed the Punjab Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) director general and the Punjab police chief to provide a comprehensive report about the late-night search of former Punjab Chief Minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi's house.

Justice Sardar Muhammad Sarfraz Dogar passed the orders while hearing the plea moved by Rasikh Elahi, the son of Chaudhary Pervaiz Elahi. The petitioner had made the Punjab government, the Punjab ACE director general and additional director general, the Lahore senior superintendent of police, and the Model Town superintendent as respondents in the plea.

The plea came after the police raided Kunjah House, the residence of Chaudhary Pervaiz Elahi in Gujrat. Chaudhary Moonis Elahi took to Twitter and shared the footage of the police officials standing outside their house on Monday late night.

During the hearing, the counsel told the court that the raids were being conducted at the houses of Chaudhary Pervaiz Elahi. He asked the court to stop the authorities from conducting raids at the residence of the PTI President's residences until a complete report was presented. However, the court rejected the plea.

Justice Dogar remarked that how the court could stop the arrest, observing that how the court could accept until the report is submitted. The court sought report from the ACE DG and the Punjab IGP, and directed both the officers to work under the law. In another case registered under terrorism charges, Chaudhary Pervaiz Elahi secured protective bail from the Lahore High Court. Chaudhary Pervaiz Elahi appeared before the court along with his legal team. The former Punjab CM asked the court to grant him bail in the said case. The court granted him bail till May 8 and directed him to appear before the court concerned for the bail.

Meanwhile, Police late Monday night raided the residence of former Punjab chief minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf president Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi in Gujrat, almost two days after they conducted a similar operation at his house in Lahore. As per details, police raided four places including Kunjah House, the former CM's residence in Gujrat to arrest him.

CJP: Political parties want to 'pick & choose' benches

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial remarked on Tuesday that the political parties wanted to "pick and choose" the bench for "desired judgments". The CJP passed the remarks as the Supreme Court resumed hearing on the petitions challenging the law clipping his office's powers.

An eight-member larger bench of the apex court headed by CJP Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Sayeed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha A Malik, Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi and Justice Shahid Waheed heard the case. At the outset of the hearing, CJP Bandial remarked that the bench will hear everyone after Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan shared that some parties in the case would like to address the bench via video link.

The top judge observed that important points, including the independence

of judiciary, have been pointed out in the case and is "one of a kind". "Our stay order of the last hearing is in place. Law related to the Supreme Court rules are very clear," said CJP Bandial. CJP Bandial further stated that the judiciary has "reservations" over the law.

"Democracy is an important part of the Constitution and so is an independent judiciary and the federation," the chief justice said and wondered whether the component of the judiciary can be changed. The chief justice stressed that independence of the judiciary is a "fundamental right".

Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawyer Khawaja Tariq Rahim said that the judicial reform bill has become part of the law. On this point, the court sought record of the debate held in the Parliament and standing committee on judicial reforms. While the chairman of the Executive Committee of the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) requested the inclusion of senior judges in the bench. The

PBC stated that more than six references have been filed against Justice Mazahar Ali Naqvi who is part of the bench.

However, the PBC's request for the formation of a full court and exclusion of Justice Naqvi was rejected by the court. The Supreme Court also rejected the AGP's request to withdraw its stay order till April 13. "There is no legal importance of a reference filed against any judge. Until the reference is fixed for hearing, it does not hold any importance," Justice Bandial said, highlighting that a bench — headed by former chief justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry — had addressed the issue in a verdict.

"Politics has tainted the judicial process," the country's top judge remarked. He maintained that there are also some limitations and restrictions of the federal list with respect to legislative powers. "See section 55 of the Federal Legislative List," the CJP said. He added that an independent judiciary is a fundamental

Bumper crop of 3.6m metric tons of wheat has been harvested in Sindh this year

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Provincial Ministers Sharjeel Inam Memon and Mukesh Kumar Chawla have said that a bumper crop of 3.6 million metric tons of wheat has been harvested in Sindh this year, which is 2 million metric tons more than last year yield. It's full Credit goes to the leadership of the Pakistan Peoples Party, who timely decided to fix the support price of wheat at Rs 4,000 per maund and saved the country from food crisis .

The provincial ministers said that the Sindh government has set a target of 1.4 million metric tons for the procurement of wheat this year, 7.5 metric tons has been achieved till date, and added that Sindh government will achieve 100% of the target in May. They said that the Sindh government has imposed a ban on the transportation of wheat in view of wheat crisis and all borders are sealed so that wheat cannot be smuggled out. The borders will be opened once Sindh government achieve its target. They said that enough wheat stock is available with Sindh government and flour Mills of Karachi are being supplied wheat at a rate of Rs . 10500 per sack on a daily basis.

They said that Sindh government stands with it's commitment made with the Karachi flour mills. Till date, the target of supplying 500000 sacks to Flour Mills Association will be completed in the first phase. In the second stage, the owners of the flour mills should submit their challans and wheat supply will be ensured to them as per their requirements. They expressed these views while talking to the media at the Sindh Assembly Media Corner.

Provincial Information Minister



Sharjeel Inam Memon said that even before 2007, we used to import wheat, but in 2008, when Pakistan People's Party government came to power and Asif Ali Zardari became the President of Pakistan, he paid special attention to the agriculture sector and as a result Pakistan became self-sufficient in wheat production and started to export wheat.

He said that this time also due to climate change and floods, there was a big loss in the agriculture sector, farmers and growers went through difficult conditions. He said that former President Asif Ali Zardari and Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah consulted and fixed the support price of wheat at Rs 4,000 per maund so that farmers and growers would grow wheat. Though the governments of other provinces had criticised the increase in the wheat support price. Apart from this, the Sindh government also gave a subsidy of Rs 5000 per acre to the farmers and growers for the purchase of seeds.

The results of which are in front of everyone and today there has been abundant wheat production in Sindh. Those who opposed this decision today also consider it a wise move. He said that imported wheat cost Rs. 9000 per ton, on which we have to spend

foreign exchange and compromise on the quality of wheat. He said that the credit goes to the leadership of Pakistan People's Party that due to their vision we have a bumper crop of wheat today. He said that if Sindh government had not taken decision of increasing wheat support price, the province has not been able to yield 50 percent of present bumper crop.

He added that availability of atta to people is top agenda of Sindh government in skyrocketed inflation. He said that Sindh government has successfully completed the task of providing atta at Rs 65 per kg to those whose income was less than Rs 50,000 during the month of Ramadan. He said that 7 million people were transferred subsidy through Benazir income support program for the purchase of atta. Talking on the occasion, Provincial Food Minister Mukesh Kumar Chawla said that Sindh government made commitment with Flour Mills Association to supply them 2 million sacks of wheat.

In the first phase, 6000 sacks have to be provided to each flour mill, which makes a total of 500000 sacks. He said that the flour mills have submitted the challans and the Sindh government has started the supply of wheat from the

warehouse of Passco . The complete record of which is available. The supply of 500000 sacks to flour mills will be completed by today. He said that in the second phase, the flour mills should submit their challans and their supply will be started from tomorrow. He said that 140 vehicles are being loaded from the Pasco warehouse on a daily basis, except for the 5-days of Eid holidays. He said that this operation is continue since April 15.

The minister said that Flour mills are being supplied wheat in Karachi with the help of PASCO at a rate of Rs 10,500 per sack on which Rs 3,500 is being given as subsidy. He added that Sindh government had spent Rs 8 to 10 billion subsidy on 500000 sacks. It will cost Rs. 12 to 15 billion on 2 million sacks of wheat. The purpose of which is to supply flour to the people at a reasonable price. He said that first time in history , Sindh government is supplying wheat to the flour mills even in the month of April. He said that the border cannot be opened until the Sindh government achieve its procurement target. When the target is met, the restriction will be removed. He said that flour mills of Karachi were allowed 10 days to bring wheat from other districts of Sindh to Karachi, due to which the price of wheat increased. He said that 200 trucks of flour mills were also allowed to bring wheat to Karachi.

He said that under the Hoarding Ordinance, the Sindh government has the authority to confiscate the wheat of the trucks, but we are not doing this so that no one is harmed. He said that it cost Rs. 12,000 per sack to flour millers to bring wheat from other district to Karachi, while the Sindh government is providing them at Rs 10,500 per sack in Karachi.

Pakistan Services Academy Peshawar delegation visits PSCA

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Services Academy Peshawar trainee officers delegation, which included 30 tehsildars, naib tehsildars, and faculty members, visited the Safe City Authority, here on Tuesday. During their visit, they were briefed about various departments of the authority, by Operations Commander SP Muhammad Asim Jasra and DSP Coordination Riaz Shahid. The officers were provided with an overview of the operational and monitoring center, 15 emergency call center.

Operations Commander Asim Jasra stated that the Punjab safe cities authority is providing full technical support to Peshawar Safe City Project. He also mentioned that a women safety app has been provided to protect the women of KPK.

The participating officers expressed their satisfaction over the visit and mentioned that it is an essential part of their training course, as it is crucial for bringing a positive change in the police culture. They acknowledged that the Safe City Project meets the demands of the new era and it should be extended to all of Punjab.

Rain in Lahore, more likely

LAHORE (APP): Light to moderate rain in the provincial capital and adjacent areas turned the weather pleasant, dropping minimum temperature to 26 degree Celsius on Tuesday. The rain started at afternoon and continued almost two hours with occasional gaps, varying from light to moderate. Commuters faced difficulty while travelling on some roads as there were small puddles.

Clean and pleasant atmosphere gave the provincial capital a heavenly look but made difficulties for commuters, especially pedestrians and motorcyclists who were trying to find shelters. The rain also created traffic gridlocks on several roads in the city, including The Mall, Canal Road, Jail Road, Gulberg's Main Boulevard, Thokar Niaz Beg, Raiwind Road, Johar Town's Main Boulevard.

Kidney disease has increased to alarming extent: Saifur Rahman

KARACHI (PPI): Administrator Karachi Dr. Syed Saifur Rahman has said that kidney disease has increased to an alarming extent in Pakistan and especially the occurrence of this disease in children up to ten years of age is worrying, the main reasons for the spread of this disease are unhealthy excessive consumption of food, water and beverages. He said this while visiting the Children's Hospital under construction by Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT).

Administrator Karachi said that there are five major hospitals around the Civil Hospital and a large number of patients are admitted on a daily basis. People in large numbers approaches these hospitals for treatment especially under the supervision of Dr. Adeeb-ul-Hasan Rizvi, patients from all over Pakistan come to Karachi for diagnosis and treatment related to kidney disease and kidney replacement operations are performed at SIUT on a daily basis.

He said that the 14-storey Children's Hospital is under construction and after its completion a bigger facility will be available and the citizens will have

a better institute for treatment. Dr. Sajid Sultan while giving a briefing to the administrator Karachi said that this building will be completed in the next two months and the treatment of patients will be started in this building. The place has been given by Karachi Metropolitan Corporation and SIUT bear the

expenses for the construction of the building.

He said that if a parking plaza is constructed near the hospital in this area, the traffic jam and parking problems can end because the patients are facing serious problems in reaching Civil Hospital, Benazir Trauma Center and Renal Hospital due to traffic jam and parking.

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

PAKISTAN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

O/o the Executive Engineer, Central Civil Division, CRBC Chowk, Diyal Road, Pak PWD, D.I Khan

No.EE CCD.DIK/AB/Tender/1151

Dated: 28/04/2023

ANNOUNCEMENT

This has reference to the tender notice hearing No EECCD-DIK/AB/Tender/783 dated 06.03.2023 published in various Newspaper i.e. "The Frontier Post" "Daily Aqi" "Daily Sada-e-Sach" and "Awan-un-Nas" dated 08.03.2023 and also uploaded on PPRA website vide TS No.504965E dated 07.03.2023 for 43 Nos Schemes and Corrigendum thereof issued vide No.EE.CCD-DIK/AB/913 dated 20.03.2023 and also uploaded on PPRA website vide TS No. 504965E dated 24.03.2023, through which all the schemes were postponed. Now, the application will be received for 43 Nos Schemes upto 15 May 2023. Tender forms will be issued after verification of documents on 15th May 2023 and the form will be received back upto 11:00 AM and opened at 11:30 AM on 16th May, 2023. Other terms and condition will be remains the same as advertised /uploaded earlier

(FARHAN ALI)

PID(P) 082-C/23

Executive Engineer Central Civil Division, CRBC Chowk, Diyal Road. Pak PWD, D.I. Khan

NOTICE OF TENDER

Applications are invited by Garrison Commander, Garrison Headquarters Nowshera Cantonment for provision of furniture for following work by **15 May 2023** from the contractors/ firms borne on the approved list of QMG's Furniture, PWD and formation Headquarters Contractors enlisted with Central, Provincial & Railways can also apply with Rupees 500.00 (**Rupees Five hundred only**) per tender as earnest money in the shape of treasury challan of FDR from National Bank of Pakistan in favour of Garrison Commander, Garrison Headquarters Nowshera Cantonment. Your tender document should reach this office by **23 May 2023 at 11:30 hours**. The subject Tender will be opened on **23 May 2023 at 1200 hours**. Detail of work is as under:-

Ser	Job No.	Name of Work	Amount	Completion Period	Remarks
1.	1755 of 2022-23	Provision of Unit Furniture for Newly Raised 1st Canine Coy at Garrison Headquarters Nowshera.	13,81,470/-	01 Month	



NOTICE OF EXTRA-ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that an Extra-ordinary General Meeting of Lucky Cement Limited (the "Company") will be held on **Wednesday, May 24, 2023 at 12 noon**, at the registered office of the Company, situated at factory premises in Pezu, District Lakki Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to transact the following businesses:

SPECIAL BUSINESS

- To consider and, if deemed fit, pass, with or without modification(s), addition(s) or deletion(s), the following resolutions, as special resolutions, pursuant to Section 88 of the Companies Act, 2017 read with Listed Companies (Buy-Back of Shares) Regulations, 2019, for the purchase / buy-back by the Company of up to 23,800,000 (Twenty Three Million Eight Hundred Thousand) issued ordinary shares of the Company, having face value of PKR 10/- (Pak Rupees Ten) each, through the securities exchange (i.e. the Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited) at the spot / current price from time to time, acceptable to the Company, prevailing during the purchase period, as recommended by the Board of Directors of the Company:

"RESOLVED THAT approval be and is hereby accorded to Lucky Cement Limited (the **"Company"**), under Section 88 of the Companies Act, 2017 read with Listed Companies (Buy-Back of Shares) Regulations, 2019 (the **"Regulations"**), to purchase / buy-back up to 23,800,000 (Twenty Three Million Eight Hundred Thousand) issued ordinary shares of the Company, having face value of PKR 10/- (Pak Rupees Ten) each, constituting up to approximately 7.59% of the current issued and paid up share capital of the Company, at the spot / current price acceptable to the Company prevailing during the purchase period, through the securities exchange (i.e. the Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited), in accordance with the salient features as mentioned in the Statement under Section 134(3) of the Companies Act, 2017.

FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the ordinary shares purchased by the Company pursuant to these special resolutions be cancelled in accordance with the Regulations.

FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Buy-Back shall be made through the securities exchange (i.e. the Pakistan Stock Exchange Limited), and the purchase period shall be from June 2, 2023 to November 20, 2023, or till such date that the Buy-Back is completed, whichever is earlier.

FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Chief Executive Officer of the Company, or any person authorized by him, be and is hereby authorized and empowered to determine and approve the quantum of shares that may be purchased by the Company (as may be deemed fit) on a day-to-day basis during the purchase period.

FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Company Secretary (the "Authorized Person") be and is hereby authorized to prepare, finalize, execute, issue and file all necessary documents, notices, applications and any ancillary documents, take and do, and / or cause to be taken or done, any / all necessary actions, deeds and things for and on behalf of, and in the name of the Company, as may be necessary or required as deemed fit for giving effect to the aforementioned resolutions or for the Buy-Back, as well as do all acts, matters, deeds, and things which are necessary, incidental and / or consequential to the principal or any ancillary matters thereto to fully achieve the aforesaid resolutions.

FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Authorized Person be and is hereby further authorized and empowered to take or cause to be taken all actions including, but not limited to, obtaining any requisite regulatory or third party approvals, wherever required, preparing all documents, engaging legal counsel, financial advisors and consultants for the purposes of the Buy-Back, opening accounts / sub-accounts with the CDC / securities broker, filing of all the requisite statutory forms, returns and all other documents as may be required to be filled with the regulator(s) or any other institutions(s), executing all such documents or instrument, including any amendments or substitutions to any of the foregoing as may be required or necessary in respect of implementing, procuring and completing the Buy-Back and all other matters incidental or ancillary thereto.

FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the aforesaid resolutions shall be subject to any amendments, modifications, additions or deletions that may be suggested, directed and advised by the regulator(s), which shall, if determined to be prudent or necessary by the Authorized Person, be deemed to be part of these resolutions, without the need of the members to pass fresh special resolutions."

- To consider and, if deemed fit, pass, with or without modification(s), addition(s) or deletion(s), the following resolution, as an ordinary resolution, to enable and authorize the Company to circulate the Annual Report (including the audited financial statements, auditor's report, Directors' report, Chairman's review report) to the members of the Company through QR enabled code and weblink, in accordance with Section 223(6) of the Companies Act, 2017 read with S.R.O. 389(I)/2023 dated March 21, 2023.

"RESOLVED THAT Lucky Cement Limited (the **"Company"**) be and is hereby authorized to circulate its annual report, including the annual audited financial statements, auditor's report, Directors' report, Chairman's review report and other reports contained therein, to the members of the Company through QR enabled code and weblink, in accordance with S.R.O. 389(I)/2023 issued by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, and that the practice of circulation of the annual report through CD / USB be discontinued."

- To transact any other business that may be placed before the meeting with the permission of the Chair.

The Statement of material facts under Section 134(3) of the Companies Act, 2017 pertaining to the Special Businesses to be transacted at the Extra-ordinary General Meeting is being sent to the shareholders.

By Order of the Board

Karachi: May 3, 2023

Faisal Mahmood
Company Secretary

Notes:

1. Closure of Shares Transfer Books

The share transfer books of the Company shall remain closed from Wednesday, May 17, 2023 to Wednesday, May 24, 2023 (both days inclusive). Transfers received in order at our Share Registrar / Transfer Agent CDC Share Registrar Services Limited (CDCSRSL), CDC House, 99-B, Block 'B', S.M.C.H.S., Main Shahra-e-Faisal, Karachi-74400 by the close of business on Tuesday, May 16, 2023 shall be treated in time for the purpose of attending and voting at the Extra-ordinary General Meeting (EOGM).

2. Participation in the EOGM via physical presence or through video conferencing:

Members whose names appear in the Register of Members as of Tuesday, May 16, 2023, are entitled to attend and vote at the EOGM. A Member entitled to attend and vote at the EOGM is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend, speak and vote for him/her. An instrument of proxy applicable for the EOGM is being provided with the Notice sent to the Members. Further copies of the instrument of proxy may be obtained from the Registered Office of the Company during normal office hours. Proxy form may also be downloaded from the Company's website: <http://www.lucky-cement.com>. An instrument of proxy and the power of attorney or other authority (if any) under which it is signed, or a certified true copy of such power or authority duly notarized must, to be valid, be deposited through email on Company.secretary@lucky-cement.com or at the registered address of the Company's Share Registrar, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited (CDCSRSL) not less than forty-eight (48) hours before the time of EOGM, excluding public holidays. Members are requested to submit a copy of their Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) at the registered address to our Share Registrar, CDC Share Registrar Services Limited (CDCSRSL), CDC House, 99-B, Block 'B', S.M.C.H. Society, Karachi.

- To attend the EOGM through video-conferencing facility, the Members are requested to register themselves by providing through email at Company.secretary@lucky-cement.com at least forty-eight (48) hours before the EOGM: the Name of Member, CNIC / Folio No. /, CDC IAS No., Cell No and Email Address.
- Members will be registered, after necessary verification as per the above requirement and will be provided a video-link by the Company via email.
- Only those Members will be accepted at the EOGM via video-conferencing whose names match the details shared with the Company for registration (as mentioned in point 'a' above).

3. E-voting and Postal Ballot

Members can exercise their right to vote through e-voting or postal ballot, subject to meeting the requirements of Sections 143-145 of the Companies Act, 2017 and applicable clauses of the Companies (E-Voting) Regulations, 2016 or Companies (Postal Ballot) Regulations, 2018 (as the case may be).



Tribal delegations calls on Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): A thirty eight member delegation representing eight tribes of District Kurram here Tuesday called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali and informed him about their issues.

The delegation was comprised including President Tehrik-e-Hussania, Syed Tajammul Hussain, Inayat Ali Tori and other tribal elders.

The delegation told that land disputes is one of the major issues that were being confronted by people living in Kurram district. They underlined the need to devise a result oriented mechanism relating to problem and demanded formulation of a commission to implement decisions taken in past relating to land disputes.

The delegation also urged KP governor to take measures for repairing Parachinar Road, improve District Headquarters Hospital, appoint new doctors, revamping of religious places and provision of furniture in schools.

Speaking on the occasion, governor highlighted sacrifices of tribal people for peace and assured his cooperation to further improve security situation in the district. He assured the delegation that their concerns would be conveyed to concerned authorities for proper consideration.

Later, delegation of district Mohmand and Lakki Marwat also called on governor and highlighted their issues and problems.



PESHAWAR: President Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Awami Workers Party Advocate Akhtar Hussain addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo by Ghulam Murtaza

APCA demands implementation of body’s recommendations

PESHAWAR (APP): Central Secretary General of All Pakistan Clerks Association (APCA) Aurangzeb Kashmiri Tuesday said that government employees had demanded to increase salaries and pensions keeping in view of inflation in the upcoming federal budget.

He demanded immediate implementation of the recommendations of the Federal Pay and Pension Committee.

He expressed these views while addressing the board of APCA in Mardan.

The massive inflation across the country had made it difficult for employees to make ends meet, with most of their monthly salaries going towards utility bills and rent, leaving little for food.



PESHAWAR: A view of open main hole in middle of road near Qasim Ali Khan Mosque which can cause any major accident.

Accused arrested

PESHAWAR (APP): The City police have arrested an accused charged in tripped murder case and expanded circle of investigation.

According to police, accused Usman Ghani has been apprehended during a successful raid after allegedly killing three persons on petty nature cases. The accused was charged for allegedly killing Jan Muhammad in a women dispute near Pathang Chowk in the limits of Pandu police station.

The accused was also wanted to police in murder of wife of Shamsur Rehman and injuring three others and Said Muhammad in an old enemy dispute. Police have shifted the accused to jail after completion of the physical remands.

Fakhar appointed at IPSI

PESHAWAR (APP): Professor Dr Fakhru Islam has been appointed Director Research and Academic Outreach at Institute of Policy Studies Islamabad (IPSI). According to the Media Coordinator, Dr Fakhru Islam has taken charge of his new assignment. Dr Fakhru had recently retired as Director Pakistan Study Center, University of Peshawar. He has a vast experience of around 35 years in teaching, research and administrative affairs. He is the writer of 100 research papers and 13 books.



PESHAWAR: Labour busy in packing tomatoes at vegetable market.

