

ATC grants bail to Imran Riaz

LAHORE (INP): Anti-Terrorism Court has granted bail to journalist Imran Riaz in Zaman park attack case. Imran Riaz was arrested amid attack on police and vandalism case. The Police had presented Imran Riaz in ATC a few days ago and had pleaded for the physical remand from the court. However, the court had granted bail to journalist Imran Riaz in the anti-corruption case also and ordered him to deposit a guarantee bond of Rs 1,00,000.



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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif being welcomed by President-elect Asif Ali Zardari upon his arrival at Zardari House.

Armed forces prepared to defend country: COAS

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited troops engaged in Field Exercise in training area near Rahim Yar Khan.

COAS was briefed about exercise Shamsheer-e-Sehra. The aim of the exercise was to enhance professional skills and battlefield procedures required to meet future challenges in operational environment.

COAS witnessed integrated fire and battle maneuvers of various elements including Armour,

Infantry, Mechanized Infantry, Artillery, Air Defence, and Anti-Tank Guided Missiles. Pakistan Airforce Aircrafts also participated in the exercise.

The exercise also incorporated Electronic Warfare capabilities and Information Operations required to subdue enemy's communications capabilities and disinformation campaign during war. COAS spent complete day with the troops in the exercise area. While interacting with the troops participating in the exercise COAS lauded the training stan-

dards, operational preparedness and high morale of all ranks. He emphasised that Armed Forces should always remain prepared against any misadventure by the enemy.

"Pakistan Armed Forces, with support of the nation, are fully prepared to defend the territorial integrity and sovereignty of our motherland against full spectrum of threat," COAS concluded. Earlier, on arrival in the field area, COAS was received by Corps Commander Karachi and Inspector General Training and Evaluation.

PTI calls election of president as unconstitutional

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) dubbed the election for the head of the state as unconstitutional and acceptable because on one hand the newly-elect president would ride to the highest constitutional position on coattails of the votes of mandate thieves and on the other the Electoral Colleges was incomplete.

Reacting over the constitutional presidential elections, PTI Spokesperson said that the vote of the unelected members, who took fake oath on the stolen mandate, for the president was completely unconstitutional and unacceptable. He stated that a spectacle was being staged in the name of presidential election and the unelected members on reserved seats were sworn in by brazenly flouting the court clear order.

PTI Spokesperson further noted that the election for the slot of the highest constitutional position without completing the Electoral College was violative to the Constitution and unlawful. He went on to say that after of the theft of the public mandate in the daylight, making the rejected people members of the National and Punjab assemblies by trampling upon the court order under their feet put a big question mark on the independence of the judiciary.

PTI Spokesperson made it clear that the votes of the non-elected members and those sitting in the Assembly on the basis of fake Form 47 in the Presidential elections would have no legal and constitutional value and status.

Asif Ali Zardari was elected as the 14th president of Pakistan for the second time on Saturday. Zardari, the joint candidate of PPP and PML-N, received 411 votes against the Sunni Ittehad Council backed candidate Mehmood Khan Achakzai who secured 181 votes.

The current ruling coalition, comprising the PML-N, the PPP, and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), has backed former president Asif Ali Zardari. The President is elected by an electoral college comprising members of the Senate, National Assembly and the four provincial assemblies. A joint session of the parliament was held at the parliament house in Islamabad today where the members of National Assembly and the Senate will exercise their right to vote. The Election Commission of Pakistan Saturday declared all four assemblies as a polling station for the conduct of the presidential elections.

Mahmood Khan Achakzai — the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) backed presidential candidate — on Friday asked the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to postpone the election as the electoral college is "incomplete".

However, ECP rejected his request. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and other political leaders cast their votes during the presidential election in the National Assembly held on Saturday. Premier Shehbaz Sharif, PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif, PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Abdul Aleem Khan, Ishaq Dar and other leaders cast their vote in the National Assembly. Senator Faisal Javed, opposition leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, Asad Qaiser, Akhtar Mengal, Mahmood Khan Achakzai also exercised their right to vote in presidential election.

The first vote for the presidential election was cast by Amer Talal and Abdul Aleem Khan cast the second vote. Two polling booths and two counters have been set up in the National Assembly for the voting process. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and other political leaders cast their votes during the presidential election in the National Assembly held on Saturday. Voting for country's head of state was held simultaneously in the national and provincial assemblies besides the Senate.