Four lawyers obtained SCP’s license

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: As many as four lawyers belonging from district Charsadda obtained license for practice in Supreme Court of Pakistan. The successful candidates including Kashif Jan, Asad Jan Durrani, Mian Naveed Gul Kakakhel and Nisar Khan advocates while the lawyers were interviewed on 27th and 28th April for SCP’s license. The interview was conducted by senior SCP’s judge Justice Qazi Faez Issa. The local civil society and political leaders congratulated lawyers for their success and hopeful for their role establishment of Rule of Law.



PESHAWAR: A 38 member delegation representing eight tribes of District Kurram meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali at Governor’s House.

Rescue operation in progress

PESHAWAR (APP): At least two people were killed, and two others sustained injuries in separate roof-collapsed incidents due to heavy rain that lashed the province the other day.

Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rescue1122, Dr Khateer Ahmed here on Tuesday reported ongoing rescue operations in various areas of the province following heavy rainfall.

He said that floodwater entered different residential areas of district Lakki Marwat, Malakand, Lower and Upper Dir, Chitral, Swat, and Kohistan.

Additionally, a 12-year-old child and a woman were washed away in the flood relay in Lakki Marwat with the child’s body later being recovered while the divers of Rescue1122 striving to recover the missing body of the woman.

DG Rescue1122 said that all the staff members were working diligently to extract dozens of vehicles that have stuck in floodwater in different areas.

AC, Dean inaugurate cafeteria

PESHAWAR (APP): Assistant Commissioner Zainab Naqvi and Dean Khyber Medical College, Professor Dr Mahmood Aurangzeb on Tuesday jointly inaugurated a cafeteria in Khyber Teaching Hospital (KTH) here.

According to the district administration, on the occasion of the inauguration, HD Zafar Afridi, MD Siraj, Dr Masood, Haji Faryad Ali Advocate, Haji Pervaz Khan and Haji Ashiq were also present.

AC Zainab Naqvi said special focus would be laid on maintaining hygiene at the cafeteria. Besides, she said patients would be provided food at subsidized prices so that they could benefit from this new facility.

Govt to establish education city in South Waziristan

PESHAWAR (APP): The government would establish a mega education city in South Waziristan tribal district to equip students with ornament of education.

KP Higher Education Department official told APP on Tuesday that the proposed education city would be setup on 7,000 kanal in South Waziristan where vast land was available for its construction.

He said additional land would also be procured for expansion of the education city to cater future requirements.

The University of Education Technology Peshawar and Agriculture University of Science and Technology, Peshawar have shown willingness to establish their campus in the education city.

Besides University of Science and Technology Swat and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Peshawar, he said other top private sector universities would also establish their campuses there.

He said land would be provided by the government to the universities while the latter would construct campuses with own finances.

He said promotion of education was essential to alleviate poverty and combat illiteracy in merged areas.

He said priorities in education city campuses would be made to tribal students.

Govt starts screening at Torkham border

PESHAWAR (INP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for prevention of monkeypox has started screening at Torkham border.

The health department in this regard has formed a team of doctors to screen the passengers coming from Afghanistan at the Pak-Afghan border.

The step was taken in the wake of recent monkeypox cases reported in different cities of the country.



PESHAWAR: President Rickshaw Drivers Union Haji Baz Muhammad addressing a press conference. — F.P. photo

Cloudy weather with widespread rain, thunderstorm predicted for KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Meteorological Center Peshawar on Tuesday predicted that mainly partly cloudy to cloudy weather is expected over most districts of the province during the next 24 hours.

However it said that widespread rain-wind/thunderstorm associated with dust storm and isolated heavy rainfall/hailstorm is likely to occur over Chitral, Lower & Upper Dir, Swat, Buner, Malakand, Shangla, Kohistan, Torgar, Battagram, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Swabi, Mardan, Nowshera, Peshawar, Charsadda, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Kurram, Hangu, Orakzai, Karak, Kohat districts.

Isolated rain-wind thunderstorm associated with heavy rainfall/hailstorm is likely to occur over Lakki Marwat, Bannu, Tank, D. I. Khan, North & South Waziristan districts.

During the last 24 hours mainly partly cloudy weather prevailed over most districts of the province. However, thunderstorm-rain with gusty winds occurred at scattered places in Peshawar, Lower & Upper Dir, Swat, Buner, Mardan, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Bajaur, Mohmand and Kurram districts.

Rain recorded (in mm): DI Khan 28, Peshawar (City 25, A/P 19), Kakul 15, Taimergara 13, Mohmand (Mamad Gut 12), Balakot 09, Parachinar 08, Bajaur (Pashat 07, Khaar 06), Takht Bhai & Cherat 04 (each), Saidu Sharif 03, Ghalanai & Dir 03 (each), Bannu, Landi Kotal & Buner 02 (each).

The maximum and minimum temperatures recorded in centigrade at different stations of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were Peshawar City 31/17, Chitral 28/13, Taimergara 24/14, Dir 24/09, Mirkhani 24/08, Kalam 20/04, Drosh 25/13, Saidu Sharif 21/14, Pattan 30/16, Malam Jabba 13/04, Takht Bhai 29/17, Kakul 18/12, Balakot 18/12, Parachinar 23/06, Bannu 34/16, Cherat 27/14, D.I. Khan 37/18.

The highest temperature recorded in the province was 37°C in Dera Ismail Khan.

Labour Day; A national tribute to workers of Pakistan

PESHAWAR (APP): Busy like a honeybee in wheat harvesting, Rafique Khan (40), a poor labourer of Nowshera district was seen asking his co-workers to accelerate the work and complete it before sunset on Wednesday.

Unaware of the International Labour Day observed on May 1, in many countries including Pakistan with enthusiasm, the motivated labourer was assisted by his elder son Sadiq Khan and three others in wheat harvesting in his native village Dheri Ishaq at tehsil Pabbi.

Known as ‘Lala G’, Khan obtained a wheat harvesting project that included wheat cutting, threshing and storage of the commodity. He was working against the clock to complete it before the heavy rainfalls predicted by the Met Office for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

“I wake up early in the morning for cutting of standing wheat on five acres on paid contract i.e., per 200kg wheat or Rs8,000 per acre while its threshing has separate charges,” he told APP.

“Following the death of my father, Haji Muhammad Zaman, I discontinued my education after matric and started different labour jobs including wheat harvesting, fruits selling, transport and bricks kiln, besides opening a small general store at my village to meet the household, health and education expenses of my seven-member family in the wake of skyrocketing price hike,” said Rafique.

“I closed my small general store after it was severely damaged by the last year’s devastating floods in River Kabul and also sold my rickshaw to return all the loans obtained for my shop business,” he told with grief.

Enjoying tea under a Shisham tree with his fellow labourers before starting threshing of wheat in the afternoon, he said, “We prefer wheat harvesting these days due to high profit margin as compared to other labour jobs.”

“Purchasing of own tractor-thresher was my dream but could not materialize it due to financial constraints,” he added. He urged the government to give interest-free loans to labourers so that they may establish their own businesses.

Like Rafique and Sadiq, hundreds of thousands of workers were engaged in different labour works including wheat harvesting, construction, transport, bricks kilns and tree plantations in KP and were contributing to the country’s development.

1st May 1was a significant day to remember and pay glowing tributes to all those labourers, who worked for the economic prosperity, and development of the country and sacrificed their lives for Pakistan.

Like other 80 countries in the world, International Labour Day was also observed in Pakistan to pay homage to the services of the labour class.

Every year, Labour Day was observed in memory of Chicago workers, who were killed by police while striking for an eight-hour workday in 1886.

In Pakistan, May 01 was officially declared as a public holiday after its inclusion in the first labour policy in 1972.

“The policy led to formulation of a social security network, old age benefit schemes and workers welfare fund while the 1973 constitution ensured all rights to labour class,” said Syed Noman Bukhari, senior lawyer of trade and labour laws and member of Peshawar High Court Bar Association (PHCBA) while talking to APP.

He said Pakistan was a member of the International Labour Organization (ILO) after its independence in 1947 and had protected all rights of the labourers including the right of union and jobs in the 1973 constitution.

He said Pakistan had ratified 36 ILO conventions of which eight were important, thus empowering labourers of all rights.

The Labour and Culture Department KP spokesman said that several housing projects were launched for the labourers.

He said 2,056 flats at Labour City Regi Lalma Peshawar for registered industrial workers were constructed. Funds had been allocated for sanitation, water and street lights in Mardan Labour Colony.

Ikhtair Wali Khan, PML(N) KP spokesman and former MPA said the minimum labour wage had been increased to Rs25,000 per month, whereas the federal government had planned to send around one million skilled labourers abroad for employment this year.

As many as sixteen countries including South Korea, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Romania, Portugal and Malta had shown keen interest in hiring services of our skilled labourers, he added. Since April last year, over 0.6 million Pakistanis were sent abroad for employment.

He said the one-window OPF facilitation desk at Bacha Khan Airport Peshawar, having representatives of 13 departments including PIA, NADRA, Immigration and Passport, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Customs, ANF, Bureau of Immigration and Overseas Employment, ASF, Overseas Employment Corporation, CAA and Overseas Pakistanis Foundation, was established to swiftly address complaints of overseas Pakistanis.

The allocation of five percent quota in public sector universities for children of overseas Pakistanis and financial support in the shape of payment of fees to them in foreign universities through the Higher Education Commission was planned.

Overseas Pakistanis Foundation housing scheme had been launched at Budhni Road, Peshawar, which encompasses 681 residential and 74 commercial plots for labourers, he added.

Provincial President Peoples Labor Bureau KP, Shah Zulqarnain said the then PPP governments had increased salaries of labourers by 150 percent, besides giving them shares in the profits of companies and regularising their jobs.

Provincial President of Pakistan Peoples’ Party KP and Minister for State, Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha said the employees and labourers were given all due shares in the government and semi-government organizations during the government of Benazir Bhutto Shaheed.

Under the new labour policy, he said around 400 percent of the workers’ salaries were increased and services of the temporary workers were regularized besides the restoration of the sacked employees.



In brief

2 bodies found electrocuted

NAROWAL (PPI): The bodies of two men were found in the fields within the limits of Tipala Choki Police Station Narowal about which the police said they were electrocuted on Tuesday. The police said that the deceased were identified as Zahid and Ahmed and they had modern weapons on them. The police suspected them to be dacoits for their armed appearances. According to preliminary investigation, both men died due to electrocution because neither of them had any mark of torture or bullet wound on his body. The bodies of both persons were transferred to a hospital mortuary and the police are further looking into the matter.

Journalist dies of cardiac arrest

F.P. Report

SAKHAKOT: Senior Journalist and Pakistan Television (PTV) correspondent Hayat Khan has been passed away due to cardiac arrest and his funeral prayer was offered at Sakhakot, last day. According to details, last Hayat Khan feel pain chest and reached to tehsil headquarters hospital Dargai while dead due to cardiac arrest in the premises. The decease has long carrier of journalism for more than two decades including as correspondent PTV as Chief Executive Office (CEO) web TV. During the funeral prayer of deceased large number people including journalist community from across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa along with civil society members were present.

Two killed in road mishap

BAHAWALPUR (INP): Two including a woman were killed when an over speeding passenger bus hit a motorcycle here on Tuesday. Police said that the accident took place on National Highway near Dara Chacharan in Bahawalpur, where a reckless driven passenger bus knocked down a motorcycle carrying two people. Both motorcycle riders including a woman were killed on the spot and bus driver fled the scene of accident. The bodies were shifted to hospital for post-mortem. Police impounded the vehicle and after registering a case into the incident started raids to arrest the driver.

One shot dead in Khushab

F.P. Report

KHUSHAB: Unknown motorcyclist shot killed Haji Ahmad Nawaz on Mainwali-Sargodha road near Mitha tiwana police station unknown while escaped from the crime scene, on Tuesday. According to details, an unknown motorcycle rider attacked Haji Ahmed Nawaz khan Mahal Residence of Mitha station colony in chowk Mitha station and later opened a fire by which Haji Ahmed Nawaz seriously injured and then transferred to Civil Hospital Jauharabad but he succumbed his injuries. The accused fled from the scene after the shooting and initially the motive of the murder was not known. then on getting the information about the incident the local police reached on the spot and start investigation after registering case. Meanwhile, SHO police station Quidabad Akhter Nawaz and ASI Mehboob Ahmed who went missing from the school handed over the girl to her parents in a timely manner. The people of the area and the parents thanked the police officer of the Quidabad police station.



QUETTA: PTI Central Senior Vice President Qasim Suri talking to media.

Two kids die in Lakki Marwat flash flood

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Two children died separately in incidents related to flash floods caused by heavy rain in Lakki Marwat on Tuesday.

According to the rescue sources, a 12-year-old boy drowned in a flash flood after heavy rain near Dal Mills, Lakki Marwat. In another incident, floodwater enters the basement of a house in Dallo Khel, causing one of its walls to collapse on a 13-year-old boy. The rescue teams recovered the dead bodies of both children and shifted them to City Hospital.

Meanwhile, the officials of the Town Municipal Committee should be prepared for emergency situation in rains and immediate steps should be taken for drainage. Mayor of Naurang Tehsil Azizullah Khan Marwat issued instructions to the Town officials after the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa issued an alert related to the rains to ensure drainage in Naurang city and its suburbs. Measures should be taken

on emergency basis to make the system effective to avoid possible rain losses.

In this context, on the orders of Tehsil Municipal Officer Karamatullah Khan TMA is continuing the process of cleaning the rivers and canals to activate the drain system in the city and suburban areas so that the rain water can stand in the city and residential areas. Instead of going straight out of the city through the main drain.

In this regard, Tehsil Mayor Azizullah Khan says that in view of the possible recent rains, the available resources are being utilized by the TMA so that the rains do not create a flood situation and prevent loss of life and property.

Seven caught for cheating in exams: Seven candidates were caught cheating in the ongoing matriculation examination in Lakki Marwat, officials claimed. The visits were arranged on the special directives of divisional commissioner of Bannu Parwez Sabatkhel, additional DC Dr Tariquddin said. He said that the district administration had also imposed

restrictions on running photocopier shops, selling pocket guidebooks and presence of unauthorised persons near examination centers.

He said that local deputy commissioner Abdul Hadi tasked assistant commissioners and additional ACs to pay surprise inspection visits to SSC examination centres to check availability of facilities and curb cheating.

During a visit to different examination centres established at the Government High Schools in Haramatala, Baistkhel and Gandhi Khankhel areas, additional assistant commissioner Mr Awais found seven candidates using cheating material while attempting the paper. He directed superintendents of the centres to initiate legal action against the candidates and ensure conduct of the matriculation examination cheating free. Additional ACs Sultan Nooruddin and Gohar Ali Khan also inspected exam centres in Shahbazkhel, Ghaznikhel, Serai Naurang, Gandhi Khankhel and Zafar Mamakhel areas.

IG FC inaugurates steel bridge at Bahrain

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Pakistan Army has successfully constructed a 100 feet long steel bridge in Bahrain, Swat. The newly constructed bridge was inaugurated by Inspector General Frontier Corps North Major General Noor Wali Khan.

The old bridge was closed to all traffic due to damage caused by recent floods, which had caused inconvenience to the people living in the area. With the construction of the new steel bridge, the local population will now have easier access to various areas.

The construction of the new bridge has been done while keeping in mind the possibility of emergency situations such as floods, and it has been ensured that the bridge will remain standing in such situations. The people of Bahrain, Swat appreciated the quick and timely action taken by the Pakistan Army on the situation. Pakistan Army considers it an honor to serve the people and provide necessary infrastructure for their convenience and safety. The construction of the new bridge is a testament to the Army's commitment to serving the people of Pakistan.

Elders demand release of dues

F.P. Report

BUNER: The elders of Amazi on Tuesday meet with Deputy Commissioner Arshad Buner while demanded release of dues to CDLD after completion of developmental projects in the area.

The elders complained they being elders were headed committees for community development infrastructure in the area and completed several schemes. During works several parties were supplied materials and labors on the surety from elders but the CDLD program wined up program without making payments to heads of committees, they claimed. The elders further said the suppliers were time and again pressing hard in elders for making payment of dues.

They appealed DC for making sure payments so as the elders to get ride of the suppliers frequently visiting their Hujra and places. DC keenly heard the elders and assured them solution and called ADC finance to his office and directed to make sure resolve the issue satisfy the elders and report to this office as soon as possible. Following the elders embassies and hailed timely action.

Stolen rickshaws recovered

F.P. Report

SWABI: Swabi police here Tuesday arrested a thief and recovered three stolen rickshaws and spare parts of two tri wheelers from his possession.

A police team led by Station House Officer, Ajab Durrani recovered three rickshaws, spare parts, engines and scrap of two tri-wheelers from possession of Muhammad Hanif.

PHC CJ visits Karak, Lakki Marwat inspects lockups

F.P. Report

KARAK: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court Justice Musarat Hilali on Tuesday visited Tehsil Court Banda Daud Shah, District Karak and Lakki Marwat inspected courts and judicial lockups.

Later, she visited the Tehsil Bar Room. She pressed upon punctuality and discipline while laying emphasis on wearing prescribed uniforms. She observed that the staff follows their officers, thus they need to be punctual and disciplined. The Chief Justice personally attended to the issues faced by the Bar and the inmates brought to the Judicial Lock and on the spot she passed remedial directions.

Later, she went to District Courts Karak and inspected courts, judicial lockup and allied offices. She also went to the Bar Room. District Bar Karak welcomed the Chief Justice and congratulated



her on assuming the office of Chief Justice. She attended to the issues faced by the bar, in particular the slow pace of work on construction of the Judicial Complex Karak and passed necessary corrective directions.

The Chief Justice then went to District Jail Karak. She was accompanied by District and Sessions Judge and Senior Civil Judge. She inspected the Jail and went to the barracks, kitchen, dispensary, stores etc. The Chief

Justice thereafter went to District Jail Lakki Marwat. She found the conditions highly alarming. As against a meager capacity a considerable number of inmates are lodged there. Basic facilities are lacking and the condition of hygiene was found highly deplorable. Seeing the capacity issues, the Chief Justice directed a coordinated and concerted efforts to improve the prevailing miserable condition of District Jail Lakki Marwat.

Three arrested for filming Buddhist remains

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Three youths were arrested for making videos for social media without permission in the ancient monument of Takhtbhai by wearing women's costumes. It is said in the report that the arrested youths are belong to District Charsadda who were came to Buddhist remains of Takht Bhai for making videos for their social media channels without prior permission of the concern authorities.

The report said that they were caught red handed by police official over the site. Report mentioned that one of these three boys wearing women costume to play a role of a female. All are arrested due to violating the law to humiliate the official process to get prior permission for filming or shooting in the world-famous Buddhist remains of Takht Bhai, written in the report.

Sources said that among these two are resident of district Charsadda named

Muhammad Hanif and Muhammad Jameel who were playing role of Hero and the other one as female actor. All accused were send to jail by the concern authority of Takht Bhai Buddhist Remains.

Commissioner orders to conclude revenue cases on priority: Commissioner Mardan Division Yousaf Rahim has said that the revenue cases at the division level should be disposed of as soon as possible and improve their performance so that the fruits of better governance can be obtained and they can get justice at the doorstep.

He expressed these views while chairing a meeting on efficiency and revenue cases at the division level in his office on Tuesday. Additional Commissioner Naem Akhtar, Deputy Commissioner Mardan Captain (R) Abdur Rehman, Deputy Commissioner Swabi Farqan Ashraf, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue,

Assistant Commissioners and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

Commissioner Mardan Division was given a detailed briefing regarding the performance and revenue of the districts on which the Commissioner Mardan Division issued instructions to the concerned officers to deal with the court cases as soon as possible, to focus on irrigation, regeneration, besides ensuring checking of the markets, to pay special attention to development projects of public interest and open ensure the holding of courts as this is the only forum in which public issues can be resolved in a better way and achieve far reaching results.

He directed that concrete measure should be taken to check the cleanliness of food items in the markets, check the prices and prevent artificial inflation, and organize operations to eliminate illegal encroachments.



QUETTA: Activists of Joint Action Committee hold protest in favor of their demands.

Govt commits for welfare of working class: Saira

Hafiz Aziz-ur-Rehman

HAFIZABAD: Present government is committed for welfare of labourers and their family members whereas government is taking practical measures for providing healthcare and educational and other facilities to the labourers across the country. This was stated by the former federal Minister and leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Saira Afzal Tahir on the occasion of International Labour Day.

While paying tribute to male and female workers, she said the labour force was backbone of our economy and present government was taking steps for protection of their rights by strictly enforcing the labour laws to discourage unfair labour practices. The dream of economic stability and development of the country cannot materialized without providing due rights of workers and to acknowledge their struggle, she said and added that heart of PMLN is beating with labourers and government of PMLN took many steps and promulgated different laws for the welfare of workers.

She said that the government was increased the minimum monthly wages of workers from 17,500 rupees to 25,000 rupees per month in view the high inflation rates and other economic challenges.

Beautification schemes launched:

Different schemes being launched to give attractive look to city Hafizabad including City of rice, I love Hafizabad, erecting model of Minar-e-Pakistan, Dewar-e-Hafizabad, National flag etc. This was disclosed by Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad Umer farooq Warriach.

DC said that district Hafizabad was famous for producing the best quality rice in the world, in this context, a attractive model of "City of Rice" would be erected at Ali Chowk Kassoki Road. A beautiful model of 'I love Hafizabad will be build at Qatal Gharhah Chowk and Minar-e-Pakistan model at Sargodha road, he said. He further told that a big National Flag would also be constructed in front of Deputy Commissioner Office and with the completion of these schemes, the beautification of the city would increase.

DHA arranges three days screening camp: District Health Authority Hafizabad arranged Three Day Medical and Anti-TB screening camp at District Jail Hafizabad and all diagnostic and treatment facilities provided to jail inmates. CEO Health Dr. Fareeha Akram Mallik, Deputy Director T.B Control Programme Punjab Dr. Umar Awan, Jail superintendent Muhammad Abu Bakar Abdullah supervised the medical visited the camp.

World Immunization Day organized

F.P. Report

WANA: In a commendable effort to raise awareness about routine vaccinations, the staff of the District Health Office (DHO) in Upper Waziristan, led by DHO Dr. Shams Ur Rehman Dawar, organized an awareness walk on the occasion of World Immunization Day. The march was held within the premises of the DHO office and aimed to highlight the importance of routine vaccinations for the well-being of children and the community.

The event was attended by a large number of staff members of the DHO office, including doctors, nurses, and other healthcare professionals. The participants held banners and placards promoting the ben-

efits of routine vaccinations, and marched in unison to raise awareness about the critical role of immunization in safeguarding public health.

Speaking on the occasion, DHO Dr. Shams Ur Rehman Dawar emphasized the importance of routine vaccinations, stating that they were the most effective way to prevent many infectious diseases that pose a threat to children's health. He also stressed the need to ensure that children receive timely vaccinations to protect them from preventable diseases and urged parents to prioritize their children's immunization.

Dr. Dawar also highlighted the challenges faced by the healthcare system in delivering vaccinations to remote and hard-to-reach areas, and called for

increased investment in the health sector to strengthen immunization programs and ensure that every child receives life-saving vaccines.

DHO further added that the event aimed to raise awareness about the importance of routine vaccinations and encourage parents to bring their children for vaccination on time. He also praised the efforts of the DHO staff and other healthcare professionals in delivering vaccinations and improving immunization coverage in the district.

The awareness walk organized by the District Health Office in Upper Waziristan was a significant step towards promoting routine vaccinations and increasing public awareness about their benefits.



Sudan crisis: Chaos at port as thousands rush to leave

KHARTOUM (BBC): In the dead of night, as HMS Al Diriyah approached Sudan's coast, Saudi officers flicked on sweeping search lights to secure safe passage for their warship into a harbour rapidly transforming into a major evacuation and humanitarian hub in Sudan's deepening crisis. Even at 2am two other hulking vessels were also anchored offshore at Port Sudan, its largest port, waiting their turn in this international rescue effort.

"I feel so relieved but also so sad to be part of this history," Hassan Faraz from Pakistan told us, visibly shaken. We reached the quayside in a Saudi tugboat at the end of a 10-hour journey through the night in HMS Al Diriyah from the Saudi port city of Jeddah. A small group of foreign journalists were given rare access to enter embattled Sudan, if only briefly. "People will be speaking about these events for many years to come," Faraz reflected, as a long queue formed on the wharf for passports to be checked against the Saudi manifest. This time, it was many young workers from South Asia who said they had waited here for three long days - after two hard weeks in this hellscap of war.

Another man from Pakistan, who said he had worked at a Sudanese foundry, spoke of having "seen so much, so many bomb blasts and firing". Then he fell silent, staring into the sea, too traumatised to say more. The fighting which raged in recent weeks, amidst very imperfect and partial ceasefires, is a pitched battle for power between the Sudanese army led by Gen Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary group headed by Gen Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, widely known as Hemedti. "Port Sudan has fared relatively better in this war," my British-Sudanese colleague Mohanad Hashim explained. "Fighting only erupted here on 15 April, the first day, but now this port city is overwhelmed by people fleeing Khartoum and other places." We had just sailed past the graceful Naval Club turned tented village for the displaced. Many people are now sleeping rough on the streets as they wait for a way out. Local hotels are swamped by people with passports from the world over, along with emergency consular services hastily established by embassies who have evacuated most of their staff from the capital.

Many fear there is no way out. Port Sudan is packed with people who have less lucky passports, including Yemenis, Syrians and Sudanese. Some 3,000 Yemenis, mainly stu-



dents, have been stuck for weeks in Port Sudan. "The Saudis are rescuing some Yemenis but they're nervous about accepting large numbers," admitted a security adviser trying to help them find a way back to their own war-torn country. Many passengers arriving in the Saudi kingdom are provided with a short hotel stay. But it's made clear that their own countries are expected to soon pick up the bill and arrange onward travel. Mohanad Hashim scanned the wharf at Port Sudan, hoping to catch sight of any of his own Sudanese relatives who may be trying to make it out. The day before, at the King Faisal naval base in Jeddah where we began our journey, he suddenly found himself embracing a cousin who had made it to the Saudi city, along with two of his teenage children, after an 18-hour passage across the Red Sea. For the Sudanese with foreign passports who make it to safe shores, the moment is bittersweet. "Please, please help our family left in Sudan," a pink-scarfed Rasha pleaded, one child sleeping on her shoulder, three more waving flowers handed out by Saudi soldiers. "Please tell the world to protect Sudan," she implored us. Their family had been living near Sport City in Khartoum where gunfire erupted the morning of 15 April.

Her eight-year-old daughter Leen, speaking fluent English with an American accent, recounted in excited detail how armed men burst into their home. "We had to all hide, all ten of us, in the back room," she declared with youthful bravado. "I stayed calm. I didn't cry because we couldn't make any noise." "They were bad, bad guys," her younger brother chimed in. Her father explained that it had been RSF forces. Their gunmen are blamed for much of the looting and violence. This worsening and deeply worrying war between Sudan's two most powerful men is

fuelled not just by deep personal and political animosities, but also by the competing interests and influence of major powers. Regional heavyweights, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have long bankrolled Hemedti, who grew ever richer by sending forces to fight for their side in the early years of their destructive war against Yemen's Houthis.

But in recent years Riyadh has also drawn close to Gen Burhan and also has longstanding ties to Sudan's army. The tangled political geography in a country with vast mineral wealth and agricultural potential also includes Egypt, Israel and Russia, including the mercenary Wagner group. But in this current crisis, where the United States and Britain and other would-be peacemakers are also weighing in, outside powers are now said to be speaking with one voice in trying to end this dangerous spiral and the enormous suffering of civilians. Diplomats express gratitude for Saudi Arabia's evacuation effort. So far, more than 5,000 people, of 100 nationalities, have made the Red Sea crossing on Saudi warships or private vessels chartered by the Saudi military. The biggest single operation, which carried some 2,000 passengers, even included Iranians. Arch-rivals Riyadh and Tehran recently moved towards a cautious rapprochement, including reopening their embassies and consulates. "It is our luck. We hope there will be peace between our countries," 32-year-old civil engineer Nazli remarked as she disembarked in Jeddah with her engineer husband, who has also worked for years as an engineer in Sudan. In Port Sudan, as another packed tugboat sailed in choppy waters to a waiting Saudi warship, its passengers turned en masse to wave a final farewell to a country they regretted, with sadness, they may never return to.

Ukraine war looms over Switzerland UN presidency

UNITED NATIONS (AP): Russia couldn't escape its war against Ukraine during its highly contentious presidency of the UN Security Council, and the war will still loom over Switzerland as it takes over the month-long presidency for the first time since becoming a full member of the United Nations in 2002.

Switzerland's UN Ambassador Pascale Baeriswyl said at the traditional opening press conference that her country's approach has been to work for unity of the council's 15 members and to be "a bridge builder." She conceded, nonetheless, that she expects "some heated or polarized discussions." Fireworks are almost certain during Switzerland's signature events, starting with a session on how to ensure trust to sustain peace in the future and another on May 23 on protecting civilians in armed conflict.

The council is also highly likely to hold a meeting on the humanitarian situation in Ukraine, she said, which is certain to pit

Moscow against Kyiv's allies. "We will try to conduct the (open) meetings in a calm way," Baeriswyl said. "When it comes to closed consultations, I may be asking in a little more active way council members to really stay respectful with each other." Russia started its presidency by giving the spotlight to its commissioner of children's rights, who is accused with President Vladimir Putin of war crimes for deporting Ukrainian children to Russia. Then, it went after the West by claiming it is violating international laws by arming Ukraine.

At its premiere event last week, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov defended his country's military action and accused the US and its allies of undercutting global diplomacy - the foundation of the United Nations, which was created to prevent a third world war. Envoys from the US and several allies responded to the video briefing by Maria Lvova-Belova, the Russian children's rights commissioner, by walking

out of the council chamber. Russian Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia's accusations about arming Ukraine drew a blistering response that Ukraine has every right to defend itself against Putin's invading army. And UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and Western envoys berated Lavrov for violating the UN Charter by attacking Ukraine and occupying part of its territory. Switzerland Ambassador Baeriswyl was among those who accused Russia of violating the UN Charter, saying Ukraine's "state sovereignty, territorial integrity and the prohibition of the use of force continue to be flouted by the military aggression of a permanent member of the Security Council against its neighbor." The presidency of the Security Council, the UN's most powerful body charged with maintaining international peace and security, rotates monthly in alphabetical order of its 15 members.

John Bolton, a former US ambassador to the United Nations and national

security adviser to former President Donald Trump, said Russia's presidency shows the "dysfunctional nature" of the Security Council, which has been paralyzed over Ukraine since Putin's February 2022 invasion of its smaller neighbor. He said the same holds true during China's council presidency.

"Obviously, they're not going to permit any serious discussion of some of the real security crises around the world, and even if they did permit the discussion, they would block the council from doing anything through the veto," he said in a phone interview with AP. Bolton said "it is unfortunate but ironic to say the least" that the promise at the end of the Cold War in 1990-1991 that the Security Council could really be effective and address global crises after decades of paralysis because of the veto power of the United States and the Soviet Union has ended, alluding to the ongoing paralysis over Ukraine and other hotspots because of Russia's veto.

Blinding US dust storm leads to fatal collisions in Illinois

NEW YORK (Agencies): Gusting winds in the Midwestern United States have kicked up a fatal dust storm, reducing visibility to zero and triggering a major vehicle pileup that killed at least six people on an Illinois highway. More than 30 additional motorists, from ages 2 to 80, were wounded in the crash as a result of storm, according to Illinois state police. Their injuries ranged from minor to life-threatening.

State police reported that up to 60 cars and nearly 30 commercial vehicles slammed into one another as strong winds whipped across the flat farmland near the town of Farmersville, about 40km (24 miles) south of the state capital of Springfield. Two semitrucks caught fire, adding to the haze that clouded the I-55 highway, shutting down traffic in both

the north and south directions. All the crashes occurred within a 3-km (2-mile) stretch of road, from milepost 76 to milepost 78. One driver, 25-year-old Evan Anderson, told the Associated Press news agency he was headed home to St Louis, Missouri, from Chicago, when the dust storm hit. A semitruck ultimately hit his car. "You couldn't even see," Anderson said. "People try to slow down and other people didn't, and I just got plowed into. There were just so many cars and semitrucks with so much momentum behind them." Politicians from Illinois Governor JB Pritzker to US Representative Nikki Budzinski issued statements expressing heartbreak at the "devastating reports" emerging from the highway. "Our hearts are heavy as

we grapple with the devastating news of a massive pileup on I-55 outside of Springfield that has reports of casualties and multiple injuries," Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton wrote in a statement. "Our entire state will mourn the sudden loss of life and pray the recovery of those injured during this tragedy." Kevin Schott, director of Montgomery County emergency management, told reporters at a press conference that the biggest challenge was "trying to get to the victims in a rapid manner", as the windstorm continued to blow at speeds of up to 72 kilometres per hour (45 miles per hour). "We had vehicles and fires to extinguish. We had to search every vehicle, whether they were involved in the accident or just pulled over, to check for injuries," Schott said.

"This particular situation would be similar to a white-out condition," State Police Major Ryan Starrick told the press afterwards, referring to snowfall so heavy that everything appears white. "The low visibility, the high winds, everything just came together unfortunately in this particular stretch of I-55." While zero-visibility dust storms are rare but not unheard of in the region, Starrick said he had never seen something so severe in his 24-year career with the police. The US National Weather Service bureau in Lincoln, Illinois, issued a warning for continued "strong west to northwest winds" through Tuesday, leading to precarious driving conditions. "Use extra caution when driving, secure loose objects, and avoid burning if possible," it warned on Twitter.

Palestinian boy mauled to death by lion in zoo

GAZA CITY (AP): A Palestinian boy was mauled to death by a lion in a private zoo in the Gaza Strip, according to the coastal territory's police force, run by the militant Hamas group. Police officers said 6-year-old Hamada Iqtiet had climbed the fence in the zoo in the southern Gaza town of Khan Younis, and reached an opening in the cage before the lion mauled him. An investigation was underway, they said.

The boy's family disputed the account, saying Hamada - who was visiting the Asdaa Park with his mother and other family members, according to relatives - had only reached an outer fence, where the lion was standing, when he was attacked. It was the first known fatality from animals kept at private zoos in the crowded and impoverished Palestinian territory. Gaza has several small private zoos where animals are kept in deplorable conditions. The animals have suffered from repeated fighting between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers, neglect, starvation and lack of medical care. International animal welfare groups have carried out several missions to evacuate animals, especially lions, to safe havens in Jordan and Africa.

Kuwait parliament dissolved

KUWAIT CITY (Agencies): Kuwait's parliament has been dissolved by royal decree, state news agency KUNA said, having only been reinstated in March based on a Constitutional Court ruling after a previous dissolution. The decree, which was reportedly signed, comes after Kuwait's Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said last month that the legislature would be dissolved and that new parliamentary elections would be held in the coming months.

The Gulf Arab state, a member of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), has seen prolonged bickering between the government and the elected parliament that has hampered fiscal reforms. The parliament first elected in 2020 was dissolved last year in a bid to end the feuding, and a vote was held in September in which the opposition made gains. But the Constitutional Court in March annulled those results and restored the previous assembly. Sheikh Meshal, who signed Emiri decree, was handed most of the duties of the ruling emir, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, in late 2021. The cabinet had submitted the decree to Sheikh Meshal earlier in the day, according to a previous statement by KUNA. Sheikh Meshal had said last month that the "will of the people" required new elections that would be "accompanied by some legal and political reforms to take the country to a new phase of discipline and legal reference". He did not go into detail on the reforms, however. Kuwait bans political parties but has given its legislature more influence than similar bodies in other Gulf monarchies, and political stability has traditionally depended on cooperation between the government and parliament.

The Gulf state has strong fiscal and external balance sheets, but the infighting and political gridlock have hampered investment and reforms aimed at reducing its heavy reliance on oil revenues. Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Sabah, the emir's son, had in January submitted his government's resignation due to friction with the parliament elected in 2020. He was renamed premier in March and a new cabinet was announced this month.

Relations have also been strained between the prime minister and the speaker of the now twice-dissolved parliament. The speaker, Marzouq al-Ghanim, wrote on Twitter shortly after the decree that he would run in the election, a date for which has yet to be announced.

Russia missile attack on Ukraine injures 34, damages homes

KYIV (AP): Russia launched its second large salvo of missiles at Ukraine in recent days, damaging buildings and wounding at least 34 people in the eastern city of Pavlohrad but failing to hit Kyiv, officials said. Air raid sirens began blaring across the capital at about 3:45 a.m., followed by the sounds of explosions as missiles were intercepted by Ukrainian defense systems.

Eighteen cruise missiles were fired in total from the Murmansk region and the Caspian region, and 15 of them were intercepted, said Ukrainian Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief Valerii Zaluzhnyi. The head of Kyiv's city administration, Serhii Popko, said all missiles fired at the city were shot down, as well as some drones. He didn't provide further details, but said more information would be available later. The attack follows launch of more than 20 cruise missiles and two explosive drones at Ukraine, which was the first to target Kyiv in nearly two months. In that attack, Russian missiles hit an apartment building in Uman, a city about 215 kilometers (135 miles) south of Kyiv, killing 21 people including three children.

In attack, missiles hit Pavlohrad, in the eastern Dnipropetrovsk region, wounding 34 people, including five children, according to Serhii Lysak, the region's top official. Seven missiles shot at the city and "some were intercepted" but others hit an industrial facility, sparking a fire, and a residential

neighborhood where 19 apartment buildings, 25 homes, six schools and five shops were damaged, he said. Missiles also hit three other areas in the region, damaging residential buildings and a school, he said. Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said that Russia conducted "a group missile strike with long-range precision-guided airborne and seaborne weapons on facilities of Ukraine's defense industry ... all designated facilities were struck." The attacks also damaged Ukraine's power network infrastructure, which will take several days to repair, according to Energy Minister Herman Haluschenko. He said that nearly 20,000 people in the city of Kherson and wider region had been left without power, along with an unspecified number of people in the Dnipropetrovsk region, including the city of Dnipro. Moscow has frequently launched long-range missile attacks during the 14-month war, often indiscriminately hitting civilian areas.

Ukraine has recently taken delivery of American-made Patriot missiles, providing improved anti-missile defenses, but it was not clear whether any of them were employed in trying to stop attack. Ukraine has also been building up its mechanized brigades with armor supplied by its Western allies, who have also been training Ukrainian troops and sending ammunition, as Kyiv prepares for an expected counteroffensive this spring. Two Ukrainian drones hit a Russian oil

depot in Crimea in the latest attack on the annexed peninsula. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in an interview last week that his country would seek to reclaim the peninsula, which was annexed by Russia in 2014, in the upcoming counteroffensive. In what has become a grinding war of attrition, the fiercest battles have been in the eastern Donetsk region, where Russia is struggling to encircle the city of Bakhmut in the face of dogged Ukrainian defense. Troops from Russia's Wagner mercenary group and other forces are fighting Ukrainian troops house-to-house to try and gain control of what has become known as the "road of life" - the last remaining road west still in Ukrainian hands, which makes it critical for supplies and fresh troops. Col. Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi, the head of Ukrainian ground forces, said that Russia continued to exert "maximum effort" to take the city but that it so far had failed.

"In some parts of the city, the enemy was counterattacked by our units and left some positions," he said. In Russia's Bryansk region, which borders northern Ukraine, a freight train was derailed by an explosive device, regional governor Alexander Bogomaz said.

There were no immediate indications of who set off the explosive, but Bryansk has suffered sporadic cross-border shelling during the war and in March two people were reported killed in what Bryansk officials said was an incursion by Ukrainian saboteurs.

7 bodies found during search for missing teens

HENRYETTA (AP): Authorities discovered the bodies of seven people while searching a rural Oklahoma property for two missing teenagers, state investigators confirmed. The bodies were found near the town of Henryetta, a town of about 6,000 located about 90 miles (145 kilometers) east of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation spokesman Gerald Davidson said.

He said the state medical examiner will have to identify the victims, but authorities were no longer searching for the missing teens or a man they may have been with. "We've had our share of troubles and woes, but this one is pretty bad," Okmulgee County Sheriff Eddy Rice told reporters. Rice declined to confirm the identities of any of the victims, where the bodies were found or any details about weapons that may have been discovered on the property. "We believe there's no other threat to the

community," he added. A missing endangered person advisory had been issued for 14-year-old Ivy Webster and 16-year-old Brittany Brewer. The Oklahoma Highway Patrol canceled the advisory. The advisory for Webster and Brewer had said they were reportedly seen traveling with Jesse McFadden, who was on the state's sex offender registry. Oklahoma Department of Corrections prison records show McFadden was convicted of first-degree rape in 2003 and released in October 2020.

Court records show McFadden was scheduled to appear in court for the start of a jury trial on charges of soliciting sexual conduct with a minor and possession of child pornography. A message left with McFadden's attorney in that case was not immediately returned. Brittany Brewer's father told KOTV in Tulsa that one of the bodies discovered was his daughter. "Brittany was an outgoing person. She was actually

selected to be Miss Henryetta ... coming up in July for this Miss National Miss pageant in Tulsa. And now she ain't gonna make it because she's dead. She's gone," Nathan Brewer said. Henryetta Public Schools posted on Facebook and its website that it is grieving over the loss of several of its students. "Our hearts are hurting, and we have considered what would be best for our students in the coming days," the note said. Officials said school would be in session, and mental health professionals and clergy would be on hand to help counsel students. But they said they would understand if families want to keep their children home from school. In a separate Okmulgee County case, the bodies of four men were found Oct. 14 in the Deep Fork River in Okmulgee, a town of around 11,000 people that is about 40 miles (65 kilometers) south of Tulsa. Joseph Kennedy, 68, is facing four counts of first-degree murder in that case.

Haiti on 'brink of civil war', humanitarian group warns

PORT-AU-PRINCE (Agencies): Haiti is on the "brink of a civil war", the humanitarian group Mercy Corps has warned, as violence between criminal gangs and civilians risks spiralling. Mercy Corps said that the deteriorating security situation and rising prices have also sparked a hunger crisis in the Caribbean nation. With the escalating violence - particularly in the capital Port-au-Prince, where gangs have taken over large parts of the city - families are losing access to basic necessities, including food and clean water, the group added.

"The population has been pushed to make impossible decisions, like choosing between taking children to a hospital or health clinics to treat cholera at the risk of being kidnapped and killed, or staying home and hoping they will get better," said Lunise Jules, Mercy Corps country director for Haiti. Jules added that many residents are starting to question, "Why not seek revenge and take justice into their own hands?"

Last week, a mob lynched at least 13 suspected gang members who had been arrested in Port-au-Prince. The violence has been exacerbated by a series of crises facing the country of more than 11 million residents.

Haiti has suffered from periodic natural disasters, gang violence, a cholera outbreak and long-standing political instability made worse by the assassination of President Jovenel Moise in 2021. Haiti's de facto leader, Prime Minister Ariel Henry, has faced a crisis of legitimacy. He was chosen for the post by Moise just days before the president was killed. Presidential and legislative elections have been postponed indefinitely since 2021, preventing any political transition.

Meanwhile, widespread violence has impeded access to healthcare facilities, forced the closure of schools and clinics, and worsened food insecurity, with residents of gang-controlled areas cut off from critical supplies. Mercy Corps, which pro-

vides cash assistance to tens of thousands of people in Haiti, said that nearly half the country's population is starving because of the crisis. "Haiti is not a functional country anymore," Judes Jonathas, the group's deputy programme director in Haiti, said in the statement.

Last week, Maria Isabel Salvador, the head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), raised concerns about the "surge of violence" in the country. Speaking to the UN Security Council, Salvador said 1,674 homicides, rapes, kidnappings and lynchings were reported in the first quarter of 2023 - an uptick from 692 such incidents in the same period a year earlier. "Gang violence is expanding at an alarming rate in areas previously considered relatively safe in Port-au-Prince and outside the capital," she said. "The horrific violence in gang-ridden areas, including sexual violence, particularly against women and girls, is emblematic of the terror afflicting much of Haiti's population."

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Will the Taliban respond to global aspirations re Afghanistan?

ACCORDING to the media, the Taliban interim authorities will be absent from UN-led talks scheduled to be held in Doha, regarding dealing with Afghan rulers and pressing them to ease a ban on women's employment and girls' education in the cleric-ruled Afghanistan. As said, the envoys from the United States, China, and Russia as well as major European nations and key neighbours including Pakistan are among the delegates that will join the two-day huddle in Qatar that hosted months-long talks between the United States and the Taliban in the past. The UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will address the session and will urge the global community to engage with the Taliban government and pave the for the preservation of basic human rights in the South Asian nation. Meanwhile, the question of recognition of the Taliban administration loomed large ahead of the global meet-up over the issue and proposed methodology to tackle with the determined rulers of the conflict-ridden country.

The current geopolitical landscape and internal state of affairs of Taliban-ruled Afghanistan portray a gloomy picture and prompted serious reservations in the global community. The historic peaceful troops' withdrawal by the US-led foreign alliance could not settle down the Afghanistan issue and failed to realize peace in the war-hit nation after the Taliban seized control of the country in August 2021. The Taliban-ruled Afghanistan not only confronts multiple domestic and external issues but poses serious security challenges to its neighbors and the global community at large. Numerous transnational terrorist groups are amassed in the country and the Taliban regime lacks both capacities and resolve to combat these grave challenges. Recently, the Taliban authorities imposed a ban on women's employment, girls' education, and women's travel without a male escort which caused grave concerns among the global community, while no inclusion of the Afghan republicans and other opposition parties in the interim set up has kicked off a fresh insurgency in some parts of the country. Historically, there had been recurrent calls from the United Nations and the global community urging the Afghan interim authorities to uphold its obligations in respect of the Doha agreements and the global responsibility regarding the protection of human and women's rights, preservation of civil liberties, inclusiveness and no tolerance for terrorism so the decades-long violence and anarchy comes to calm, and the country becomes a hub of economic activity instead of being a sanctuary for the transnational terrorist groups that threaten the regional and global peace.