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Asif Ali Zardari, is the widow of Pakistan's first female prime minister Shaheed Benazir Bhutto. Born on July 26, 1955, in Karachi, Asif Ali Zardari is the son of Hakim Ali Zardari, a tribal chief and prominent landowner. Zardari

Zardari elected Pakistan's president for second time

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: PPP co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari was elected as the 14th president of Pakistan for the second time on Saturday. Zardari, the joint candidate of PPP and PML-N, received 411 votes against the Sunni Ittehad Council backed candidate Mehmood Khan Achakzai who secured 181 votes.

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Achakzai accepts defeat, congratulates Zardari

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: As presidential election results poured in from all legislative assemblies, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) candidate Mahmood Khan Achakzai on Saturday expressed his views that the country has witnessed "first of its kind of poll" for the coveted post without "horse-trading" in which he contested joint candidate of ruling coalition — Asif Ali Zardari.

Accepting his defeat against Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) nominee Zardari in the presidential race, Achakzai told reporters that it was a unique election in which "horse-trading" was not witnessed. He congratulated Zardari on becoming the president of Pakistan for a second term and termed it the "beginning of a new era" as it was a "rare" poll which was held in a good environment.

He also thanked the PTI-backed lawmakers for voting in his support, however, he specifically complained about the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) and the National Party (NP) for not casting their votes despite announcing to sit in the opposition. "In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), all 90 lawmakers voted for me. The PTI lawmakers cast their ballots for me in the presence of cameras. A good trend has been set [...] next matters would be discussed in the parliament," said Achakzai. He criticised Dr Abdul Malik for promising to vote for him and backtracking later. "We have to respect the decision of the nation that voted for one party. We [political parties] also have to support each other," the politico said, however, he opposed taking parliamentary conflicts to the judiciary. At the conclusion of the key electoral event, Achakzai urged for collaboration amongst parties in the national interests in testing times. To a question regarding JUI-F's decision to not take part in the presidential poll, Achakzai replied that Maulana Fazlur Rehman has seemingly fallen asleep. The PTI-SIC candidate said that the incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan was his friend since the formation of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM).

JUI, GDA boycott election

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) of Maulana Fazlur Rehman boycotted the presidential election advised its members of the electoral college not to cast their votes on Saturday.

The JUI had also not participated in the elections of Prime Ministership, Speakership and Deputy Speakership and now, it has announced a boycott of the presidential election too. JUI members from Senate, National Assembly, Balochistan Assembly, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly will remain absent to avoid be a part of the polling process of presidential election on Saturday. JUI chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said that they will not engage in any electoral process until they get their mandate.

After Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F), Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) also announced the boycott of today's (Saturday) presidential election. Addressing a press conference in Karachi, GDA leader Pir Sadaruddin Shah Rashdi also announced support for the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in protest against what he called rigging in the elections.

Zardari to be sworn in as President today

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President-elect Asif Zardari will take the oath of his office at the President's House today (Sunday). Chief Justice of Pakistan, Qazi Faez Isa, will administer him the oath of office.

Preparations for this momentous occasion are in full swing, with invitations extended to esteemed guests by the President's House. As the nation eagerly awaits the swearing-in ceremony, the event symbolizes a significant transition of power and a testament to Pakistan's commitment to democratic principles. PPP co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari was elected as the 14th president of Pakistan for the second time on Saturday.

served as the 11th president of Pakistan from 2008 to 2013 and was the first politician to complete a full term in office. He has been a member of the national assembly of Pakistan since August 2018. The historic Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) was also a Zardari's brainchild that became the first widely acknowledged social safety net in the region that earned accolades internationally.

In 2013, former Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and former President Asif Ali Zardari agreed to build an economic

corridor between the two countries which gave birth to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The historic milestone of Belt and Road Initiative further enhanced the mutual connectivity between the two countries, opened vistas of progress and development and generated unprecedented employment opportunities to Pakistanis. While he also helped reset the contours of the country's foreign policy garnering international community's support on various regional and global issues.