Realistically, the foreign troops' withdrawal could not prove to be a lasting solution to the decades-long violence in Afghanistan, as it throned a contesting group and opened up the window for a fresh conflict in the country. So far, the Taliban are determined to implement their agenda and rule the nation solely, while Northern Alliance, Islamic State, and other militant groups are aggressively working to topple the Taliban rule and instate their own government in the country. Meanwhile, Afghan women and civil society groups are staging peaceful protests in favor of their fundamental rights and against the global recognition of the Taliban government. Apparently, the Taliban regime has created problems for itself through the creation of issues out of the nonissues. The Taliban authorities preferred to grasp their political agenda instead of restoring peace, delivering to the public, getting global recognition, and consolidating their gains in the country, thus the astigmatism of the leadership again rendered the country a terrorist hot spot and security risk for the global community.

Presently, an UN-led global huddle has been arranged to deliberate on the Afghan issue and deal with the Taliban rulers, which will surely provide an opportunity for the Taliban government to settle its issues and become a part of the global community. However, Kabul's failure to comprehend the global aspirations would cause serious problems for the people and the government of Afghanistan in the future. Because economically fragile and politically unstable Afghanistan is purely dependent on foreign aid, while further diplomatic isolation and no foreign assistance would cause severe economic and humanitarian crises in the country. Therefore, the Afghan interim rulers must pause their ego and think for the people of Afghanistan who persistently suffered over the past decades and deserve some peace and prosperity at this point in time.

Dialogue the best option for feuding Sudanese generals

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sulami

THE world is watching with grave concern the confrontations and bloody clashes between the Sudanese army led by Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan and the Rapid Support Forces commanded by Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo that are gripping the capital, Khartoum, and other cities in the country. These clashes are continuing despite regional and international warnings that the situation could deteriorate further, with the country potentially sliding into civil war. The two warring parties insist adamantly on a zero-sum game, rejecting all the Arab, African and international calls and initiatives aimed at ending the clashes and encouraging the parties to sit down at the negotiating table.

The regional efforts have so far succeeded in convincing the Sudanese army and the RSF to enforce several truces, with the aim of ensuring the safe passage of humanitarian and medical assistance and enabling the wounded and others requiring medical attention to have access to hospitals. This is in addition to dealing with the problems caused by most hospitals being put out of operation, the suspension of the supply of healthcare and food items, lengthy power cuts, and a lack of fuel.

All of these truces have, however, failed to silence the gunfire; instead, they have involved intermittent heavy fighting, raising concerns about the efficacy of

any future truces, especially given the lack of local or international bodies on the ground that are able to communicate with each of the warring parties. As if this was not enough, the situation is further complicated by each party's desire to secure its military positions and obtain additional reinforcements during the truces. The Sudanese army perceives the RSF as a threat to the Sudanese state.

the other from the country's political and military spheres. The two generals insist on engaging in a zero-sum game. Al-Burhan describes the RSF and its commander as "rebels" who he asserts have disobeyed the military establishment and refused integration into the regular army. He insists that the RSF's forces must be driven

Sovereignty Council, and to appoint new army commanders to negotiate with them. Dagalo also wants to take over all the military headquarters and bases across Sudan destroyed by the army and air force's bombardment over the past two weeks. Despite the army's advances and successes in destroying a large number of RSF outposts, its

negotiations with Dagalo. However, the continuation of the current turbulence could make Sudan fall prey to foreign interventions, exacerbate the humanitarian crisis and increase civilian casualties. The continuation of this crisis will also cause the conflict to spill over into other regions, potentially sparking civil war, further intensifying the crisis and increasing Sudan's security, economic

Since the start of the conflict in Sudan, many initiatives have been proposed by a number of regional organizations and countries that are interested in establishing stability in Sudan - with the goal of ending the conflict, which has been ongoing and steadily escalating for more than two weeks. The latest of these initiatives - proposed by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, which is concerned with development in East Africa - called on both the army and RSF to send representatives to the South Sudanese capital Juba to hold talks on how to bring the fighting to a halt. All of these initiatives have failed to stop the fighting and bring about a political settlement.

The warring parties' preference for the military option may not be the best option for ending the ongoing battle between them. Such an option will only lead to a prolongation of the conflict and will exacerbate the humanitarian crises endured by civilians. Additionally, crushing Dagalo and forcing him out of Khartoum could lead him to retreat to his homeland of Darfur, from where he could lead an insurrection that might pose a threat to Sudan's security and stability.

The best option is for the two sides to embrace negotiations and dialogue as a means to settle the ongoing dispute. That way, they could prevent the situation from worsening and deter the specter of Sudan being further partitioned.

This is in addition to dealing with the problems caused by most hospitals being put out of operation, the suspension of the supply of healthcare and food items, lengthy power cuts, and a lack of fuel. All of these truces have, however, failed to silence the gunfire; instead, they have involved intermittent heavy fighting, raising concerns about the efficacy of any future truces, especially given the lack of local or international bodies on the ground that are able to communicate with each of the warring parties. As if this was not enough, the situation is further complicated by each party's desire to secure its military positions and obtain additional reinforcements during the truces.

Sudan has never had a military force that serves alongside the regular army, which has amassed massive quantities of personnel and equipment since independence in 1956. While everything else in Sudan has declined steadily in recent years, the RSF has continued to grow in power day by day.

Tensions between Al-Burhan and Dagalo, who served as the former's deputy in the Transitional Sovereignty Council, have been running high, to the point where each of them is now working to eliminate

out from the capital and all the other Sudanese cities where they are currently deployed until they can be integrated into the army's military units. Al-Burhan also demands that Dagalo be removed from the leadership of the RSF and be held accountable for the killing and intimidation of civilians and for destroying infrastructure and state institutions.

Dagalo, meanwhile, continues his efforts to control the army's command, to secure the detention of Al-Burhan and his colleagues on the Transitional

cutting off of supply routes from Darfur and other regions, and Al-Burhan's talk of surpassing the stage of RSF escalation and confrontation, the army chief has so far failed to crush the militia or gain total control of Khartoum. This is the reason he has refused calls to enter into negotiations with Dagalo, instead insisting on moving ahead with the military option.

Making huge advances on the ground would provide Al-Burhan with the necessary leverage to improve his negotiating position in any future

and political costs. The two sides' insistence on continuing the war has already cost the lives of at least 500 people, wounded thousands of others and caused tens of thousands to flee the regions where the clashes are taking place, heading toward other Sudanese regions or to neighboring countries like Chad, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Egypt. The conflict has also led most of the world's countries to shut down their embassies and consulates in Sudan and evacuate their citizens by air, sea and land.

It's raining IMF in Suriname

Belén Fernández

ON February 17, large demonstrations rocked Paramaribo, the capital of the South American nation and former Dutch colony of Suriname. Thousands of people took to the streets to protest against government corruption, runaway inflation, and the decision by President Chan Santokhi to end state subsidies for electricity, fuel and other essential items. As one might have guessed, the elimination of subsidies is taking place under the charitable guidance of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which has long specialised in addressing international economic crises by increasing the misery of the poorest echelons of society.

Suriname's current IMF loan and debt-restructuring programme is but one of the many dubious achievements of Santokhi, who upon assuming office in 2020 went about having his wife appointed to an assortment of lucrative positions, including to the supervisory board of the state oil company Staatsolie. I arrived in Paramaribo in April, two months after February's anti-austerity demonstrations, and spoke with Ahilia Welles, a Surinamese activist, teacher and politician - in that order, she specified - who had attended the rally

and been hit in the leg with a tear gas canister fired by police. The man next to her had immediately picked up the noxious device, she said, and hurled it back at the forces of law and order. "That's when I knew the Surinamese were really angry," she told me. Per the write-up of the day's events by the Reuters news agency, the peaceful protests had "turned ugly when demonstrators throwing rocks and bottles at police stormed parliament's grounds". For its part, the US Embassy in Paramaribo issued a statement condemning the protesters' "attack on the Surinamese National Assembly building and related acts of violence as an unacceptable assault on democracy" - as though there is anything democratic about a country where it is a crime to insult the president and express contempt for the government. As the global powers that be paint it, of course, any manifestation of mass public despair resulting in the destruction of state and private property is somehow more "violent" than, you know, destroying human lives with malicious economic policies.

Welles told me that, in her current teaching job in the northern Surinamese district of Para, a number of her students were regularly absent from class because they were obligated to work to help their families survive. Other students

would arrive at school with no food for the day, a situation Welles had tried to offset by bringing meals to class. Until, that is, she herself could no longer afford to do so.

Another of Santokhi's initiatives has been to curtail the salaries of teachers, a policy that is of a piece with the seemingly de facto neoliberal consensus that those responsible for educating a nation's youth and paving the way for the future shouldn't be able to feed themselves. On April 27, several days into my stay in Paramaribo, I happened upon a teachers' protest in the city's colonial centre, where the fury was palpable, but I only understood one Dutch word - "onderwater" - in an impassioned speech by a union official. Indeed, much of the country had been underwater since my arrival on account of torrential rains and flooding, which had occasioned school closures, kept many folks trapped in their homes and underscored the administration's lack of concern for addressing actual domestic existential threats.

I had come to Suriname with no particular agenda although sitting indoors watching the encroachment of snake-infested waters through the window had admittedly not been among the considered options.

When claustrophobia won out, an elderly Afro-Surinamese man named Ricky, whose pre-diluvian acquaintance I had made in Paramaribo, offered to pick me up in his dilapidated car. The outcome of this generous effort was that water came seeping in through the doors of his vehicle as we made our way down my street, and he alternately emitted desperate appeals to God and curse words against the government, the weather and the IMF - an entity that, according to Ricky, did not want him to be able to purchase gas, bread or anything at all.

He took me to a Chinese-run store to buy knee-high snake-proof rainboots, and I walked home. When the floods temporarily subsided, Ricky and I visited the birthplace of Anton de Kom, the Surinamese anti-colonial icon and World War II resistance fighter. In his signature 1934 work *We Slaves of Suriname*, de Kom writes about how, at the turn of the 17th century in colonial Suriname, "the whites were free to amass wealth without opposition" while slaves were "personal property and a movable asset" - a state of affairs that had prompted the Surinamese to come up with a proverb: "The cockroach cannot assert its rights in the bird's beak."

Across the street from de Kom's former residence was white graffiti against a blue background denouncing the IMF "gang". To be sure, Suriname is neither the first nor the last country to be ganged up on by the US-dominated global financial system. Capitalism itself is an enslaving force.

The Surinamese floods simply happen to quite aptly metaphorically capture how a nation can drown under elite tyranny. And while slavery, colonialism and all those nasty phenomena are supposedly things of the past, there is a disconcerting parallel with the present in not just Suriname but in other countries of the Global South as well. In 2017, Tunisia also signed a loan agreement with the IMF. Within a year, anti-austerity upheaval swept through the North African country as Tunisians suffered the consequences of IMF-sponsored "economic reforms". Back then, I spoke to University of Tunis Professor Corinna Mullin, who observed that Tunisia's post-colonial period had happened to entail "many structural continuities with the forms of accumulation and dispossession that characterised French colonial rule", which came to an end in 1956.

Nowadays, Mullin said, "international financial institutions, the EU, the US

and other prominent (neo)colonial-capitalist actors" were consumed with shoving "neoliberal 'development'" down Tunisian throats - but only "for the benefit of international and a segment of local capital". In other words: the proverbial bird's beak. Mexico, too, has experienced the clenches of global capitalism, such as when, thanks to the conditions placed on IMF and US loans extended to the country in the 1980s and early 1990s, the agricultural subsidies theoretically permitted by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) of 1994 applied only to Mexico's richer and more powerful NAFTA "partners", the United States and Canada.

As journalist Garry Leech notes in his chapter of the book *Asylum for Sale: Profit and Protest in the Migration Industry*, US agribusiness in particular was able to exploit an obscene bias, "constituting further structural violence that shattered the lives of millions of Mexican small farmers through NAFTA-sanctioned dumping of heavily subsidised US food products onto the Mexican market". So much for "free trade" - or freedom in general. Here in Suriname, meanwhile, the floodwaters are finally receding - and yet much of the population continues to drown in deprivation.

Why major European cities are rejecting Israeli apartheid

Ramzy Baroud

A succession of events that started in Barcelona, Spain, in February before moving to Liege, Belgium, and Oslo, Norway, in April has sent a strong message to Israel: The Palestinian Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement is alive and well. In Barcelona, the city's mayor canceled a twinning agreement with the Israeli city of Tel Aviv. The decision was not an impulsive one, although Ada Colau is well-known for her principled positions on many issues. It was the outcome of a fully democratic process, initiated by a proposal submitted by left-wing parties at the city council.

A few weeks after the decision was made, a pro-Israeli legal organization known as the Lawfare Project announced its intention to file a lawsuit against Colau because she supposedly "acted beyond the scope of her authority." It meant to communicate a message to other city councils in Spain, and the rest of Europe, that there would be serious legal repercussions for boycotting Israel. However, much to the organization's - and Israel's - sur-

prise, other cities quickly advanced their own boycott procedures. Liege's local leadership did not try to conceal the reasons behind its decision. The city council, it was reported last week, had decided to boycott the state of Israel due to its regime of "apartheid, colonization and military occupation." That move was the result of a majority vote at the council, proving once more that a moral pro-Palestinian stance is fully compliant with democratic processes. Oslo, meanwhile, is a particularly interesting case. It was there, in 1993, that the "peace process" resulted in the Oslo Accords, which ultimately divided the Palestinians while giving Israel the political cover to continue its illegal practices and claim that it has no peace partner.

But Oslo is no longer committed to the empty slogans of the past. Its city council last week passed a decree boycotting the import of goods from the Palestinian territories Israel seized in 1967. The Norwegian capital will also boycott Israeli companies involved in exploiting the resources in the West Bank and Gaza. In June last year, the Norwegian government

declared its intention to deny the label "Made in Israel" to goods produced in illegal Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories. Though these settlements are illegal under international law, Europe did not mind doing business - in fact, lucrative business - with these colonies. In November 2019, however, the European Court of Justice resolved that all goods produced in "Israel-occupied areas" had to be labeled as such, so as not to mislead consumers. The court's decision was a watered-down version of what Palestinians had expected: a complete boycott, if not of Israel as a whole, at least of its illegal settlements. However, the decision still served a purpose. It provided yet another legal basis for boycotting Israel, thus empowering pro-Palestine civil society organizations and reminding Tel Aviv that its influence in Europe is not as limitless as it would like to believe. The most that Israel could do in response was to issue angry statements, along with haphazard accusations of antisemitism. In August 2022,

Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt requested a meeting with then-Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid during her visit to Israel. Lapid refused. Not only did such arrogance make little difference to Norway's stance on the Israeli occupation of Palestine, but it also cleared the way for pro-Palestinian activists to be even more proactive, leading to Oslo's decision last week.

The BDS movement explained the meaning of Oslo's move. "Norway's capital ... announced that it will not trade in goods and services produced in areas that are illegally occupied in violation of international law," it stated. In practice, this means that the city's "procurement policy will exclude companies that directly or indirectly contribute to Israel's illegal settlement enterprise - a war crime under international law." Keeping these rapid developments in mind, the Lawfare Project will now have to expand its legal cases to include Liege, Oslo and an ever-growing list of city councils that are actively boycotting Israel. But even then there are no

guarantees that the outcomes of such litigation will help Israel's cause in any way. In fact, the opposite is more likely to be true. A case in point was the recent decisions by the German cities of Frankfurt and Munich to cancel music concerts by pro-Palestinian rock legend Roger Waters. Frankfurt justified its decision by branding Waters "one of the world's most well-known antisemites." This bizarre and unfounded claim was rejected outright by a German administrative court, which last month ruled in favor of Waters.

Indeed, while a growing number of European cities are siding with Palestine, those who side with Israeli apartheid are finding it difficult to defend or even maintain their position, simply because the former predicate their stances on international law, while the latter's are based on twisted and convenient interpretations of antisemitism. What does all of this mean for the BDS movement? In an article published in *Foreign Policy* magazine last year, Steven Cook reached the hasty conclusion that the BDS movement had "already lost" because,

according to his inference, efforts to boycott Israel had made no impact "in the halls of government." While BDS is a political movement that is subject to miscalculations and mistakes, it is also a grassroots campaign that labors to achieve political ends through incremental, measured changes. To succeed over time, such campaigns must first engage ordinary people on the street and activists at universities, houses of worship, etc., through calculated, long-term strategies, themselves devised by local and national civil society collectives and organizations.

BDS continues to be a success story and the latest decisions made in Spain, Belgium and Norway attest to the fact that grassroots efforts do pay dividends. There is no denying that the road ahead is long and arduous. It will certainly have its twists, turns and occasional setbacks. But this is the nature of national liberation struggles. They often come at a high cost and require great sacrifice. But with popular resistance at home and growing international support and solidarity abroad, Palestinian freedom should, in fact, be possible.

Malevolent voices manipulating the Syria refugee issue

Baria Alamuddin

THE Arab nations of Lebanon and Syria share a complex and often fractious history of mutual dependence, intermarriage, and bitter divisions. The Syrian regime once sought to occupy and dominate Lebanon, but today many Lebanese gripe that they are experiencing a very different kind of Syrian occupation - in the form of about 1.5 million refugees.

But these tensions obscure deeper truths: that Syrians and Lebanese are both profoundly suffering, and that there are those who are calculatedly plotting to set the two peoples against each other for political gain. It is not unfair to ask why the refugee issue has suddenly been forced to the top of the Lebanese news agenda, and what national priorities this divisive issue is supposed to distract us from. Everybody theoretically supports the eventual repatriation of Syrians. Lebanon's devastated economy makes it impossible to bear this immense refugee burden, along with substantial refugee populations from Palestine, Iraq and elsewhere. The World Bank has placed Lebanon as the highest-ranked country in the world for food price inflation, with a 261 percent annual increase in the food consumer price index.

However, Druze leader Walid Jumblatt has raised important questions about who would guarantee the safety of returning Syrians, and warned that refugees couldn't simply be sent back to a slaughterhouse.

Amnesty International likewise urged Lebanon to "immediately stop forcibly deporting refugees back to Syria amid fears that these individuals are at risk of torture or persecution at the hands of the Syrian government." With the refugee

issue becoming frenziedly politicized, Lebanese social media is suddenly overflowing with anti-refugee hate speech, rumors and abuse. Shiite and Christian leaders fear the political consequences of the long-term presence of the mostly Sunni refugee population. Some people have genuine fears of history repeating itself, given that the unmanageable tensions related to the Palestinian refugee population were a principal trigger for the Lebanese civil war from 1975 to 1990. Self-serving sectarian politicians are cynically fanning the flames. One minister provocatively warned: "We will become refugees in our own country." Another figure who should know better declared: "Military occupation or civilian occupation - they both lead to the same thing: a 'greater Syria' and the loss of Lebanon's sovereignty. We are truly under invasion by a foreign people."

One popular narrative warns that for every 100 repatriated Syrian families, 200 new Syrian babies are born in Lebanon, while another widespread trope blames the West for obstructing refugee returns to undermine states such as Turkey and Lebanon. A minority of Syrians have exacerbated tensions by publicly badmouthing their Lebanese hosts. And just as anywhere in the world, a large, impoverished refugee population has given rise to increased criminality and other social problems. This is unsurprising when 90 percent of Syrian refugee households live in extreme poverty with minimal access to healthcare, services or employment. Over a third of Syrian children aren't even enrolled in school. But let's have the intelligence and self-respect to not use this as a pretext to

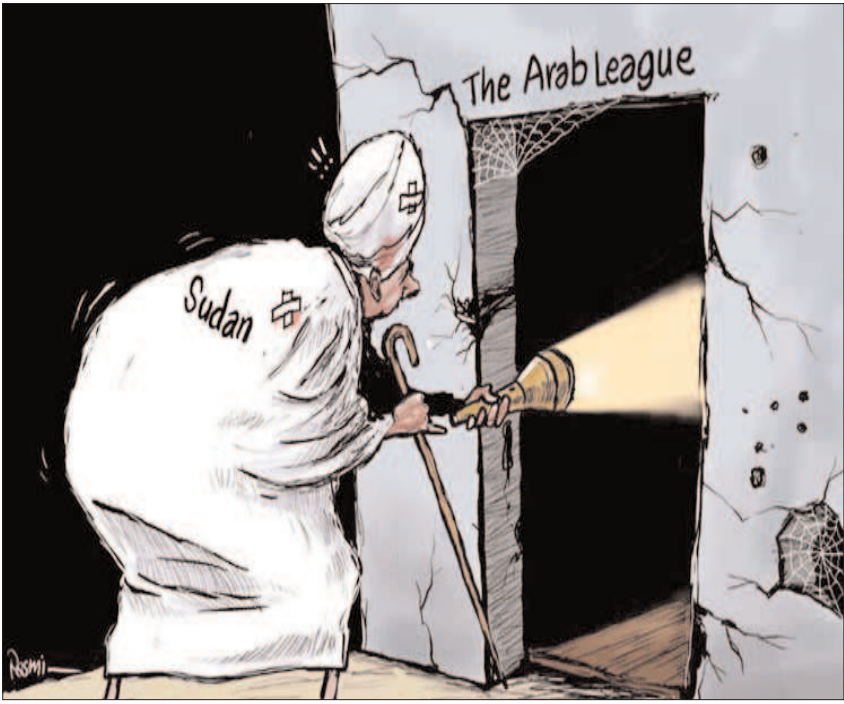
denounce all Syrians. Traumatized Syrian refugees faced torture, murder of family members, rape, chemical weapons attacks and state terrorism. Let's have a modicum of empathy and forgive their hesitation to return to Syria to suffer more of the same.

Lebanese and Syrians are all collectively struggling to survive. So let's refocus the media agenda back toward those genuinely culpable for our current predicament. It isn't the fault of Syrian refugees that corrupt political factions sabotaged Lebanon's economy and obstructed all conceivable routes to national salvation. It isn't the fault of Syrian refugees that Hezbollah and its allies are indefinitely blocking the selection of a president and a government to address Lebanon's myriad crises. Who are the real criminals here? Social media fear-mongering has real-world consequences - namely an escalation in violence against refugees and vigilante action to evict Syrians from various localities. Citizens should be conscious of the sinister agendas behind such provocations. In the past two years there has been an escalation in concerted efforts for forced returns of refugees. Many refugees have nothing to return to after homes were destroyed on an industrial scale, and vast tracts of land and urban areas were given to Assad cronies. One of Lebanon's largest concentrations of refugees is at Aarsal, where many were displaced from the border-straddling Qalamoun region. Hezbollah has appropriated the agricultural land there and controls the area as its personal fiefdom.

The levels of coordination between Lebanese and Syrian ministers on this issue suggest that

Assad will be able to handpick those who return - either reliably loyal demographics or those who can be transported directly into the army or the torture chamber. After the earthquake in February it took aid agencies days to reach affected areas in Syria, with the regime exploiting its control of borders to obstruct access and corruptly profit from goods intended for earthquake victims. There is an evolving trend toward rehabilitating Assad, treating his crimes against humanity as a closed chapter, thus allowing him to believe that his atrocities were vindicated. Arab diplomats demanded that Assad distance himself from Tehran, but he bluntly replied that Iran was the one regional ally who remained with him over the past 12 years. Consequently, there is a risk that regional states, desperate to draw a line under the Syrian conflict, are offering normalization without gaining anything in return. If the Arab world and international community want to close the Syrian refugee file, they must work much harder to broker a permanent solution that guarantees the rights and safety of citizens. It's said that you can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family. Syrians and Lebanese are fated to exist alongside each other for eternity. How we support our Arab brethren in this moment of existential crisis will be always remembered and will shape that relationship for centuries. Given Hezbollah's energetic efforts to goad Israel into a massively disproportionate retaliation, tomorrow it could be Lebanese refugees flooding into Syria. What goes around comes around. So let's dig a little deeper into our reserves of tolerance and empathy, and refuse to allow these malevolent voices to set us against each other.

Arab News



Turkiye critical to East-West power balance

Yasar Yakis

DESPITE the efforts of the Euro-Atlantic community, the Ukrainian crisis gives the impression that it is moving toward a standstill. The US and Germany are doing their best to keep the pressure on Russia, but so far there has been no sight of a breakthrough. The members of NATO, especially the US, are sending strong messages to Moscow that they will continue to increase the pressure, but it is unclear whether Russia will eventually yield.

Despite the fact that NATO identifies itself as a defensive alliance, there are analysts who believe that it is a US tool to share the responsibility of crises in the world. With the Ukrainian crisis in full swing, the alliance's solidarity will definitely increase and, as long as the Russian threat hangs over its head, this solidarity is likely to remain. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg last week announced that the alliance has so far delivered to Ukraine enough weapons to equip nine well-trained armored brigades. For good reason, the Ukrainians believe this is less than what they need. Compared to the size of the Russian army, this is only a token effort. The remaining gap has to be filled by the determination and resolve of the Ukrainian troops. Russia has been shown to have shortcomings in the field of defense, but this does not mean it cannot sustain a prolonged war. Nobody knows what the targets of Russia were at the outset. Moscow's early narratives gave the impression that it was going to annex Donetsk and Luhansk and stop there, because it claimed there was a strong Russian-speaking minority in these two provinces. According to

Ukrainian figures, however, only 38 percent of the people in Luhansk and Donetsk use Russian as their first language. In many other provinces, this percentage is much lower. After launching a major attack on Feb. 24, 2022, Russia invaded vast swaths of Ukraine and occupied about 27 percent of its territory, but it later had to withdraw from several provinces. The Russian-occupied Ukrainian territories have now been reduced to 17 percent, including Crimea. Expelling Russia from some of these areas, such as Donetsk and Luhansk, may not be easy. The more the war settles down, the more difficult it may be to uproot the Russian forces. Therefore, Russia may prefer to let the present situation fester.

It is unrealistic to presume that Russia is on the threshold of collapse. It covers an immense geography. It has a population of 143 million. It has a huge amount of natural resources. If necessary, it may introduce belt-tightening policies by forcing or persuading the people. Finland's NATO accession is already complete. Turkey's objection to Sweden's NATO membership will probably be solved one way or another, most likely by Ankara giving in to US pressure. Sweden, with its strong defense industry, will of course become an important asset for the alliance. However, Russia's unease because of Sweden's NATO membership - plus Finland's 1,500 km-long border with Russia - may become a disturbing factor in East-West relations. All these factors will become important in the new European defense architecture. Tensions are likely to increase in the Black Sea region when the present

power balance in the area is reshaped. The former rivalry between East and West may come back to the region. After Romania and Bulgaria became members of NATO in 2004, the balance tilted toward the West. Georgia's EU membership bid is progressing slowly. If Tbilisi goes as far as joining NATO, Russia's unease in the Black Sea will further increase. In the East-West power balance, Türkiye will become critical again because it enjoys a slightly different type of relationship with Russia. It has not taken part in its fellow NATO members' sanctions on Russia. It has problems with Moscow because of its cooperation in the defense industry with Ukraine. It cooperates with Russia on several other issues, but this raises problems. This is a peculiar situation, but the Turkish-Russian relations may offer some breathing space in NATO-Russia ties, allowing them to avoid suffocation.

The power balance that prevailed in the Black Sea thanks to the Montreux Convention of 1936 was maintained for more than 80 years mainly because of the contributions of Türkiye and Russia. Since Bulgaria and Romania joined NATO, the preponderance of the alliance in the Black Sea has increased. This is yet another factor that has to be reckoned with in the new defense architecture in Europe. The Russia-Ukraine war will come to an end sooner or later, but only after tens of thousands of young men - if not hundreds of thousands - are killed, after millions of civilians suffer all types of hardship, and after extensive damage has been caused to physical infrastructure, mostly in Ukraine but also in parts of Russia.

UK sums up rich world's increasingly hostile attitude to refugees

Chris Doyle

A NOTHER war. Another disaster. Another series of desperate evacuations. Another bolted door in the face of desperate refugees. How many times in recent years have the major international actors desperately tried to evacuate their own nationals from a war zone while ignoring the inevitable refugee flows that result? Rival powers almost compete to get their people out first, with the drawbridge being well and truly raised for refugees who seek to join them.

The situation in Sudan guarantees another huge surge in displacement. Already, the UN is predicting that up to 270,000 refugees will flee Sudan, on top of the almost 5 million who have already been displaced. Let us also not forget that Sudan has been hosting more than 1 million refugees even though it is not a rich state. All this is part of a bigger picture where the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide now tops 103 million. At the turn of the century, that figure was just 18 million.

The UK is sadly becoming a leader in this category of anti-refugee states. Casting aside a proud historic record of giving refuge to those fleeing wars and persecution, the world's sixth-largest economy is becoming one of the most unwelcoming. It has been a process. At the height of the Syrian refugee crisis in Europe in 2015, then-British Prime Minister David Cameron finally allowed a scheme to take in 20,000 of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees over five years. London was generous with its aid to Syrians, but only if they stayed in the Middle East.

In fairness, only Germany and Sweden of the European powers opened their doors back then.

Who knows who will host Sudanese refugees in Europe? The British government bats off questions about them coming to the UK by declaring that it is focused on getting UK nationals out of Sudan. Some see that as a very parochial concern in the bigger picture of the disaster on the ground. British politicians appear to want to dodge the issue.

Yet, at some stage in the near future, Sudanese fleeing this conflict may end up crossing the English Channel on small boats. Many of those working on refugee issues highlight a worrying racist element to this. Last year, when it was white European Ukrainians, the UK - like other European countries - was all too happy to facilitate the arrival of refugees. It has taken in more than 117,000 Ukrainians in just over a year. Others have looked on enviously. The Sudanese are doing so now as their country is torn apart.

At the helm of Britain's hostile policy toward non-European, non-white refugees is Home Secretary Suella Braverman. She is the darling of the far right of the Conservative Party. She lost no time in stressing that the government has no plans to open up safe and legal routes for Sudanese refugees wishing to come to the country. She suggested that Sudanese could approach the UN Refugee Agency should they wish to come to the UK, though that organization promptly rejected this as false. Braverman rejects any

comparison to Ukraine, when proper safe routes were swiftly opened up, claiming it is a "very different situation." Quite how was not explained. Sudanese refugees may not see the difference. When asked about Sudanese refugees coming to the UK in the House of Commons, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak just dodged the question. The pressure may build to such an extent that the government is compelled to announce some form of safe route for a limited number of Sudanese refugees. Yet, so far, ministers are doing everything they can to avoid even hinting at this prospect. If they can avoid it, they will.

It is all part of a very hostile and toxic climate that Britain and others have established for refugees, especially those from Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Those awaiting the processing of their asylum applications in the UK face horrendous conditions. One refugee worker told me many were now hoping they might even be dispatched to Rwanda to get out of the hellish existence they are caught in. Braverman wastes no opportunity in hammering away at "illegal" immigration to the UK, especially those coming by boats across the English Channel. Last week, she claimed that they "possess values which are at odds with our country," and spoke of "heightened levels of criminality." She has barely allowed the dog whistle to leave her lips. The government knows this is a hot electoral issue and it is currently trying to push an alarmingly dire and flawed illegal migration bill through parliament.

Even former prime minister and fellow Conservative Theresa May has been scathing about it. For those in doubt, check out the praise of Britain's immigration policy offered up by far-right Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni.

The UK is just one example. European powers, as well as the US, have gravitated toward this hostile environment policy toward non-white refugees, abandoning their moral and legal obligations. The contrast with Ukraine is so telling. It is fueled by the increasingly widespread domestic belief, often without foundation, that these richer countries are becoming filled up, but also that refugees bring different cultures and beliefs at odds with their own. The nastier end of the political spectrum depicts them as a threat; criminals coming to try to replace indigenous populations.

Opposition political forces cannot just sit on the sidelines and complain. The easy option is to resort to the politics of outrage and anger. This will not help the refugees. The massive surge in the number of refugees requires a major policy debate that acknowledges that many host societies feel overwhelmed, and that doing nothing will play into the hands of the racists and the far right. It means understanding that allowing never-ending conflicts to continue without resolution has major consequences. It means understanding that the richer world cannot just leave the poorer nations to host and care for the overwhelming majority of displaced people. It means addressing the deep-rooted drivers of displacement rather than ignoring them.

A future allied to China and India is wishful thinking on the Kremlin's part

Aleksandr Smirnov

EVER since the West's sanctioning of Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, the Russian government has been attempting to bolster ties with Asia, but does Russia really see itself as a part of Asia in the future? While Russia is undoubtedly becoming significantly more dependent on Asia economically, the political side of this issue is not quite as cut and dried.

In an article written to mark Xi Jinping's visit to Moscow in March, Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke about China as a "friend" and described the ties between Moscow and Beijing in glowing terms, as did Xi Jinping in his own reciprocal article to mark the visit. However, only Putin went as far as to mention the negative influence of the so-called "Collective West" on the current world order and the crisis in Ukraine, two topics that Xi was careful to avoid. This is significant as Putin, by hinting at the creation of a united front against the West, was effectively showcasing what it is the Kremlin has to offer China - as well as to other Asian countries - as an inducement to accept Russia as part of their continent politically. Russia's pitch may have fallen on dead ears, though, as Asian countries who view the West negatively have no need of help from Russia, whose global influence is diminishing by the day. Xi Jinping

in particular continues to show strength in his own confrontation with the West - especially with the US - without needing Moscow's assistance. This is why the only countries in Asia that have shown any kind of actual support for Russia's war against Ukraine are Iran, which sees Russia as a partner in sanctions, and North Korea, which is keen to avoid publicizing its support for Moscow any more than necessary. India's involvement seems primarily to be linked to the low prices it now enjoys for Russian oil and its desire to keep Putin's regime from getting too close to Beijing.

Despite the fact that China and India are Russia's two biggest economic partners, Russia's incorporation into the Asian political sphere does not appear likely, not least as China and India have been at odds with one another for decades now, making an ally of one an unlikely ally of the other. While Russia could at one point have carved out a role for itself as a bridge between East and West, centuries of Romanov rule ultimately set Russia on a course to become part of Europe rather than Asia, and culturally and politically Russia has been a Western country since the time of Peter the Great.

Some ascribe Russia's tendencies both to develop strict power

verticals and to sacralize the country's leadership to the legacy of Mongol-Tatar rule in the country, and sociologists from the Levada Center recently concluded that Russians continue to believe that the ideal leader of the country would be a strong authoritarian figure rather than a career politician. However, these factors are little more than stumbling blocks in Russia's path to becoming a modern Western-style state, rather than the foundations of a separate Russian identity.

This is borne out by what happened during the period of relative freedom under Mikhail Gorbachev in the last years of the Soviet Union. When given the chance to speak freely, Soviet citizens almost unanimously favored a democratic path, which in turn transformed into a desire to dissolve the USSR, once and for all. When the former Soviet republics gained their independence in 1991, the Baltic states immediately began their efforts to rejoin the Western world. Russia also attempted to pivot to a truly democratic state, however, the aforementioned political roadblocks significantly hindered that process, which served to widen the window of opportunity for a leader such as Putin to seize power.

As the process of democratization slowed further, popular griev-

ances - such as the feeling of resentment at the loss of the Cold War - become ever more ripe for use. In this case, it's irrelevant whether the Cold War can truly be said to have been "lost by the USSR," or not, but its subliminal propaganda power and usefulness as a tool for the creation of a new dictatorship remains. These factors alone however do not push Russia closer to Asia. Moscow's current economic reliance on Asia is little more than a temporary solution to Western sanctions.

Even though Russia's leadership may attempt to bolster ties with Asia by building an anti-Western coalition, countries such as China, India, and even Iran have so far only reciprocated when presented with circumstances that are clearly economically beneficial. With Russia no longer able to properly trade with the West, the East is its only other option. In other words, just because Russia has been expelled from the Western family of nations, it doesn't necessarily follow that it can expect a warm welcome from its Asian neighbors. All it means is that Russia has been put out on the street and is now hawking its remaining wares to anyone who might be interested, and given that it's inevitably the buyers who are setting the prices, that doesn't sound much like hospitality.

The Moscow Times

Sudan's lab leak threat

Matt Ridley

LAST week a horrifying report emerged from Khartoum, where poor Sudanese civilians are being terrorised by internal conflict. Fighters had seized a biological laboratory that houses samples of measles and cholera. It was said that power cuts may threaten the safe containment of those samples. That's a worrying enough statement at the best of times, but set against the world-wide proliferation of biological facilities, where risky pathogens are stored and studied, and after a lethal pandemic that may well have begun in a lab, it is an alarming harbinger.

Since the emergence of Covid, more than a dozen high-level biosafety laboratories (more serious than the one in Khartoum) have opened, or are set to open, around the world. The rush to build such labs started 20 years ago in the wake of the Sars epidemic and this has significantly increased the risk of dangerous and sometimes novel viruses or bacteria leaking accidentally. The list of serious outbreaks suspected to be caused by such leaks over the decades is a long one, involving smallpox, anthrax, influenza, Sars, Covid, foot and mouth, brucellosis and others. Yet there remains little formal international mechanism for registering, let alone policing, such labs to ensure they adhere to high safety standards.

Unlike nuclear facilities, biological labs are subject to inconsistent global rules. As Alison Young reports in her new book, Pandora's Gamble: "The governance structures around the world are a hodgepodge of biosafety and biosecurity guidance, institutional self-policing and fragmented regulatory oversight systems. Nobody is tracking how many or which labs around the world maintain collections of the most dangerous pathogens - either natural or man-made - nor does anyone know how many labs are engaging in experiments that are making pathogens more dangerous." But an accident is not the only worry. While it remains highly unlikely that the governments of America, China or most other countries would deliberately release a dangerous virus, the same reassurance cannot be applied to rogue regimes such as North Korea. The rogues that ran the Soviet Union, after all, researched how to use pathogens such as anthrax as weapons. Bad actors today have undoubtedly noticed not only how easy it was to bring the world economy to its knees in 2020 with a highly infectious but not highly lethal virus. They have also noticed how ineffectual the World Health Organization (WHO) has been at investigating how the pandemic began and how reluctant Western scientists were to

admit the possibility that a pandemic began with a lab leak, let alone a deliberate release.

The evidence for that hypothesis has just got stronger. A last-gasp attempt by Western scientists to implicate the market in Wuhan rather than a lab suffered a blow this week when US virologist Jesse Bloom revealed that raccoon dog samples in the market were negatively correlated with the virus. The risks around biological research have grown enormously in recent years. Scientists have learned how to alter the infectivity of viruses and expand the range of animals they can infect. Synthetic biology allows them effectively to email viruses around the world: it was reported that Sars-CoV-2 first reached Switzerland over the internet, in the form of a live virus grown (safely) in a Swiss lab from an online genetic sequence, two weeks before any human cases reached the country. With the right contacts, a terrorist based in one country could now start an outbreak in another. The WHO said there was a "high risk of biological hazard" at the laboratory in Khartoum. Not only did Covid show us the danger of a lack of lab security and governments' limited capacity to respond to this threat, but the potential lab leak cover-up means there has been little or no serious debate about the global peril of viruses escaping from captivity.

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Rupee sheds 08 paises against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani rupee witnessed 08 paises devaluation against the Dollar in the interbank trading on Tuesday as it closed at Rs283.91 against the previous day's closing of Rs 283.83.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of Dollars in the open market were recorded at Rs 286.35 and Rs 289.25, respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 48 paises to close at Rs 311.40 against the last day's closing of Rs

311.98, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen lost 03 paises to close at Rs 2.06; whereas an increase of 11 paises was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 354.10 as compared to its last day's closing of Rs 353.99.

The exchange rate of the Emirates Dirham went up by 02 paises and the Saudi Riyal witnessed 03 paises decrease to close at Rs 77.31 and Rs 75.70, respectively.

Gold price jumps high

in Pakistan despite stability in int'l market

PPI adds: Despite stability in prices of yellow metal in the international market on Tuesday, the Pakistani jewelry market witnessed another big jump in gold prices as the price of 24-karat gold has surged by Rs1,500 per tola.

According to the All-Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association, the price of 24 karats of pure gold reached Rs2,21,000 per tola.

The price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold also increased by Rs1,286 to

Rs1,89,472 per 10 grams in the local markets.

Rates of 10 grams of gold of 22 karats have also increased and traded at Rs1,73,683 per 10 grams on Tuesday.

Gold prices remained unchanged on Tuesday's international market and traded at US\$1,990 per ounce on the second day of the week.

The rate of 24 karats fine silver also increased by Rs130 per tola to Rs2,730 per tola while the price of 24 karats silver of 10 grams increased by Rs111.45 to Rs2,340.53 per 10 grams.



ISLAMABAD: SAPM on Youth Affairs Shaza Fatima meeting with Finance Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar at Fiance Division.

Tokyo's Nikkei index edges up at close

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo's key Nikkei index ended slightly higher Tuesday ahead of a closely watched Federal Reserve policy decision, with Japanese markets closed for the rest of the week.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index added 0.12 percent, or 34.77 points to 29,157.95 -- the highest close since August last year, having advanced for four straight sessions.

The broader Topix index slipped 0.12 percent, or 2.53 points, to 2,075.53.

The dollar stood at 137.59 yen, further advancing from 137.45 yen in New York and 136.91 yen in Tokyo on Monday.

The strong dollar and solid corporate earnings have brightened market sentiment, analysts said.

But Tokyo shares spent the day hovering around Monday's close ahead of a series of Japanese national holidays known as Golden Week. Normal trade resumes from Monday.

Wall Street stocks ended lower overnight as markets digested the sale of California's troubled First Republic Bank.

Investors in Tokyo were not rattled by the takeover, said Chihiro Ota, assistant general manager of investment research and investor services at SMBC Nikko Securities.

"Trade lacked a sense of direction. It was mixed. Before a five-day break (and various international economic data), you cannot pour resources into Japanese shares," he said.

While the Tokyo market is shut, the US Federal Reserve will conduct a two-day policy meeting with chair Jerome Powell to address the media on Wednesday.

The European Central Bank will also make a policy decision. ECB President Christine Lagarde's press conference is scheduled for Thursday.

Global market players will review key American indicators, including figures related to jobs and employment.

In Tokyo, chip-related shares were among the winners. Rohm rose 1.83 percent to 10,600 yen and Advantest jumped 3.53 percent to 11,140 yen, while Tokyo Electron, which makes tools to build semiconductors, added 1.48 percent to 15,730 yen.

SoftBank Group added 0.14 percent to 5,170 yen, but Toyota dropped 0.51 percent to 1,864.5 yen. Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group fell 0.77 percent to 862.6 yen. Heavily weighted Fast Retailing, which operates Uniqlo, fell 0.40 percent to 31,970 yen.

Promoting Pakistan's exports: MOFA to facilitate business community

ISLAMABAD (APP): President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari Tuesday said that Pakistan needed a great boost in exports to improve its economy and urged the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to cooperate with the business community in this regard.

He said this while talking to Director General Organization of Islamic Cooperation & Economic Diplomacy Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Asma Rabbani during a meeting with her along with a delegation.

Director ED Bilal Akram Shah and Assistant Director ED Hira Fatima were also present on the occasion.

Ahsan Bakhtawari said that the close cooperation of Pakistani foreign missions with the private sector was the key to promote exports and assured that MOFA would cooperate with the business community for better access to the

ests of his country and urged the ambassadors also work hard to explore new markets for exports.

He said that ICCI was planning to promote tourism and intended to celebrate Africa Day to highlight exports potential for Pakistan in the African market, so MOFA should cooperate with ICCI in this regard.

He also highlighted the importance of close links between the Chambers of Commerce and the Foreign Missions of Pakistan to improve the economy.

Addressing the delegation, Asma Rabbani, DG OIC & ED, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, lauded the role of the business community in the development of the economy.

She said that a better understanding of the international market was important for promoting exports and assured that MOFA would cooperate with the business community for better access to the

global market.

She said that MOFA would act as a bridge between Pakistani missions and chambers of commerce for closer ties to promote business and economic interests of Pakistan in the international market.

She stressed the need for strong linkages between MOFA, Ministry of Commerce, BOI and ICCI to improve Pakistan's economy. She said that ICCI should prepare comprehensive proposals to promote Pakistan's exports in Africa, Central Asia and other markets, which would be considered for implementation.

Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President ICCI, said that Pakistan could improve its exports by focusing on product development, so MOFA should cooperate with the private sector in this regard.

He shared useful proposals to improve olive oil export and meet the palm oil needs of Pakistan.

European Union delegation visits Sialkot Chamber of Commerce

SIALKOT (APP): A delegation of European Union led by First Counsellors European Union of Pakistan Daniel Clauss visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) here on Tuesday.

Commercial Counsellors (Embassy of Germany, Denmark, France, Sweden, Poland) and European Union Adviser Economy and Trade, Husnanin A Iftikhar also present.

During the meeting, SCCI Senior Vice President Wahub Jahangir highlighted the importance of GSP Plus and its continuation to support the SME sector of Pakistan, as the EU was the largest trading partner for Pakistan.

He emphasized on 'Ease of visa policy' and special consideration to visa applications with SCCI recommendation, to exporters of Sialkot, giving them easy access to markets in Europe to enhance bilateral trade.

He said that indeed Pakistan's strong relations with the European Union were most important based on mutual cooperation,

trust, shared values of democracy, respect for human rights and cultural and economic liberalism.

Wahub said that relationships between European countries and Pakistan had grown up in recent years in various fields, I would especially thank the EU for extending the GSP plus status to Pakistan.

He said that Sialkot greatly values this kind gesture of EU's GSP Plus Status and hoped it continue in the best interest of Pakistan, to further sustain and strengthen trade and diplomatic relations.

More than 78 per cent of Pakistan's export enters the EU at most concessional rates, he added.

The SCCI SVP said that today, EU was one of the Pakistan's largest trading partners and the biggest market for Pakistan exports with the total EU-Pakistan bilateral trade reaching 12.2 billion Euros in 2021.

He said that Pakistan's exports to the EU were dominated by textiles and clothing as well as leather products while Pakistan's

imports from the EU mainly comprise of mechanical and electrical machinery as well as chemical and pharmaceutical products.

However, I firmly believe that there was immense potential for other Made in Sialkot goods, especially the quality products of Sialkot including surgical instruments, sports goods, gloves and musical instruments etc, he added.

First Counsellor European Union of Pakistan Daniel Clauss said that European Union was keen to establish strong trade relations with Pakistan.

He stressed the need for making some effective and positive measures to boost the mutual trade ties between European Union and Pakistan.

He said that GSP Plus Status for Pakistan was to help Pakistan to promote its trade and exports to the EU countries, as the Pakistan business community must get the full benefits of the GSP Plus.

First Counsellor European Union of Pakistan discussed various ideas for

providing support to the SME sector, with the focus on creating linkages within the EU to open new markets for the products.