Institute of Business Administration
Karachi
Leadership and Ideas for Tomorrow

IBA-OGDCL Talent Hunt Program 2024

The Stepping Stone of Success



About the Program:

The IBA - OGDCL Talent Hunt Program is a fully funded Orientation Training Program jointly implemented by the IBA, Karachi and the Oil & Gas Development Company Ltd (OGDCL). The program imparts aptitude skill development and training to capable and deserving students from selected districts of Pakistan for the comprehensive admission process of undergraduate degree programs at the IBA, Karachi.

Eligibility Criteria

Financially deserving students eligible with either;

- 70% or above marks in HSSC-I examination from any Board of Secondary & Intermediate Education of Pakistan in year 2023 & appearing for HSSC-II examination in year 2024.

OR

- 70% or above marks in HSSC-II examination from any Board of Secondary & Intermediate Education of Pakistan in year 2023.

- Must possess the domicile from the mentioned districts.

Dates & Deadlines

OGDCL-THP applications open for batch 2024	Friday, March 1, 2024
Application submission deadline	Monday, March 25, 2024
Shortlisted candidates' announcement	Tuesday, April 9, 2024
Assessment Test for the Orientation Program 2024*	Sunday April 28, 2024
Result announcement	Tuesday, May 12, 2024
Telephonic Panel Interviews	May 17, 2024 to May 19, 2024
Final shortlisted candidates' announcement	Monday, May 20, 2024
Orientation Program starts	Monday, June 3, 2024

* Assessment Test will be conducted in Hyderabad, Sukkur, Thatta, Attock, Chakwal, Taunsa, Dera Ghazi Khan, Kohat, Karak, Lakki Marwat, Orakzai, Dera Bugti, and Jhal Magsi

Institute of Business Administration Karachi, Talent Hunt Program office

NBP Building, Main Campus, KU Circular Road, Karachi 75270, Pakistan, For Call (92-21) 38104700, Fax (92-21) 99261508

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Program Outlines

- Candidates successfully qualifying Orientation Assessment test ** and interview and wishing to pursue an undergraduate degree at IBA Karachi, are encouraged to apply.

- Candidates selected on merit and offered admission in undergraduate degree programs will be considered for up to 100 % scholarship/arrangements or Garz-e-Hasna against tuition fees & other facilities depending upon the need assessment of the student for the mentioned 4-year degree programs on the recommendation of IBA - Financial Assistance Committee.

** Assessment Test will be based on Matriculation & HSSC Level-I curriculum. For Test related material visit the website:<https://ogdclthp.iba.edu.pk/testpreparation.php>

LAST DATE TO APPLY
MARCH 25TH, 2024



Candidates from selected districts are eligible to apply for the program.

Scan for Online Application Form:
(Refer to the below QR code)



112,000 relief hampers delivered

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Divisional Commissioner Muhammad Ali Randhawa said on Saturday that over 112,000 relief hampers, as part of the 'Neghaban Ramzan Programme', had been delivered directly to households throughout Lahore division.

In a statement issued here, he provided a comprehensive update about the relief hampers' distribution. He highlighted that 63,186 hampers were delivered at the doorsteps of eligible beneficiaries in Lahore city.

Commissioner Randhawa said that in Sheikhpura district, 21,008 households received the Neghaban Ramzan Package, while 4,228 hampers were delivered in Nankana Sahib and 2,352 in Kasur under the initiative.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's proactive directives were ensuring efficient and timely delivery of essential items to eligible recipients.

The commissioner highlighted the meticulous verification process, guaranteeing accuracy and transparency in the distribution of the Neghaban Ramzan Package. The ongoing verification process is approaching completion, with data uploads in progress. The delivery operations continue with steadfast commitment and efficiency, extending crucial assistance to those in need.

Zardari success is victory of democracy

LAHORE (APP): Chaudhry Munawar Anjum, central deputy secretary of the Pakistan People's Party, lauded President Asif Ali Zardari's re-election on Saturday, and termed it a victory for democracy.

In a statement released on Saturday, Anjum commended Zardari's commitment to the democratic process, echoing the sentiments of the late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

"President Zardari has exemplified the essence of democracy by emphasising the pivotal role of people, represented through the parliament, as the true architects of law and governance," added Anjum.