He appreciated the role of SCCI in boosting industrial activities in the region.

The First Counsellor European Union of Pakistan urged the business community to play its pivotal role in ensuring the complete and concrete implementation by Pakistan on all the conventions of GSP Plus for getting the full benefits of the GSP Plus Status for Pakistan.

He said the EU was the biggest export market for Pakistani goods.

The meeting was attended by SCCI Vice President Amer Majeed Sheikh, President Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot Dr Marian Nouman, Senior Vice President WCCIS Gulzeb Waqas Awan, Chairperson Legal Aid Committee Lubna Tabassam, Executive Members Lubna Tabassam, SCCI executive committee members and the business community.

Shareholders rejoice as Lucky continues to break profitability records and announces a 2nd Share Buyback

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Continuing its remarkable legacy of surpassing one milestone after another, on a consolidated basis, Lucky Cement Limited, achieved its highest ever profit after tax of PKR 48.5 billion, for the nine months period ended March 31, 2023 of which PKR 11.6 billion is attributable to non-controlling interests.

This represents an impressive 82.9% increase compared to the same period last year. The resultant earnings per share (EPS) for the period comes out to PKR 115.24. The remarkable increase in profit includes gain on disposal made by Lucky Core Industries, a subsidiary company, of approximately 26.5% of the issued and paid-up share capital of NutriCo Moringa (Private) Limited resulting in a gain of PKR 17.2 billion.

Moreover, following the successful completion of the Company's first buy-back of 10.0 million shares, the Company announced yet another buy-back of 23.8 million of its own shares. This buy-back plan is subject to obtaining the necessary approval from the

members of the Company. The primary objective behind this strategic move is to bolster the Company's valuations. By repurchasing its own shares, the Company aims to optimize its capital structure and unlock additional value for its stakeholders. This buy-back initiative showcases the Company's proactive approach in managing its financial resources, fostering investor confidence and reinforcing its commitment to maximizing long-term shareholder value. The Company has announced to hold an Extraordinary General Meeting of its members on May 24, 2023.

On a consolidated basis, the Company attained a gross revenue of PKR 340.1 billion showcasing a significant 28.0% increase compared to the revenue of PKR 265.7 billion in the same period last year (SPLY). The noteworthy growth in gross revenue is mainly attributable to the commencement of commercial operations of Lucky Electric Power Company Limited in March 2022.

On an unconsolidated basis, the Company reported a gross revenue of PKR 91.5 billion, which signi-

fied an increase of 15.7% as compared to the SPLY. The Company reported a net profit after tax of PKR 11.1 billion. Moreover, the EPS for the period is calculated at PKR 34.73, as compared to an EPS of PKR 34.97 during the SPLY. This marginal decline in the Company's profitability is attributed to lower dividend income from subsidiaries during the current period.

Representative of Lucky Cement expressed gratitude for the Company's success and attributed it to the blessings of the Almighty, when contacted for comments on the financial results for the nine months ended March 31, 2023. "Commencement of profitable operations of Lucky Electric Power Plant, part sale of Nutrico Moringa, acquisition of Lotte Chemicals Pakistan, Capacity expansion of 3.15 MT in cement, addition of solar power plants for our own consumption and completion of share buyback were the major events in recent times for us. Our employees embody a deep-rooted sense of urgency to grow and operate efficiently, which is evident when you talk to any one of them", added the representative. Aligning with its

growth strategy, the Company had announced the commencement of operations of Line-2, at Pezu Plant on December 22, 2023. This addition increases the production capacity of the Company's cement production by 3.15 Million Tons Per Annum (MTPA), thereby, bringing the total capacity to 15.30 MTPA. After the successful completion of the aforesaid expansion, the Company has further reinforced its rank and prominence as the largest manufacturer and exporter of cement and clinker in Pakistan.

Following the successful completion of the 34 MW solar power project, the Company remains steadfast in its philosophy of creating value through investments in clean energy, has completed commercial negotiations for the 25 MW Solar Power Project at Karachi Plant and procurement process for the necessary equipment and materials has commenced. The management expects to complete the project in 2Q FY24. These investments were in line with the Company's objectives to promote renewable energy, decrease the country's dependence on imported fuel and to make the Company more cost-efficient.

Bank of Punjab, PSEB and Mastercard launched Freelancer Digital Account and Card

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Bank of Punjab (BOP) in collaboration with Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) and Mastercard launched the Mastercard Freelancer Digital Account and Card at a ceremony held on May 2nd, 2023. The launch came after the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the parties to offer tailored banking services and solutions to PSEB-registered freelancers and Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology Enabled Services (ITes) professionals.

The Mastercard Freelancer Digital Account and Card is an innovative banking solution designed specifically for the needs of freelancers and IT and ITes professionals. The solution offers a range of benefits including a fully digital account with no branch visits and minimal KYC requirements, instant issuance of PSEB co-branded debit and credit cards, loan facilities and auto enrollment into mer-

chant accounts. The merchant solutions refer to instant invoice generation, next day payments and minimal charges.

This digital account service will be provided under BOP@Work, which will make freelancers and IT and ITes professionals eligible for discounted offerings on auto finance, home loans, and personal finance.

The partnership between PSEB, BOP, and Mastercard marks an important step towards facilitating the growth of the freelancing industry in Pakistan and promoting financial inclusion among freelancers and professionals working in the IT and ITes sector. The Member IT, Ministry of Information Technology



and Telecommunication, Syed Junaid Imam who graced the launch ceremony as the chief guest, said, "The IT and ITes industry is a major contributor to Pakistan's economy, and the Government of Pakistan is committed to promoting this sector to achieve its full potential.

The collaboration between BOP and PSEB will provide a significant boost to the freelancers and IT industry."

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Zafar Masud, CEO of Bank of Punjab, said, "We are proud to launch the Freelancer Digital Account and Card, a product that has been designed to cater to the unique needs of freelancers and IT and ITes professionals.

Court Notice

In the Court of Jouhar Ali Safi Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No. 309/1. Institution 27/3/2023. Date of hearing. 22/5/2023. Shebar Khan VS Fared Khan. Notice to no 2. Abdulsalam. 7. Mohamad. 6. Khan Said. 8. Mohamad Saeed out of country. 13. Mst Koky d/o Ziarat Khan resident of Nawa Kalay at present Karachi. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 22/5/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No. 235/1. Institution 26/11/2021. Date of hearing. 16/5/2023. Amer Rehman etc VS Nowsher Khan etc. Notice to no 6/6. Said Jowhar Shah s/o Mst Norsedi Bibi. 50/7. Tahir Wahab s/o Gul Wahab resident of Jangdara Torwarsak thesel Daggar Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 16/5/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No. 54/1. Institution 3/3/2023. Date of hearing. 17/5/2023. Abdul Hakim VS Anwar Farosh Khan. Notice to no 1. Anwar/Farosh. 3. Said Rahim sons of Faroshi resident of Elai thesel Daggar district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 17/5/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Saima Ehsan Civil Judge II/Allaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Case No. 13/1. Institution 14/1/2023. Date of hearing. 8/5/2023. Nor Rehman VS Tariq Khan etc. Notice to no 21. Shahusain Khan son of Samot Khan resident of Ghazikhanay thesel Gadezai district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 8/5/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Qaisar Khan Afridi Additional District Judge II/Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Daggar. Appeal No. 26/13. Institution 18/2/2023 Date of hearing. 2/6/2023. Mohammad Wared VS Mst Minhafa etc. Notice to no 12.Mehran s/o Malok resident of Pir Baba thesel Gadezai district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 2/6/2023 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

‘Economic diplomacy key to break restrictions of low exports’

LAHORE (APP): Economic diplomacy and cross border networking hold the key to break the restrictions of low exports and to acquire affordable technology from other countries to improve industrial productivity of the country.

Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry Kashif Anwar expressed these views while speaking at Golden Ring Economic Forum Series at University of Management and Technology on Tuesday. GREF Chairman Lt. Gen. (Retd) Sikandar Afzal, President Hasnain Raza Mirza, UMT Director General Abid Sherwani and experts from different sectors also spoke on the occasion.

The LCCI President said, "As far as Economic Diplomacy is concerned, we from the platform of chamber of commerce have been consistently making efforts. For that matter, we keep on interacting with foreign diplomats and also develop liaison with international business community."

Kashif Anwar shared his views on key areas where Pakistan needed to make most of its synergies. He said that it had been observed that Regional Economic Integration allowed more significant trade flows and also provided greater business growth opportunities.

Kashif Anwar suggest-

ed that economic diplomacy should be used for reviewing existing PTAs (Preferential Trade Agreements) and FTAs (Free Trade Agreements) to utilize them for our own advantage and also negotiate new trade agreements with countries located in Gold Ring region like Russia, China, Turkey, Iran and Central Asia.

The LCCI President said, "These countries are our next door neighbors and we also share border with some of them. It is to mention that the worth of global trade done by these countries stood around US \$ 6 trillion and Pakistan's share was merely 0.8 percent in that".



In brief

Two-day karate trials

PESHAWAR (APP): The two-day trials to select the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Karate team, for the 34th National Games to be held in Quetta, kicked off here at Hayatabad Sports Complex on Tuesday. More than 100 players, both male and female, turned up for the trials organised under the aegis of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Karate Association with international coach Shah Faisal monitoring the trials along with other selectors. Shah Faisal, who is also the administrator of Hayatabad Sports Complex, said that due opportunities had been given to both male and female athletes so that a strong KP team could be formed. He said there were different weight categories and the winner of each category would join the provincial team and represent the province in the forthcoming 34th National Games. He said that KP players had good chances of winning medals in both female and male categories.

BFAME Championship

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Bridge Federation of India (BFI) on Monday, confirmed their participation in the upcoming B F A M E Championship 2023, scheduled to commence in Lahore on May 5. According to the details, the 30-member Indian contingent will arrive here on the very same day before the start of the event, which will run until May 13. Teams from India, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Jordan, and Bangladesh will be competing in the event, poised to be held at Lahore Gymkhana. Pakistan has previously hosted BFAME Championships in 2007 and 1985. The finalist teams will book their place in the World Championship, to be held later this year. Pakistan Bridge Federation President Mubasher Lucman said, "We are happy to host teams from India, Palestine, and the Middle East to Pakistan for the auspicious BFAME Championship."

India clinch Test ranking

DUBAI (Web Desk): India on Tuesday dethroned Australia to become number one Men's test team in the world alongside dominating the Men's World T20I rankings. The International Cricket Council (ICC) released new annual rankings according to which India's recent victories against Australia pushed them on the top with 3,031 points and a rating of 121 in 25 matches. Australia are at number two on the table with 2,679 points and a rating of 116 in 23 matches. As per the ICC's statement, series since May 2020 were considered for the annual rankings, with series completed before May 2022 weighted at 50 percent and all subsequent series weighted at 100 percent. "Australia's reign at the top of the Men's Test Rankings comes to an end after 15 months with India going past the Aussies ahead of next month's ICC World Test Championship Final", stated the ICC. The finale is set to be played on June 7, 2023 at Oval stadium. As for the World T20I ranking, India maintained their domination with 13,889 points and a rating of 267 in 52 matches. "India had a below-par T20 World Cup in 2021 but bounced back with a semi-final appearance in 2022. The Men in Blue have been terrific in T20Is since May 2020, having lost just the one bilateral series (against Sri Lanka in 2021), emerging victorious in 13 other series while one ended in a draw (against South Africa in 2022)", the ICC stated.

Medvedev, Rublev upset in Madrid; Sabalenka advances

MADRID (AP): Leading men's seeds Daniil Medvedev and Andrey Rublev were knocked out by fellow Russians in the fourth round of the Madrid Open on Tuesday.

Women's second seed Aryna Sabalenka reached the last four after trailing Mayar Sherif by a set and a break. Sabalenka rallied to beat the Egyptian 2-6, 6-2, 6-1. The Australian Open champion reached her fifth semifinal in seven tournaments. She won Madrid in 2021.

The 59th-ranked Sherif was the first Egyptian to make it to the quarterfinals in a WTA 1000 event. No. 2-seeded Medvedev lost to qualifier Aslan Karatsev 7-6 (1), 6-4. Karatsev, ranked 121, earned his first victory against a top-10 opponent since 2021. No. 5-seeded Rublev lost to his doubles partner Karen Khachanov 7-6 (8), 6-4. Khachanov saved two set points in the tiebreaker in his first win against a top-10 opponent on clay since 2019. Medvedev entered the match with a tour-leading 33-

4 record this year.

Karatsev is a former No. 14 in the world and has won three tour titles, the last in Sydney last year. "I'm feeling great," Karatsev said. He will play Taylor Fritz or Zhang Zhizhen in the quarterfinals.

The 12th-ranked Khachanov believed their tiebreaker was crucial after losing to Rublev in Monte Carlo three weeks ago, when Rublev went on to capture his maiden Masters 1000 title.

"It's always tricky to play against each other because, on one side, we know each other's games perfectly because we've been training together for so many years," Khachanov said. "At the same time, we know what to expect, but also of course a bit nervous to play against each other. We are good friends."

Khachanov improved his win-loss record to 19-0 after winning the first set in 2023. His next opponent will be defending champion Carlos Alcaraz or 13th-seeded Alexander Zverev, who met late Tuesday. Khachanov

and Rublev made it to the doubles quarterfinals, where Jamie Murray and Michael Venus await.

"This (singles) match is over," Khachanov said. "We need to have some time maybe to absorb it. That's how it was in Monte Carlo. The day before, we played doubles, we lost a very tight match, and then the next day he beat me. After one day, life goes on. He's doing well this year. I'm doing well, I'm just happy."

Also through to the quarterfinals was Daniel Altmaier, who defeated Jaume Munar 6-3, 6-0.

Munar was upset with a call that put him down 3-0 in the final set. He challenged it and was irate when the ruling against him stood, saying: "I will destroy this machine. How is it possible? The mark is clear." He walked to what appeared to be some tour officials near the court and argued with them about the challenge system, telling them "we are playing for 80,000 euros (\$87,600) here."



MADRID: Alexander Zverev of Germany plays a forehand against Carlos Alcaraz of Spain the Fourth Round match on Day Nine of the Mutua Madrid Open.

Djokovic set for US Open after vaccine mandate lifted

LONDON (Agencies): Novak Djokovic will be free to play in this year's US Open after the United States government confirmed it is lifting its Covid-19 vaccine mandate on international travelers.

Djokovic, one of the highest profile athletes to remain unvaccinated, has not been able to play in the United States since the vaccine mandate came into effect in November 2021.

The 35-year-old world number one last played the US Open in 2021, when his bid to complete a calendar year Grand Slam ended in defeat in the final to Russia's Daniil Medvedev.

Since then Djokovic has been a glaring absentee from US tennis tournaments due to the travel mandate.

The 22-time Grand Slam singles winner applied unsuccessfully for a special exemption to enter the United States to play this year's Masters events at Indian Wells and Miami.

US Open organizers, as well as the US Tennis Association, both called for Djokovic to be granted an exemption. US tennis great John McEnroe was one of several who questioned the decision to continue to bar Djokovic from the United States, noting that the Serb played the US Open in 2021 when the pandemic was still raging.

"He played (the US Open) in 2021 and then wasn't allowed to play in 2022, someone explain that to me," McEnroe said earlier this year. "And now he's still not permitted to play? It's absurd." Djokovic was also infamously deported from Australia last year and missed this year's Australian Open due to his vaccine status.

However, on Monday, the White House confirmed that its vaccination requirement for travelers entering the United States would be lifted on May 11.

More than a million people died from Covid-19 in the United States.

However, the White House noted that the pandemic had been all but stopped. "Since January 2021, Covid-19 deaths have declined by 95 percent and hospitalizations are down nearly 91 percent. Globally, Covid-19 deaths are at their lowest levels since the start of the pandemic," the White House said in a statement.

Nepal beat UAE to book India, Pakistan meetings at Asia Cup 2023

KATHMANDU (INP): Home side Nepal thrashed the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on the reserve day of the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) Premier Cup final and booked a spot in the upcoming Asia Cup 2023.

Nepal will now take the last slot in the Group A of the continental event, which features arch-rivals India.

Young all-rounder Gulsha Jha starred for Nepal in the historic victory as he first returned with brilliant figures of 1/10 before following it up with a gritty 67-run knock in pursuit of a modest total, made difficult by UAE's strong spin-bowling attack.

Batting first, UAE could pile up 117 runs despite Asif Khan's sensible 46 as the rest of their batters failed to contribute significantly.

Lalit Rajbanshi was the pick of the bowlers for Nepal as he returned with astounding figures of 4/14.

The 16th edition of the Asia Cup is scheduled to be hosted in Pakistan in

September.

However, the upcoming edition of the event has been in jeopardy briefly after Pakistan was rewarded the hosting rights for the event in October as the Board of Cricket Control in India (BCCI) refused to tour the country on political grounds.

Earlier, a report emerged that the two cricket boards were gradually moving towards a compromise and had nearly agreed to host India's matches on a neutral venue while the rest of the tournament will be played in Pakistan.

As per the latest development, however, the BCCI has refused the hybrid proposal for both events and once again demanded to shift the Asia Cup entirely from Pakistan.

Following BCCI's initial refusal to tour Pakistan, the PCB also hinted at not touring India to participate in this year's World Cup.

Although PCB has not said anything officially on the

prospect of using the hybrid model – India playing Asia Cup matches on a neutral venue – for the ODI World Cup but has hinted it will be discussed at the ICC forum.

"This is not to say that the hybrid model will not be advocated at the proper ICC forum at the right time," the last line of a PCB release said, while denying the hybrid model was discussed in last week's ICC meeting.

Pakistan will due to suffer an extra expense of half a million dollars to broadcast India's neutral venue matches in the Asia Cup. But the consequences of Pakistan not playing in India will be greater, both in terms of sponsorship and broadcast expenses.

In that India has to add a Co-host for the event, "Situation is very fluid," said a top source dealing with the situation. "A final decision will only be made in June and by that time the ICC will adopt a wait and see policy."

Danish wants Pakistan to regain lost glory in squash

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's top player Danish Atlas Khan has offered his unconditional services to put the country once again on the path to success, saying there was no shortage of talent in the country but a stern roadmap was needed to help regain lost glory in the game.

Danish, who is also the nephew of former world squash champion Jansher Khan, speaking about his plan for the revival of the game, said the Pakistan Squash Federation (PSF) was making all-out efforts to promote and encourage the game and players in the country.

"However, other stakeholders must also come forward to help encourage and promote, not only squash but all sports. We should take all departments on board to promote all sports in the country. Wapda, PIA, NBP, Railway, banks, all government departments should include senior and junior players as to support



the games," he told APP.

He was of the view that in the past, departments used to support players which resulted in giving us many world champions in squash, hockey and cricket. "Sports cannot grow or flourish, without the support of departments. We should form academies on the grassroots level as well," he said. Danish, who has won 32 gold medals for Pakistan, said PSF was providing players with squash facilities and spending hefty amounts on making squash courts.

PSF funds should also be increased so that it can be utilized for the betterment of players. He said there

should be squash courts in schools as to promote the game at the grassroots level.

"The more courts and academies there will be, the more talent will come to the fore. In Egypt, players are picked from schools to train in academies with modern techniques and skills and improve their physical fitness."

Danish, who won the silver medal in the World Junior team championship in Ecuador in 2010 as a team captain and bronze medal in World Junior Championship, said, "If we want to compete with international players then we have to train like them and use the same track they have been working on."

He said the coaches should also be qualified as they have to pass training onto the players. "I have also offered my unconditional support to PSF and for the promotion of the game in the country and I hope we will get a world champion soon," he said.

Fiery Kohli fined again after IPL post-match row

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Indian cricket star Virat Kohli was fined on Tuesday for the second time in this Indian Premier League (IPL) season after a post-match altercation with former national team-mate Gautam Gambhir.

Both were docked their entire match fee, the Indian Premier League said, while Naveenul Haq was fined 50 per cent of his for breaching the league's code of conduct. Kohli and Afghan bowler Naveen were seen having sharp words on the field during a tense match between Kohli's Royal Challengers Bangalore and Lucknow Super Giants on Monday.

Kohli, who has often run into trouble with his aggressive approach, had to be restrained by opposition batsman Amit Mishra during the match. Bangalore eventually won by 18 runs.

Afterwards, Lucknow's Kyle Mayers had to be led away from an exchange with Kohli before other players tried unsuccessfully to stop a visibly furious Gambhir, Lucknow's team mentor, from confronting him.

Gambhir and Kohli, who played together when India won the 2011 World Cup, had a shouting match before Bangalore skipper Faf du Plessis intervened.

The former national teammates were also involved in an ugly on-field exchange in a 2013 IPL match. The 41-year-old Gambhir has become an MP for India's Hindu-nationalist ruling BJP party since retiring from cricket in 2018.

This was Kohli's second offence this season after he was fined 10 per cent of his match fee for his conduct

during Bangalore's loss to Chennai Super Kings last month. Despite being one of the best batsmen of the modern game, "King Kohli" and Bangalore have never won the Indian Premier League. He quit the RCB captaincy at the end of the 2021 season.

He went through an extended batting slump in 2021 and 2022, during which time he lost the Indian captaincy, one of the most high-pressure jobs in world sport. Kohli, 34, has spoken about his mental health struggles during his dry phase, including how he had been "snappy" to his Bollywood actress wife Anushka Sharma. He has had numerous run-ins with opposing players and was once reprimanded after hitting a plastic chair with a bat following his dismissal during an IPL match.

Luca Brecel wins snooker World Championship title

SHEFFIELD (INP): Belgium's Luca Brecel became the first player from continental Europe to win snooker's World Championship as he withstood a fight back from four-time champion Mark Selby to triumph 18-15 in the final.

Luca Brecel's victory also meant he joined Canadian Cliff Thorburn (1980), the Republic of Ireland's Ken Doherty (1997) and Australian Neil Robertson (2010) as only the fourth modern-era world champion from outside the United Kingdom at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre.

Having overturned huge deficits to defeat both seven-time world champion Ronnie O'Sullivan and Si Jiahui in the quarter and semi-final rounds respectively, held his nerve after Selby had eroded his lead.

The 28-year-old, who had never won a match at the Snooker World Championship before this year's edition, started Monday's concluding ses-



sion 15-10 up. Selby, however, won five of the next six frames as he closed to within one at just 16-15 behind.

But the Englishman then missed a black off the spot and Brecel capitalised to move within a frame of victory at 17-15. Luca Brecel was first in come the next frame and then demonstrated excellent cue-ball control around the black in a match-winning break of 112. "So tough, he (Selby) is the worst

opponent to have in a final, he just keeps coming back, he's such a fighter, when it was 16-15 I didn't fancy winning at all, I was missing balls by a mile but then I made a good break."

Asked what his win would mean for European snooker, former child prodigy Brecel replied: "It's going to explode, I was so nervous because I wanted it to happen for Belgium and Europe and now I can't wait to see what it brings, I'm so happy I did it."

Something of a throwback, the crowd-pleasing Luca Brecel's path to the final was notable for his unconventional approach to match preparation. Selby, who on Sunday became the first player to make a maximum 147 break in a World Championship final, paid tribute to the new champion by saying: "Congratulations to Luca, he's a great talent and a great lad, a great family. Enjoy the year, you deserve it mate, you played fantastic."



F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Chief Executive Murree Brewery Company Isphanyar Bhandara says that sports always help to maintain a healthy lifestyle of the youth. In addition to developing physical health, these kinds of activities also help to build their character.

These activities teach the lessons of courage, passion, confidence, and tolerance which can help us to develop our inner selves.

He also added that youth

with good health can also play a pivotal role in the country's development. While talking at the event, he also said that our players are assets of the nation, and they can help us in promoting sports for the formation of a healthy society.

He was talking to the reporters after the distribution of prizes at the 119th M.P. Bhandara Memorial Polo Cup Final in Rawalpindi.

The tournament was played between three teams. The final match was

played between (ASC and Security2000). In the end, Team ASC scored eight goals, and Security2000 scored two goals.

The event was graced by the presence of the Ambassadors of eight different countries. The dignitaries appreciated the efforts of Murree Brewery in promoting sports activities and developing the sports culture in the region. M.P. Bhandara Memorial Polo tournament was held in 1904 and continues to be a prominent sports event.

FIFA warns Europe of Women's WC broadcast blackout

GENEVA (AP): Publicly criticizing broadcasters for offering to pay too little to screen the Women's World Cup has not worked out yet for FIFA president Gianni Infantino, who is now threatening a blackout in major European markets.

A public standoff started by Infantino last October was intensified late Monday when he warned five key countries – England, France, Germany, Italy, Spain – where deals are still not signed less than three months before the tournament starts in Australia and New Zealand.

"To be very clear, it is our moral and legal obligation not to undersell the FIFA Women's World Cup," Infantino said in a

statement about the July 20-Aug. 20 tournament.

"Therefore, should the offers continue not to be fair (towards women and women's football), we will be forced not to broadcast the FIFA Women's World Cup into the 'Big 5' European countries."

England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain have all qualified for the first Women's World Cup to have 32 teams, and FIFA has a standby broadcasting option with its own online streaming platform FIFA+.

Europe is FIFA's most lucrative broadcast market with \$1.06 billion in TV revenue for the 2019-22 commercial cycle, mostly tied to the men's World Cup in Qatar.

FIFA reported total

financial reserves close to \$4 billion at the end of 2022 with \$3.43 billion in broadcast revenue from total income of \$7.57 billion in the past four years.

Infantino first aired the Women's World Cup broadcasting issue seven months ago, when in Auckland for the official draw for the tournament. He said then that offers as low as 1% of the equivalent TV rights price paid for the men's World Cup were "not acceptable."

In March, for world soccer's annual meeting in Rwanda, Infantino reported no progress with TV broadcasters while also announcing a more than three-fold increase in team prize money to \$110 million for the tournament.



In brief

IRSA releases 144,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 144,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 137,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1439.38 feet and was 41.38 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 32,800 cusecs while outflow as 45,000 cusecs. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1121.75 feet, which was 71.75 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 49,900 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 54,700, 49,800, 36,800 and 9,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 34,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 11,900 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

MP foil attempt to smuggle wheat

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Highways and Motorway Police on Tuesday foiled another attempt to smuggle wheat as it seized eight trucks near Kallar Kahar, Balksar, Chakri and Swabi. About 137 tonnes of wheat and 70 tonnes of flour were recovered from the trucks, a spokesperson of the National Highways and Motorway Police said. He said that attempts were being made to smuggle wheat from different areas to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. After the completion of preliminary legal proceedings, all truck drivers were handed over to the District Food Authority.

CDA demolishes illegal structures

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Tuesday demolished more than one hundred illegal structures in phase three of Park Enclave and arrested four people for obstructing the operations against the encroachments. The operation was conducted in line with the directives of Chairman CDA Noor ul Amin Mengal to purge the city of encroachers. During the operation, concerned authorities demolished 96 illegal rooms, 25 kitchens, 32 washrooms, and some other illegal structures. Chairman CDA said that the encroachments should be removed, and the remaining development works of Park Enclave should be completed as soon as possible. He further added that after the Elimination of encroachments in Park Enclave phase 3, the encroachments from phase 1 and 2 would also be eliminated, he added.

AIOU to close admissions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has set May 4, (Thursday) as the last day of its 2nd phase admissions of post-graduate programs for the semester spring 2023. According to AIOU, the Programs offered in this phase include Associate degree (BA, B.Com), Associate degree in (Education, Human Resource Management and, Islamic Banking and Marketing), B.Ed (1.5 Years, 2.5 Years and 4 Years), BS (ODL programs), BBA and Postgraduate Diploma programs. Admission forms and prospectuses for these programs are available on the university's website (www.aiou.edu.pk). The students have been instructed to apply online and submit fee by the evening of May 4 to avoid the late fee charges. (Continuing students) have been allowed to enroll till May 11 without late fee charges.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran Mr. Seyed Mohammad Ali Hosseini at Parliament House.

Raja inaugurates exhibition showcasing Hungary's Islamic architectural heritage

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Raja Perviz Ashraf inaugurated a three-day photo exhibition highlighting Hungary's Islamic architectural heritage, which was organized in celebration of the golden jubilee of Hungary's constitution. Ashraf praised Hungary for being one of the first European nations to showcase peaceful coexistence between Muslim and Christian communities, and he expressed his gratitude to the Hungarian government for promoting inter-cultural dialogue and understanding through such events. The speaker also commended the cooperation between the governments of Hungary and Türkiye in preserving the Islamic cultural heritage of the Ottoman Empire in Hungary.

MNA Ms. Mehnaz Akbar Aziz, the Convener

of Pakistan-Hungary Parliamentary Friendship Group, expressed her gratitude to Speaker Ashraf for promoting inclusivity in Parliament. She appreciated the initiative of the Hungarian government for enhancing educational scholarships for Pakistani students in Hungary, and she also praised the efforts of the Hungarian government in promoting inclusivity, regardless of religion. Hungarian Ambassador Bela Fazekas thanked Speaker Ashraf for organizing the exhibition and appreciated the cooperation extended by him. He highlighted that Hungary has a rich history of Ottoman architecture in a non-Muslim European cultural environment. The ambassador emphasized that the exhibition showcased well-preserved and renovated minarets, mosques, and tombs that were built by the finest

artists of that era. Fazekas also stressed the importance of parliament-to-parliament contacts in enhancing ties between the two nations.

Türkiye Ambassador Mehmet Pacaci said that that Ottoman architecture in Hungary was a mix of eastern and western elements as Ottoman architects adapted the Islamic patterns. He congratulated and thanked the Ambassador Bela Fazekas for exhibiting the commendable exhibition in the National Assembly of Pakistan. Further, he extended his gratitude Speaker Raja Perviz Ashraf and National Assembly Secretariat for organizing this exhibition which enabled the visitors to be a part of Islamic history. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Parliamentarians, Members of diplomatic community and Media representatives.

ANF recovers over 224 kg drugs; arrests 6

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in three operations managed to recover over 224 kg of drugs, and 180 intoxicated tablets and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He said in an operation near Rawalpindi Bahria Town Phase-4, ANF arrested two accused and recovered three grams of cocaine, two grams of Ice drug and 180 intoxicated tablets.

ANF in an operation conducted a raid on Quetta-Karachi Road and recovered 84 kg charras from a Karachi-bound mini bus coming from Quetta. Charras was concealed in secret cavities of the bus while two accused residents of Mastung were also rounded up during the operation. In the third operation on RCD Highway, 120 kg charras was also recovered from secret cavities of a truck and ANF arrested two accused residents of Quetta.

He said that separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.

RWMC cleanliness activities continued during rains

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) carried out the cleaning of nullahs and drains in city areas despite the rain on Tuesday.

According to a RWMC spokesman, during the rains, the company had made special arrangements for cleaning in the city and deployed additional workers to clean and dredge major drains to avoid urban flooding. He informed RWMC workers removed hundreds of tons of waste in the Rawalpindi city areas while drains blocked during the rain had been opened immediately to have no problem with drainage in the city.

He said that complaints received on social media platforms were also being addressed instantly.

In addition, the spokesman informed that RWMC communication teams conducted its door-to-door campaign in various areas of the city and distributed waste bags and pamphlets about the importance of cleanliness and prevention of dengue.

Ashrafi terms USCIRF's report baseless

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman and Prime Minister's Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi on Tuesday said there was no misuse of blasphemy law in Pakistan.

Terming the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)'s report on Pakistan baseless, he said the commission had been misguided by some miscreants in a bid to achieve their nefarious designs.

Ashrafi said Pakistan was a country where the believers of all faiths were being provided all the basic rights as an equal citizen of the state.

He said if there was any bone of contention among the believers of different faiths in Pakistan, they tried to resolve it with mutual understanding instead of indulging in any confrontation.

He said if there was any mishap in the wake of religious extremism, it was properly tackled by all the relevant forums in Pakistan.

It was absolutely fictitious to say that the blasphemy law was being used for personal or political gains in Pakistan as there was a crystal-clear policy of the government and the Ulema and Mashaykh of all schools of thought making all out efforts to stop its misuse at every nook and cranny of the country since the day one.

He said during his tenure as chairman of Muttahida Ulema Board Punjab, he received 12 applications against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chief Imran Khan which were not entertained by

him keeping in view the sensitivity of the subject. Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman and Prime Minister's Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi further made it clear that those applications were not filed by any government or political entity but they were submitted by common people due to their reservations on the disappointing incident of Masjid-e-Nabvi (Peace Be Upon Him).

Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman and Prime Minister's Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashraf said the blasphemy law was a unanimous law on which people of all religions were with the majority population of the country because this law had safeguarded the life, property and worship places of all the religions across the board.

Pointing out India in the light of report, he proposed the United States Department of State to take the notice of ongoing brutalities against the minority communities in India. He said in India, minorities communities were being treated as the third-class citizens and they were being deprived of their basic social and religious rights. Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman and Prime Minister's Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi invited the USCIRF to pay a visit to Pakistan and discuss the issues at the relevant forums instead of getting disinformation from the biased people.

700 e-challan issued through briefcam software during last month

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad capital police with the help of briefcam software have issued 700 e-challan and successfully recovered 11 vehicles involved in various criminal activities and e-challan defaults. According to a police spokesperson, police recovered 11 vehicles out of which six were involved in different criminal activities while

five were found to be e-challan defaulters.

In addition, 700 e-challans were issued during last month with the help of briefcam software for lane violations, zebra crossings and signal violations.

Similarly, the Safe City Islamabad briefcam software also assisted in identifying culprits involved in different criminal

activities in crowds and identified the number plates of vehicles with this system.

CPO Safe City Islamabad stated that Islamabad's capital police are committed to protect the life and property of the citizens and no criminal elements will be allowed to disturb the peace of the people, he maintained.

Ethiopia's successful peace process offers lessons for Sudan: Envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Jemal Beker Abdula on Tuesday said Sudan could learn from the successful peace process of his country for ending the conflict which had entered into its third week. Addressing to Pakistan-based ambassadors from the member states of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) here, he said dialogue was the only way forward for resolving disputes to bring lasting peace in the region.

The meeting of the ambassadors of IGAD member states was called by Sudan's Envoy in Pakistan to brief his counterparts about the latest situation in his country.

Referring to the speech delivered by Prime Minister of FDRE H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed in an event recently held at Addis Ababa to commemorate the conclusion of Ethiopia's Peace Process, he said the prime minister had also urged the warring parties in Sudan to learn from Ethiopia's peace process for ending their conflict.

"It is on record how much Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular suffered from the Tigray war, but it is the determination of our people and support of the whole of Africa and other international partners which steered us out of

the conflict," the ambassador said.

"Peace in Sudan is imperative for peace in entire Africa, so there is a dire need to end this conflict now through dialogue," he said while expressing Ethiopia's desire to help Sudan in resolving its issues.

The ambassador said Ethiopia has not only been supporting in evacuation process of stranded nationals from Sudan but also extending humanitarian support to the people of Sudan in such trying times.

He said Ethiopia had faced the same kind of challenges but peaceful dialogue was the only option for all stakeholders to bring lasting peace to Sudan.

Nobody would get any benefit from the war as it only resulted in deaths, hunger, poverty and unemployment, H.E. Jemal Beker said while apprising his counterparts on the successful execution of the peace process to bring peace in northern parts of Ethiopia.

He also highlighted the role played by the African Union in resolving the dispute between the government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Tigray's People Liberation Front (TPLF).

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) is a body of eight member states including Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda.

MoU signed to digitalize health sector Punjab

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Health Department and Telecom Foundation on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to digitalize the health system in the province.

Caretaker Minister for Health, Punjab Dr Jamal Nasir, and General Manager Telecom Foundation Atifa Ehsan signed and exchanged the documents here at a ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Jamal Nasir said that according to the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, a modern digital health system was being planned for the Punjab Health Department, which would initially provide basic health centres and facilities.

He said there would be less rush of patients in headquarters hospitals due to this system.

The minister informed that the system would start from Rawalpindi and digital health service would be more useful for patients above 60 years of age.

He said that under this system, smart belts, watches and mobile apps would be provided to the patients through which their health would be monitored at their homes 24 hours while in case of an emergency, it would be activated under the automatic system.

Dr Jamal said an ambulance would arrive at the doorstep of the patient and he would be admitted to the hospital in case of an emergency. He said that

digital beds would also be provided to needy patients and their health would be continuously monitored.

Dr Jamal Nasir said that in the first phase as a pilot project, the data of patients in two primary health centres would be digitalized and would be linked to the central system.

Dr Jamal Nasir further added that digital health service was a revolutionary initiative of the Punjab government and would be gradually spread across Punjab. CEO of Health Rawalpindi Dr Ansar Ishaq, District Health Officer Rawalpindi Dr Ehsan Ghani, Director Films and Publications Hamid Javed Awan and other relevant officials were also present on the occasion.

Czech embassy launches web page to highlight women's role

ISLAMABAD (APP): The embassy of Czech Republic in Pakistan here on Tuesday launched a web page jointly developed by Czech arts school and the National College of Arts (NCA) Lahore with objective to highlight the role of women in the society, providing role models, and supporting women empowerment.

Deputy Foreign Minister of the Czech Republic Jiri Kozak and Tomáš Smetánka, Czech Ambassador to Pakistan inaugurated along with Nilofar Bakhtiar.

Ambassador said with this initiative contact among people of the two counties would be further strengthened.

He said women of Pakistan achieved great success in every field including science, technology and education.

A hundred of artistic portraits of women, who shaped the past and present of Pakistan and Czechia, together with their short biographies, can be accessed at the domain heroines.pk.

In 2020, students of Ladislav Sutnar Faculty of Design and Art in the Czech city of Plzen created a set of 50 posters of outstanding women of all times.

The collection inspired NCA to produce a similar series, celebrating prominent Pakistani women. The Czech and Pakistani Heroines posters exhibition was then held in Lahore on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of Pakistan last August. Afterwards, pictures of 50 + 50

great women from both countries have been edited into a book, published in December 2022. In order to make the Czech and Pakistani Heroines widely accessible, the Czech Embassy prepared the online form of the book, which will also include an Urdu version. "I wish the Heroines serve in education, to widen boys' and particularly girls' view about the roles women have been playing and can play as professionals, artists, entrepreneurs, lawyers, politicians, social activists," says Ambassador Tomáš Smetánka.

I do hope portraits of personalities like Samina Baig, Asma Jahangir, Perween Rahman or Arfa Kareem will inspire young ladies to the best use of their talents and abilities."

"The women of Czech & Pakistan are resilient and fearless, their stories have a special place in our hearts and now they'll live forever through the very special initiative: web page Heroines.pk," Chairperson Nilofar Bakhtiar says.

The Czech Embassy, NCA, and Bata Pakistan Ltd. as sponsor of the project decided to establish "The Heroine Award to be conferred every year to a woman that distinguishes herself in her profession or area of activity.

The laureate's portrait will then be added to the collection. Public can submit nominations for the award through www.heroines.pk.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Perviz Ashraf inaugurating the opening ceremony of the photo exhibition on Islamic Architectural Heritage of Hungary at Parliament House.

ANSA returned 8 oil tankers

HERAT (Agencies): Afghanistan National Standard Authority (ANSA) has returned 8 oil tankers to Iran, after assessing them low-quality on Tuesday. At least 8 low-quality oil tankers had been stopped at the ground port of the country's western province of Farah and returned to neighboring country of the Islamic Republic of Iran for being low-quality. The National Standard Authority has recently taken necessary steps to prevent the import of low-quality oil and gas into the country.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Shawwal 12, 1444 — Wednesday, May 03, 2023

Tourists visiting Samangan

SAMANGAN (Agencies): Number of foreign tourists visiting the historical sites of the northern province of Samangan has increased in recent weeks. "Dozens of Italian and Spanish and thousands of domestic tourists have visited the historical sites, particularly Rustam Takht of the Samangan province of Afghanistan," the statement quoted the provincial officials of the Information and Culture Department as saying.

AFJC: Violence against journalists increased by 64%

KABUL (Khaama Press): Afghanistan Journalists Center (AFJC), on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, has reported on the deteriorating situation of media in Afghanistan – adding violence cases against journalists have increased by 64 percent in the past year. The organization on Tuesday, May 2, which marks International Press Freedom Day, published a report highlighting the situation of media in Afghanistan and warned of the continued threats and arrests of journalists across the country. The findings of AFJC indicate that over the past 12 months (May 2022-May 2023), at least 213

incidents of violence, threats, and detention of journalists have been recorded in the country. The violent incidents include one death, 21 injuries, 6 physical harassments, 115 threats, arrest of 70 journalists, out of which at least 2 reporters (Murtaza Bebbudi and Khairullah Parhar) are still in Taliban custody. The Islamic Emirate authorities have been repeatedly accused of violating human rights in the country. AFJC has also announced that the majority of violence cases including threats, and arrests of journalists and media workers have been committed by the Taliban government agencies or Islamic Emirate

authorities. The center has also stated that the media situation in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime has had a negative process – adding after the overthrow of the previous government in August 2021, roughly half of 600 media outlets have ceased operation due to economic problems and restrictions imposed by the ruling regime. The Afghanistan Journalists Center (AFJC) reiterated that press freedom and access to information are parts of the fundamental rights of the people and warned of the consequences of the increasing restrictions in this area by the Taliban-run administration.

4.6 magnitude earthquake strikes paktia province

PAKTIA (Khaama Press): An earthquake of 4.6 magnitude hit 39 Km northeast of Gardez, Paktia province on Tuesday. The quake of 4.6 magnitudes occurred at 5:24 am local time, 5 km depth on Tuesday with the epicentre of Sayed Karam district of Paktia province of Afghanistan, reported by the Indian National Center for Seismology. No casualties have been reported so far. According to the official reports, natural disasters have increased in recent months, including earthquakes, landslides, heavy rains and flooding, and have left enormous financial and human damage. According to Shafiullah Rahimi, the State Ministry for Natural Disaster Management's spokesman, 29 people died across 31 provinces, while the recent earthquake and flash floods from March 21 to April 20 injured over 105 persons. Meanwhile, he continued, there were financial losses brought on by the natural disasters, including the death of 848 cattle, destroy of 155 residential houses and partial destruction of 1,242 houses, and the damage of 7,106 acres of agricultural land. Afghanistan is a disaster-prone country, including earthquakes. Over 200 people were injured, and at least 19 died when a powerful 6.5 magnitude earthquake struck Afghanistan in March. Due to inadequate management and timely response to natural disasters, the country has suffered significant damage.

AFDA ready to provide investement opportunities to international companies

KABUL (Agencies): The head of Afghanistan Food and Drug Administration, Dr. Abdulbari Omar, said that the administratiin ready to provide investment opportunities for international companies in the sector of health products and drug. The head of AFDA Dr. Abdul Bari Omar, met with Hassan Shirzadi, the economic officer of the Iranian Embassy in Kabul, a statement said. The two sides discussed the export of drug to Afghanistan and high investment in the production of healthy products and drug in the country. In this meeting Omar



said that the AFDA is ready to provide investment opportunities for international companies in healthy products and drug, according to the statement.

Nawa inhabitants lament dearth of health amenities



GHAZNI CITY (Pajhwok): Some residents of the Nawa district of southern Ghazni province are complaining about an adequate health facilities and services. Nawa district, 170 kilometres from Ghazni City, has around 500 large and small villages but only five small clinics, which are not enough for its population. Mohibullah Khpalwak, a tribal elder, told Pajhwok Afghan News there was a shortage of health centres in the district and the existing facilities were not well-equipped. Residents had to take their patients to the provincial capital for medical treatment, the elder said, urging the government to address their problem as soon as possible. Haji Khaksar, another inhabitant of the district, said the road connecting Nawa district with Ghazni City was bumpy and people faced problems traveling it. He also lamented: "There are few health facilities in the district and the dilapidated road hampers the evacuation of patients to the provincial capital." People could not take their patients to the main city in time because of the

bad condition, he said, adding several patients had died on the way. He regretted their calls were yet to be heeded by the authorities. Mirza Mohammad, who brought his spouse to Ghazni City for treatment, said: "I had visited the district health centre several times, but due to lack of facilities, my patient was not treated. I was thus forced to bring her to a private hospital in Ghazni City, travelling 170 kilometers, despite financial problems." He added: "There is no health facility in our area (Malik Din) and the health centres in the district cannot meet our need. We are faced with multiple problems, including financial constraints. We have to visit hospitals in Ghazni City or Kandahar." Syedullah Taraki, a civil society activist, claimed no attention had been paid to the district in the past due to war and the health problems thus remained unsolved. He deplored several pregnant women had lost their lives during childbirth. Now that conflict has ended, the government should focus on improving the health sector in the district. More often than not,

patients in remote villages due to lack of health centres and the distance to Ghazni City, he believed, asking the government to pay serious attention to the issue. Dr Nahida Mohammadi, a women's rights activist, confirmed the masses had been deprived of basic facilities due to war. Remote areas were without health services, and the previous government did not pay enough attention to the construction of more facilities, she alleged. She called for the establishment of health centres in backward areas, release of funds and equipment, as well as tasking mobile teams with educating people to control diseases and address problems. Dr. Rasoul Khan Nazari, director of public health, informed eight health centres were active in Nawa, including the district hospital, Nanga, Kala Khan, Faizabad, Malik Din, Rehman Qala, Poti and Sakira clinics. He explained health services in the district had not been suspended. He visited many clinics recently and found the medicines there were also available in Ghazni City.

Historical site discovered

BAGHLAN (Agencies): A historical site has been discovered in the country's northern province of Baghlan, the provincial Information and Culture Department in a statement said Tuesday. The historical site named Mir Ghazi Bek has been discovered in the Tal Ghazi area of the Deh Salah district of the province, said the statement. "The site which has been surveyed and discovered by archeology teams of the Ministry of Information and Culture, dated back to the Islamic era," the statement quoted Director of the provincial Information and Culture Department Mawlawi Asadullah Hashimi as saying. After the resumption of power by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan dozens of historical sites and relics have been discovered countywide so far. Officials of the Islamic Emirate particularly, officials of the Ministry of Information and Culture are making necessary efforts to discover and maintain historical sites and relics across the country.