Highlighting Zardari's reverence for Bhutto's vision and the rule of law, Anjum underscored the significance of democratic principles in the nation's political landscape. "Democracy is the best revenge," Anjum asserted, attributing Nawaz Sharif's recognition of Bhutto as a martyr as a significant milestone in Pakistan's democratic journey.

Anjum emphasised the importance of supporting Zardari's presidency as a testament to the resilience of democratic values. "President Asif Ali Zardari stands as an unwavering champion of democratic politics," concluded Anjum, affirming his party's steadfast commitment to upholding democratic ideals.

WCLA organizes photo walk

LAHORE (APP): Walled City of Lahore Authority organized a photo walk in the Shalimar Bagh here on Saturday.

Over 300 photographers participated in the photo walk and toured different parts of the Shalimar Bagh. The purpose of this photo walk was to bring different parts of the bagh and historical buildings to public view. The renovation work is being carried out by Walled City of Lahore Authority. The photo walk consisted of historical buildings of Shalimar Bagh such as Arz Begi, Fountains, Hammam Shahi, Watch Tower, Queen's Bedroom, Naqar Khana, Bara Dari, Daulat Khana a Khas o Aam , Sawan Bhadon Pavilion and King's khawbgah.

Each of these buildings has its own unique identity in history. At the end of this tour, a wonderful musical performance and drum circle was organized. Over 250 people participated in the drum circle and enjoyed the performance. The participants appreciated the efforts of Walled City of Lahore Authority. Director General Kamran Lashari says that such activities are of significant importance for the promotion of historical buildings and tourism and the Walled City Authority is working day and night to achieve this important goal.



LAHORE: Workers of People's Party celebrating on the victory of President-elect Asif Ali Zardari outside Punjab Assembly . —APP Photo

Shandana will have to proof her claims: Azma Bokhari

LAHORE (INP): Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari on Saturday said the practice of leveling baseless allegations won't be allowed to go unchecked, as she blasted SIC's Shandana Gulzar — an PTI-backed independent elected to the National Assembly from Peshawar — for accusing Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz of orchestrating the killing of Zille Shah.

Zille Shah, a PTI supporter whose original name was Ali Bilal, had died in road accident, but the party leadership accused the then PML-N government of killing him during the protests held outside the party founder's Zaman Park residence in Lahore.

The claim was, however, unfounded as CCTV footage revealed that the vehicle hitting him belonged to a PTI leader

and the death was used to obtain political mileage.

But Shandana recently, out of nowhere, again blamed Maryam for his death and claimed that she had an audio recording to proof her stance — a statement which triggered an immediate reaction as Azma had promised legal action against her in a post shared on X — the social media platform formerly known as Twitter.

On Saturday, Azma, who took oath as Punjab information minister earlier this week, told reporters that Shandana would have to appear before the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and substantiate her claim.

The FIA Cyber Crime Wing has issued a notice to Shandana and directed him to appear in person on March 14 on the charges of running an "highly

intimidating campaign against state functionaries and creating violence in public and society through information system" [social media].

Waving a copy of the FIA notice, Azma said Shandana had been managing an anti-state campaign which must be checked — a reference to multiple statements issued by the SIC lawmaker which coincide with the spread of disinformation in an organised manner.

"You always come up with the chants of political victimisation whenever asked for evidence," Azma said while describing the PTI members as "political vultures" and added that Shandana levelled an unfounded accusation against the Punjab chief minister.

Addressing the SIC member, Azma said she

would not be allowed to play the "woman card" and "political card" and must have to appear before the FIA.

The PTI founder could not get a free pass to accuse anyone of anything according to his wishes, she said and remarked that the electoral success in 2018 was a "jackpot" for the PTI. They would be welcomed, [only] if they protested in a peaceful manner, Azma said, as Maryam had told a press conference some days back that she would not spare anyone creating law and order situation or damaging public property.

When asked about possible restrictions on social media, Azma said she was a great advocate of freedom of expression, but insulting or accusing anyone of murder on social media could not be tolerated.

Police make foolproof security for PA

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Police ensured foolproof security arrangements at the Punjab Assembly on the occasion of the presidential elections.

IGP Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar visited the Punjab Assembly and reviewed the security arrangements. He met the police officers and personnel posted on security duty. He instructed the police officers and officials to be on alert and perform their duty diligently.

The IGP said that excellent security arrangements

had been made on the occasion of polling for the presidential elections in the Punjab Assembly. He instructed the police teams not to allow anyone to take the law into their hands. He ordered to take action according to the law against the evil elements causing any disturbance. He said that monitoring of security and traffic arrangements is being ensured with the help of CCTV cameras.

Earlier, the IGP issued orders for increasing security of the entire province,

including in the Punjab Assembly, on the occasion of the presidential elections.

He, while instructing the officers, said the security of the entire Punjab including the provincial capital should be tightened. Under the direction of IGP Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, Dolphin Squad, PERU and Elite teams ensured effective patrolling in and around the Punjab Assembly, while CTO Lahore herself ensured the flow of traffic during the important assembly session.

Police arrest 4 gamblers

KARACHI (APP): In an operation, the Super Market police station conducted a raid on confidential information, resulting in the apprehension of four individuals engaged in gambling activities. According to the statement provided by SSP Central Zeeshan Shafiq Siddiqui, the raid took place in the Liaquatabad area, where the Super Market police station apprehended the suspects red-handed. The arrested individuals have been identified as Muneeb Ahmed, Zohaib, Ali, and Khadim. Upon their apprehension, authorities seized a significant amount of cash, along with two mobile phones and various gambling materials.

CM orders immediate treatment of brain-tumor patient

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Nawaz Sharif has directed the Punjab health secretary to immediately start treatment of a brain-tumor patient, Farzan, son of Mohammad Rizwan Kashif, a resident of Loharanwala in Qila Didar Singh, Gujranwala.

The chief minister issued these instructions on the recommendations of a medical board, constituted for Farzan's treatment.

Earlier, the medical board had recommended Farzan's treatment abroad. But later after further research, it assessed that the child can be treated in the country.

The chief minister directed to immediately transfer Farzan to Children's Hospital. Best treatment facilities should be provided to the child, she instructed. She directed Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique to personally monitor the case.

CM orders precautionary measures for rains: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has directed all relevant departments to take preventive measures to avoid any untoward situation in the face of expected heavy rains in the province.

He directed the Meteorological and other departments concerned to share prediction about increase in severity of stormy rains from March 11 to 14. She said the public should be warned of the situation in advance, adding that help should be taken from the media, social media and mobile alerts service in this regard.

The chief minister directed the agencies like Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Punjab and Rescue 1122 to take effective steps in close coordination with all relevant departments to ensure public safety. She also ordered

for taking effective measures for protection of livestock in rural areas.

CM congratulates office-bearers of NPC: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has congratulated newly-elected office-bearers of the National Press Club (NPC) Islamabad.

In her message, the CM extended her felicitation to President Azhar Jatoti, Vice Presidents Ehtishamul Haq, Sahar Aslam Khan, Secretary Nayyar Ali, Joint Secretary Aun Shirazi, Sahar Sh Qureshi, Finance Secretary Waqar Abbasi and other office-bearers.

The chief minister expressed her best wishes for their success in promoting good journalistic ethics in the country. She added,"It is hoped that the newly-elected body of National Press Club Islamabad will play a positive role in convenience and welfare of journalists."

Nisar congratulates Zardari on his election as President

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan People's Party Sindh president Nisar Ahmed Khuuro on Saturday congratulated Asif Ali Zardari on his election as 14th president of Pakistan.

Talking to media at Sindh Assembly building, MPA Nisar Khuuro said President Asif Ali Zardari was the pioneer of 18th Amendment of the Constitution and during

his tenure as President of Pakistan, provincial autonomy clauses of the constitution will be implemented in letter and spirit.

National Finance Commission Award has been delayed since long but after election of President Zardari, new NFC will soon be announced, Khuuro hoped.

He said strong provinces are the based of

the strong Federation and after the abolition of the concurrent list of the constitution, the federal ministries which are to be transferred to the provinces should be handed over to them.

He expressed the hope that after election of Asif Zardari as President, democracy will be strengthened and the Parliament will complete its constitutional term.

LESCO detects 440 power pilferers in 24 hours

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has detected a total of 440 connections from where the customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts (Lahore, Sheikhpura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara) on the 177th day of grand anti-power theft campaign.