Afghan laborers voice frustration over economic difficulties

KABUL (TOLONews): On World Labor Day, laborers expressed frustration over their ongoing economic difficulties and high rate of unemployment. International organizations noted that more than half of the households in Afghanistan are struggling to afford food. Sediqullah, who is working on a Kabul street, said that he is not able to earn enough money to support his family. "Sometimes, I walk on the street to find a job, but I cannot earn even 100 Afs," he said. The laborers who were

interviewed by TOLONews called on the Islamic Emirate to provide them with job opportunities. "The unemployment is at its peak. I stay from morning until (the afternoon) but I still go back home with bare hands," said Ghulam Farooq, a resident of Kabul. "I find work for one day and then I am jobless for another three days," said Nabi, a resident of Kabul. The severe economic crisis in Afghanistan has even forced families to send their underage children to work.

The Ministry of Public Works said that more than 150 centers of technical and professional craft professions are active in various provinces of Afghanistan. According to the ministry, around 20,000 staff members are entering the markets. "The Ministry of Public Works is planning to extend these centers to the districts," said Abdul Wahid Faiz, an official of the ministry. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Economy said that the construction of major economic projects will provide job opportunities for people.

"In the ongoing year, we try to provide jobs for the youth through supporting small and moderate industries, and also through supporting major economic projects and half-finished projects," said Abdul Latif Nazari, deputy Minister of Economy. According to a Report of the International Labor Organization, 900,000 people have become jobless in 2022. However the number of jobless people is expected to increase after the Islamic Emirate banned women from working at NGOs.

Biden admin to let Afghan evacuees extend temporary status

KABUL (Khaama Press): The US Government intends to prolong the short-term status of tens of thousands of Afghans living in the United States. The Biden administration is planning to let tens of thousands of Afghans living in the United States extend their temporary status. According to CBS News, which cited anonymous people familiar with the decision. Since the Taliban took control of Afghanistan and

the military's bloody and chaotic withdrawal of American troops, more than 76,000 Afghans have entered the US. Many Afghans who entered the country have collaborated with American officials as translators, interpreters, and other partners for many years. As part of Operation Allies Welcome, the largest resettlement initiative in the country in decades, the US government temporarily accepted the refugees in exchange for their service

with a promise of a path to a new life in the country. Veterans organizations and immigrant advocacy groups collaborating with the government to develop a more long-term path for Afghans to move forward with their lives welcomed the movement. Some legislators believe that by including advanced screening provisions in the bill, it will be able to win the support necessary to pass the Republican-controlled House and the slim

Democratic majority in the Senate. "It cuts to the core question of whether the US keeps its promise of protection to its allies," Helal Massomi, an Afghan refugee and adviser on Afghan policy at Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, said in a statement. "Congress needs to keep our nation's promise and make it clear to Afghans that this country is more than their temporary safe haven — it's their home."

Railway project to begin soon

KABUL (Khaama Press): The ambitious Railway Project will connect Afghanistan to East Asia, Iran, Turkey, and several European countries. The ambitious project, known as the Mazar-i-Sharif-Herat-Kandahar Railway project, has been approved by the Taliban's Economic Commission and will be funded entirely by domestic resources, according to a statement released by the office of the deputy prime minister for economic affairs. The economic commission has tasked the Railway Authority to establish the parameters of the projects without mentioning the estimated project cost. The 1,468 km network will cross nine provinces, 37 districts, and 800 villages. The project will connect Afghanistan to East Asia, Iran, Turkey, and several European countries. There will be two phases to the project's completion. A 657-kilometre road via Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat will be part of the first phase. An 811-kilometre road will connect Herat and Kandahar as part of the second phase. "According to the economic and technical studies, and taking into account the transit value, the value of the estimated transfer and the revenue, the work on the project's first phase will commence this year," the statement said. However, amid the country's economic and humanitarian crisis, the initiative is still in its early phases, and it is still uncertain if it will be implemented successfully.

No magic solution to Afghan crisis, says Swiss UN Envoy

KABUL (Khaama Press): Switzerland's Ambassador to the United Nations Pascale Baeriswyl has said the situation in Afghanistan under the Taliban administration has turned into a complicated dilemma. Switzerland took the presidency of the UN Security Council for the first time. Baeriswyl told to reporters at the UN Headquarters that Afghans are currently faced with an extremely complicated challenge, and said "We do not have a magic solution to the Afghan crisis". Ms. Baeriswyl expressed her optimism about the ongoing Doha Meeting, and said, "I am hopeful that Doha Meeting would conclude to finding ways to manage the Afghan crisis," which has affected women and girls the most than other segments of society. This comes as Doha Meeting chaired by the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, and participants from 25 countries and international institutions is going

on in Qatar. The meeting is aimed at achieving a general consensus to interact with the Taliban and adopt a single approach towards the policies of the de facto authorities of Afghanistan. Participants from the US, China, Russia, and Afghanistan's neighboring countries including Pakistan and European partners have been invited to the two-day-closed door meeting to discuss Afghanistan. Stéphane Dujarric, the UN Spokesperson on Friday said the Taliban representatives have not been invited to the meeting. Also, it is believed that recognizing Afghanistan's de facto regime is not part of the agenda. The UN has announced that major issues including women's rights, forming an inclusive government, countering terrorism, drug trafficking, and finding a common approach to engage with the Taliban administration would be discussed thoroughly.

mainly on women and girls, aid agencies and humanitarian organizations have remained committed to continue delivering their life-saving support to the people of Afghanistan in 2023. Meanwhile, aid agencies call on the international community to remain in solidarity with the Afghan people and extend their support to the people of Afghanistan during these difficult times. Currently, the war-torn country goes the worst humanitarian and economic challenges. Poverty, hunger, internal displacement, drought, and natural disasters have added to the problems of the Afghan population.

Barred from school, Afghan girls turn to Madrassas

KABUL (TOLONews): Following the closure of schools for girls above sixth grade in the country, some girls have turned to madrassas (religious schools) to learn the religious sciences. Mubashera, who is 18 and in the twelfth grade, is currently enrolled in a

madrassa to study religious sciences. She said she went to this madrassa (religious school) after other schools were closed to them. "It is ok that we can be (Quran reciter) through seminars but it cannot replace our education. We cannot be a doctor by learning in seminaries,"

Mubashera said. Female students, criticizing the closure of girls' schools, urged the Islamic Emirate to reopen schools for girls. "We can only be a reciter in seminary and learn about God," said Alina, another student. "I am very happy that I

am coming to seminary and can have religious lessons, but at the same time I am very upset that our schools, institutes and universities are closed," said Susan, a student. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Hajj and Islamic Affairs (MoHIA), said that 6,000 seminars are officially registered. Some women's rights activists believe that current restrictions on women and girls will undermine the nation's educational system. "The closure of schools and universities is a big hammer to our educational fields, and this shows that our Afghan society is going towards paralysis," said Hadis Shaml, another women's rights activist. In a meeting with Mawlawi Zakir, head of the political deputy PM's office, UNAMA's acting political head Scott Smith asked the Islamic Emirate to take steps in the field of women's education and work, the Arg tweeted.





ISLAMABAD: Contract base female teachers blocked the road outside Federal Directorate of Education, during a protest for release of their salaries.

LHC orders Imran to join investigation

LAHORE (PPI): The Lahore High Court on Tuesday directed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman Imran Khan to join the investigation of cases registered against him by the Lahore High Court on Tuesday. The former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman appeared before the Lahore High Court (LHC) under strict security in a plea seeking the dismissal of 121 cases registered against him.

A five-member larger bench of the LHC headed by Justice Ali Baqir Najfi comprising Justice Amjad Rafique, Justice Anwarul Haq, Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh and Justice Alia took up the plea of Imran Khan. At the outset of the hearing public prosecutor said the former prime minister is not joining the investigation in any of the case registered against him.

Is Imran Khan also not cooperating with the investigation team in cases he secured bail, the LHC bench asked. "Yes he is not joining any of the investigation," the public prosecutor replied. How will the matters proceed if your client will not join investigations?, the bench asked Imran Khan's lawyer Salman Safdar. Safdar said they don't have any objection to joining the investigation but his client has serious security concerns.

During the hearing, Imran Khan came to the rostrum and said attempts were made to 'assassinate'

ATC extends Khan's bail

ISLAMABAD (PPI): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) Tuesday extended the interim bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan and other party leaders in judicial complex vandalism case.

As per details, the anti-terrorism court Judge Raja Jawad Abbas heard the case and extended the interim bail of the nominated PTI leaders, including PTI chief till 17 May. The PTI leaders including Syed Shibli Faraz, Asad Qaiser, and Zulfi Bukhari's request for exemption from appearance before court has been accepted, while other prominent leaders of PTI including Asad Omar, Omar Ayub, Ali Nawaz, Hammad Azhar, Hassan Niazi, Azam Swati, Raja Khurram Nawaz, and Farrukh Habib appeared before the court.

In a statement the lawyer stated that the PTI chief Imran Khan's hearing request has been scheduled for 3rd May in the Islamabad High Court (IHC). Meanwhile, the lawyer has requested that the interim bail be extended until the hearing on the bail application. It is pertinent to mention here that the cases have been registered against PTI leaders at CTD and Golra Sharif Police Station Islamabad. Last month, An anti-terrorism court (ATC) has extended the interim bail of the former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan in two cases.

As per details, the anti-terrorism court Judge Ijaz Ahmed Buttar heard the case and accepted the PTI chairman Imran Khan's plea to appear before the court via video link. The PTI chief's counsel Barrister Salman Haider told the court that there are threats to Imran Khan's life and the documents of those threats are submitted to the court. The court asked why unlike other former prime ministers the PTI chief Imran Khan has such serious life threats. If the bail plea is disposed of on the video link then how will the authorities arrest Imran Khan, the judge asked.

him in Wazirabad and Islamabad. Those who are supposed to protect me want to kill me, Imran Khan alleged. Later, the LHC ordered Imran Khan to join the investigation in all 121 cases and sought report from the Punjab government on May 8. The PTI chief in his plea stated that the cases registered against him are based on false accusations and on a political basis.

Furthermore, the PTI premier urged the court to stop the concerned authorities from registering illegal FIRs and dismiss the plea against him. Earlier, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) asked former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chief to contact relevant forums for cases registered against him in the federal capital.

Zaidi case; Police fail to submit charge sheet

KARACHI (INP): Police failed to submit charge sheet in a 'fraud' case registered against the President of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) – Sindh chapter Ali Zaidi.

According to the details, PTI Sindh President Ali Zaidi appeared in the Judicial Magistrate Malir court with his lawyers for a case registered against him at the Ibrahim Hyderi police station.

However, the police were unable to submit the charge sheet in the case and requested more time to do so. As a result, the court has adjourned the hearing of the case until 16 May. It is worth mentioning here that a local court granted bail to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh president Ali Haider Zaidi in a 'fraud' case. Ali Haider Zaidi was arrested, last week, after a case was registered against him at Ibrahim Hyderi police station on 'fraud' charges. The court's Judge Ahmad Ali Gabol granted bail to Ali Zaidi and ordered him to submit Rs. 10,000 surety bonds in the court.

The PTI leader was brought to Malir court under strict security after his physical remand expired today. The police pleaded to the court to extend the physical remand of Ali Zaidi, but it was turned down.

Ali Amin Gandapur secures bail

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former federal minister Ali Amin Gandapur has secured post-arrest bail from an anti-terrorism court in Lahore in a vandalism case.

The PTI leader is booked at Race Course police station over charges of providing weapons to the PTI workers. ATC Judge Aijaz Ahmed Battar granted post-arrest bail to Ali Amin Gandapur against surety bond of Rs50,000. The former federal minister is currently in Sukkur jail.

On April 20, an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore handed over former federal minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Ali Amin Gandapur to Sindh police over transit remand. A case was registered against the PTI leader for delivering hate speech against state institutions.

It is pertinent to mention that the Lahore police took custody of the PTI leader soon after a court in Bhakkar granted bail to a firebrand politician in a case related to opening fire on a police checkpoint. Gandapur, a former federal minister, was arrested from outside the Peshawar High Court's D.I. Khan bench earlier this month. On April 8, a case was registered against Gandapur at Islamabad's Golra police station under section 7 of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA).

Four killed two injured in KP rains

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: At least four persons were killed and two injured due to rains, floods and lightning during the last 24 hours in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Provincial Disaster Management Authority PDMA issued a report on Tuesday that three persons including two children died in Lakki Marwat while one person died in Shangla district.

According to reports so far, one house was reported partially damaged in the province. District Administration, Rescue 1122, Civil Defense and other related institutions are alerted in this connection. The situation is being continuously monitored. Steps are being taken to

open the closed roads. PDMA had issued a letter on April 26 to all concerned institutions and district administration regarding this spell of rains to take advance measures regarding rains, hailstorms and floods in the province.

Meanwhile, heavy rain followed by hail storm played havoc in different area of district Lower Dir of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) on Tuesday. According to details, dozens of residential houses, shops, water supply schemes, wheat crop ready to harvest and different fruits orchards were adversely damaged as Paittoo Dara Yar Khan Bandha received heavy rain followed by hail storm. Traffic between different

areas remain suspended as road was swept away by flooded nullahs in different localities. More than a dozen expensive cattle were also killed in rain related incidents.

Deputy Commissioner Dir Lower Iftikhar Ahmed and other officials visited the affected to review the damages, however, relief activities in the affected areas could not be started till filing of the report due to which local people had to face problems. Chairman Mishran Islahi Committee Muhammad Shahir Tajik, Secretary PTI Lower Dir and affectees have demanded of the government and non-governmental organization to launch relief activities in affected areas.

Climate Change breaking records, says Sherry

BERLIN (APP): "As we approach the Global Stocktake at COP28, I see global records being broken by climate change, while actions taken to match pledges fall short," said the Federal Minister for Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Senator Sherry Rehman.

"We're in a race against time, and gatherings like these are crucial in dispelling the growing climate cynicism that has taken hold across the world, particularly among the youth. However, it's imperative that we move beyond talk and actually take action, especially in the case of countries and big businesses that fail to align with global carbon budgets and our Paris Agreement goals," said the Minister.

The Minister is representing Pakistan at the Petersberg Climate Dialogue in Berlin, a high-level political discussion on climate cooperation and Global Stocktake ahead of the COP28 in UAE. "For our part, Pakistan is aligned with the commitments of the Paris Agreement, and we look forward to a real change in the glacial pace of climate finance, adaptation and mitigation in our collective efforts, as developing countries such as Pakistan are actually facing climate catastrophe but face significant obstacles in securing the necessary funding to meet their climate goals," said the Minister while speaking to the media on the first day of the Ministerial dialogue.

Minister Rehman said, "While developed countries received 52% of climate finance in 2022, developing economies only received 48%, despite representing 80% of the world population. This is particularly alarming as developing countries, including Pakistan, have limited access to international climate finance. Pakistan requires \$348 billion between 2022 and 2030, representing 10.7% of its cumulative GDP, to meet its climate needs." She elaborated that according to the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance, 78 developing countries that have submitted their NDCs require a staggering \$6 trillion until 2030 to meet their financial requirements under the Paris Agreement.

The Minister highlighted that a clear definition of climate finance is essential for transparency and accountability in the distribution and use of climate finance. She also stressed that the international financial architecture must be restructured to make climate finance more accessible to developing nations. "The slogan that we should 'leave no one behind' will become meaningless if accessing climate finance remains out of reach for developing and vulnerable countries."

Most of the developing world is actually being left behind while the gulf between ambitions, pledges and actions continues to grow, bolstered with ambitious language that has less

and less to do with climate facts on the ground. Words matter, and they should not be used to normalise inaction, where vaulting targets and pledges sanitise lack of actual action and fulfilment of pledges," the Minister stated.

Minister Rehman said that climate justice and equitable adaptation and mitigation efforts are at the heart of this discourse. She emphasized, "The CBDR principle of the UNFCCC obligates developed countries to provide new, additional, adequate, and sustained financial resources to developing countries. Before states get to COP28, we must resolve crucial queries related to the recently created Loss and Damage (L&D) Fund and prioritize funding gaps in the global financial infrastructure."

Minister Rehman provided an outline for COP28, underlining the importance of preventing developing countries from being trapped in financial debts and dependencies while addressing climate injustice, and that the Global Stock Take (GST) provides a chance to assess progress and make recommendations for the right financial set-up for climate action; the need to bridge individual JET-PS to regional mechanisms, enhance access to concessional financing for climate-vulnerable countries, re-channel more Special Drawing Rights, and boost the financial firepower of MDBs.

Pakistan taking steps to stabilise economy: ADB

SEOUL (APP): Acknowledging quick stabilization measures taken by Pakistan to put the national economy back on track, Asian Development Bank (ADB) President Masatsugu Asakawa on Tuesday assured the bank's continued support for the incumbent government's critical and structural reforms at a time when the country recently witnessed devastating floods caused by climate change.

Addressing a press conference at the ADB Board of Governors' 56th annual meeting here at Incheon, a bordering city of South Korea's Capital Seoul, the president said Pakistan was taking 'quick' required stabilization measures by containing spending, enhancing tax revenues and improving the financial sustainability of energy sector. He said the ADB was supporting these policy measures that would definitely improve the economic condition of the country and help improve fiscal space for enhancing social protection transfers.

He said the bank would continue supporting Pakistan in these reforms through Policy-based lending operations to help improve the economy and financial position. Answering a question of APP correspondent about predicted heavy rains and floods this year in Pakistan and ADB's response in this regard, he said "... the government [of Pakistan] is taking swift economic stabilization and rehabilitation measures... These structural reforms will definitely bring [economic] stability of Pakistan and create fiscal space for enhanced social protection transfers."

Masatsugu Asakawa renewed pledge of the international financing lender to continue extending all possible support to Pakistan, saying "The ADB will maintain supporting Pakistan on its economic structural reforms." The ADB will maintain to continue its support to improve Pakistan's economic condition.

The ADB President also announced new programme IF-CAP: the Innovative Finance Facility – for Climate in Asia and the Pacific, terming the plan "a global first in its scale and scope." Elaborating the IF-CAP facility, Masatsugu

Asakawa said it would change the way 'we do business.' He was of the view that the region needed trillions (of dollars) in investment to combat climate change and help reach that level, there was need to maximize our capital in new ways. He said the IF-CAP would multiply ADB's lending capacity through leverage and would allow crowding in substantially more resources from the private sector, and other investors who share bank's commitment to climate action.

He explained that the programme was based on the use of financial guarantees from ADB partners, adding by guaranteeing a portfolio of the bank's sovereign loans, they would help shoulder some of the loss in case of a credit event in one of our borrowers. "This is a groundbreaking arrangement because it will reduce the capital ADB needs to hold for credit risk, freeing up capital for a substantial increase in lending to climate projects. Every dollar of guarantee into IF-CAP will result in the capacity to make new loans," he added.

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Judiciary's authority to interpret the Constitution: Marriyum

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Tuesday said that a transparent and fair system has been introduced by the recent legislation by the Parliament amending Article 184 (3).

"The Parliament will go to any extent to protect its constitutional powers", the minister said in a statement. The Parliament has the right to fully protect and defend its constitutional rights, she said adding no one could take away the constitutional power of Parliament for legislation.

She said that the judiciary's authority was to interpret the Constitution and laws but it had no power to rewrite the Constitution or impose restrictions on legislative power of the Parliament. The Parliament passed a law on the long-standing demand of the lawyers' fraternity, bar councils and bar associations, she maintained.

The minister said that the legislation relating to Article 184-3 does not curtail the powers, independence and autonomy of the judiciary. By this legislation, 'One-Man-Show' and 'Imperial court-like' objections were addressed. The three senior-most judges of the Supreme Court will exercise this power in consultation, she said.

3 terrorists killed, two injured in IBOs: ISPR

E.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Three terrorists were killed including a commander whereas two were injured in separate intelligence based operations (IBOs) conducted by the Security Forces in Tank and DI Khan on Monday.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release on Tuesday, the Security Forces had conducted two intelligence based operations in Tank and DI Khan on reported presence of terrorists in the area. During conduct of the operations, after intense fire exchange, three terrorists were sent to hell including terrorist commander Jabbar Shah alias Shah Alam while two terrorists were injured.

The sanitization of the surrounding areas was being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area. "Security Forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism," the ISPR said.

Bushra Bibi to 'file case' against Maryam

LAHORE (Agencies): Bushra Bibi, wife of former prime minister Imran Khan, has decided to lodge a criminal case against Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz for defamation, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Fawad Chaudhry said Tuesday.

The PTI's senior vice president, in a press conference in Islamabad, said the ruling party leader Maryam alleged that Bushra Bibi was taking bribes for getting official documents signed by the authorities during the previous PTI-led government. "She has never participated in any political activities [...] she was only seen visiting panahgahs [shelter homes]," he remarked. Despite the fact that the former first lady is an apolitical person, Fawad said, Maryam continued to hurl allegations against her.

CJP: Political parties want to 'pick & choose' benches

(Continued from Page 1)

component of the Constitution and it cannot be changed. "It is alleged that the fundamental part of the Constitution was violated through legislation for the first time in the country's history," he remarked. He added that the chief justice has the authority to appoint seven senior judges and form a full court.

Only the president, CJP Bandial said, can file a reference as declared by the court in the Iftikhar Chaudhry case. "A reference against a judge cannot prevent them from working until the opinion of the Supreme Judicial

Council," he said. The CJP said that the court gave the same decision even in the Justice Qazi Faez Isa case and highlighted that he has receives complaints against judges regularly.

"Complaints keep coming against most of the Supreme Court judges including myself," he added. Criticising political parties for seeking verdicts based on their wishes, the chief justice said: "Political people want decisions of their choice, not justice." The demand for a full court and removal of judges was also made during the elections delay case. "The decision of the Supreme Court judges is the decision of the court. Every

institution is bound to implement the Supreme Court's orders," the CJP said. The hearing of the pleas was adjourned by the court till May 8. "We will resume the case on Monday and then review all the issues," CJP Bandial said. He also directed all parties in the case to submit written arguments in the case.

After having the PBC's request rejected during the hearing, its lawyer Hassan Raza Pasha apologised to the judiciary in case of any hurt caused. "We are not angry. We will leave [eventually]. PBC will stay here, we won't," CJP Bandial said. "A request for formation of a full court was made

earlier, but not for the exclusion of judges," Pasha elaborated.

CJP Bandial asked the PBC counsel to find out what a full court is according to lawyers. Pasha said he has informed the court about lawyers' concerns. "The Supreme Court bar has to protect the institution," the chief justice remarked. He said that it should first be understood what the law is and why is it made. "The court should consider expanding the bench," AGP Awan said. The CJP responded saying that the members of the bench can also be reduced.

"If the judges of the Supreme Court are not respected, then there will be no

demand for justice," the top judge said. He lamented that it was shameful that a request for full court was made in the previous case.

The Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023, which is aimed at regulating the powers of the CJP, was approved by the Parliament during a joint sitting on April 10. The National Assembly, on April 21, notified the Supreme Court (Practice and Procedure) Bill 2023 as an act. The bill's implementation was halted by the same bench hearing the case today.

The top court, during the last hearing of the case on April 13, had stopped the implementation of the law

observing that if the law received the assent of the president, the bill would not be acted upon in any manner till further order. "The moment that the Bill receives the assent of the President or (as the case may be) it is deemed that such assent has been given, then from that very moment onwards and till further orders, the Act that comes into being shall not have, take or be given any effect nor be acted upon in any manner," read the nine-page interim order issued on April 13. In its order, the bench stated that the facts and circumstances presented here are extraordinary both in import and effect.