The LESCO spokesman told media here Saturday that the company has also submitted FIR applications against electricity thieves, out of which 209 FIRs have been registered in respective police stations.

Grand anti-power theft operations against electricity thieves are being conducted on the directives of the Federal Power Division and the LESCO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engineer Shahid Haider is supervising these operations. The LESCO chief

vowed that the operations would continue without discrimination until the complete end of electricity theft. The electricity pilferers as well as the LESCO officers and employees who facilitate them are also being brought to justice.

On the 177th consecutive day of the anti-power theft campaign, the spokesman added, large commercial consumers were also found involved in electricity theft and all of them were also disconnected and charged with detection units. Among the seized connections 09 were commercial, 01 industrial, 05 agricultural and 426 domestic, and all these connections were disconnected and charged with a total of 460,298 units as detection bill amounting to Rs 14,324 million.

Apprising the media about some major power pilferers, he explained that

LESCO charged Rs 1.6 million detection bill to an electricity pilferer in Saddar area of Kasur district; Rs 1.6 million detection bill to a power pilferer in Mozang area, Rs 500,000 detection bill to an electricity thief in Manawan area, and Rs 350,000 fine in the form of detection bill to a customer stealing electricity in Batapur area.

During the 177 days of the grand anti-theft campaign, the spokesman mentioned, the LESCO detected pilferage on 61,794 power connections and 57,138 FIRs have been registered against electricity thieves in the relevant police stations, while 19,885 accused have so far been arrested by the police. The LESCO has so far charged a total of 80,135,550 detection units worth Rs 3,055,504,552 to all the power pilferers.

Minister, IGP visit Police Khidmat Centres

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister Primary and Secondary Healthcare Khawaja Imran Nazir, along with IGP Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, Saturday visited the Police khidmat Centers and Special Initiative Police Stations in provincial capital.

He arrived at Abshar Police Service Centre Shadman and Special Initiative Police Station Gulberg.

The IGP Punjab briefed

the minister about the facilities being provided at the service centre, police station and Saiban Centre to the public. He informed the minister about traffic licensing, training, modern facilities being provided to citizens including automated system in police stations. He said all service centres, police stations and offices of the Punjab Police had been equipped with modern infrastructure, technology and IT facilities and the best policing facilities were being provided to citizens in all offices including Police Service Centres, Police Stations, Traffic Licensing Centres of Punjab.

The provincial minister appreciated efforts of IGP Dr. Usman Anwar for modernising infrastructure development of public service delivery police offices.

Railways conducts seminar on passenger safety

LAHORE (APP): In a proactive move to prioritise passenger safety, the Pakistan Railways Lahore Division collaborated with Rescue 1122 to conduct a seminar, aimed at training operational staff at the railway washing lines.

The event, held on Saturday, encompassed essential aspects of emergency preparedness and firefighting techniques.

One of the focal points of the seminar was the training, provided by Rescue 1122 on emergency fire extinguishing methods. Attendees were

not only briefed on theoretical aspects but also provided with an opportunity to participate in practical demonstrations, led by Rescue 1122 experts.

The seminar drew participation from various departments, including electrical, RTA, traffic, mechanical power van, and commercial staff, highlighting the comprehensive approach taken towards ensuring passenger safety.

Muhammad Imran, Divisional Mechanical Engineer, spearheaded the seminar, underscoring the importance of equipping

railway operational staff with basic firefighting skills. Additionally, Muhammad Zeeshan, Rescue 1122 Community Coordinator, and Lead Fighter Staff, Mian Waheed Shahzad, engaged in detailed discussions on controlling fires during emergencies.

Muhammad Hanif Gul, Divisional Superintendent Railway, reiterated the significance of ongoing training initiatives for railway staff, emphasising the need for continuous learning and adaptation to handle unforeseen situations effectively.



پاکستان سول ایوی ایشن اتھارٹی

PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA)

OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME A PART OF PCAA'S PROFESSIONAL TEAM

SITUATION VACANT NOTICE NO. 01/2024

Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority requires services of qualified individual to fill the following vacant post on contract basis where selection will be made purely on suitability and merit:-

Post	No. of Positions	Prescribed Qualification / Experience / Desired Skills	Quota & Pay Scale	Age Limit
Director Security (Equivalent to EG-09)	One (01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Masters with 02nd Division from HEC Recognized University / Institute.■ Any other professional degrees / intelligence related training / Aviation Security training or course will be added qualification.■ Minimum 25 years experience in any management cadre with at least 10 years experience of handling security related issues in a large public sector / military setup■ Experience of at least 02 years in command position in BS-20 or equivalent in a security or intelligence related setup■ Experience of Working with Information Technology and Security Systems will be preferred.■ Experience in conducting Security Inspections & Audits and Disaster Relief would be an added qualification■ Strong working knowledge of security related laws and their implementation■ Strong administrative skills such as decision making, planning and organizing abilities■ Knowledge of ICAO Standards and recommended practices pertaining to Aviation Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Merit■ Lump Sum Package of Rs. 589,254 Per Month (Negotiable as per policy)■ With 5% Annual increment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Maximum 57 years (including all age relaxations)

Note:- The incumbent may be placed in Pakistan Airport Authority as per the service exigencies and decision of Competent Forum.

Application Procedure:

- Interested candidates are required to fill & submit Online Job Application Form available at www.caapakistan.com.pk within fifteen days from the date of this advertisement.
- Candidates will be required to upload scanned copies of certificate / degree of the required qualification only of the concerned post as mentioned above and CNIC while applying for the job.
- In case a candidate does not upload the above documents with the online application form, his/her application will be rejected.
- All the interested candidates must read the Terms of Reference (TOR) mentioned in the detailed notice available at www.caapakistan.com.pk before applying for the post.

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PID(K)# 2523

Ramazan moon sighting: Ruet-e-Hilal body meets tomorrow

PESHAWAR (INP): With the month of Ramazan a couple of days away, Central Ruet-e-Hilal committee will meet on March 11 (Monday) in Peshawar for moon sighting of Ramzan 1445 Hijrah.

The central committee session will be started after Asr Prayers on Monday (29 Shaaban) in Peshawar.

Ruet-e-Hilal committee chairman Abdul Khahir Azad will preside over the meeting. The Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee will convene meeting in Peshawar along with zonal committees meetings in their respective areas.

The committee after the meeting will make announcement about Ramazan moon sighting or otherwise.

On the other hand, according to astronomers, although the moon of Ramzan will rise on March 10, it will not be visible at that time, the moon will be clearly visible on March 11.

Experts said the first Taraweeh will take place on the night of March 11 as there was a 95 percent probability that the first fast will be observed on Tuesday (March 12).

Muslims around the world observe fast from dawn till sunset with the fasting hours falling between 12 and 17 hours - depending on the geographical locations across the globe.

Earlier, it was reported that Islamic countries would observe the crescent for Ramazan on March 10, various news agencies reported.

The moon is predicted to appear after sunset in most Islamic countries on the day of the central conjunction, which is set for 9am GMT, according to the International Astronomical Centre. Because of this, it is expected that March 11 will be the start of Ramazan in many countries.

Despite this, the scientific criteria for crescent visibility indicate that there is little chance of seeing the crescent on March 10.

Session on low birth weight, maternal adolescent anemia held



PESHAWAR (APP): Nutrition International Organization in collaboration with Health Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa organized interactive session on low birth weight births and maternal adolescent anemia.

The event that was held to mark International Women Day was also attended by Meena Khan, Provincial Minister for Higher Education, Archives and Libraries.

Provincial Coordinator Nutrition International, Darya Khan briefed the participants about different programs of NI in KP including Maternal New-born Health & Nutrition (MNHN), Advancing Maternal Health through Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation and Implementation Research AMMI Project Universal Salt Iodization, Food Fortification Program, Weekly Iron Folic Acid Supplementation for In school Adolescent Girls Project and Vitamin A Supplementation & Zinc.

KP govt notifies office timings for Ramazan

PESHAWAR (APP): The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has announced working timing of offices during Holy month of Ramazan.

According to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Administration Department, timings of provincial government offices on five day week basis are 9: AM to 3:00 PM from Monday to Thursday and 9: AM to 12.30: PM on Friday.

The timings of provincial government offices on six day week basis are 9: AM to 2:00 PM from Monday to Saturday and 9: AM to 12.30: PM on Friday.

Governor urged doctors to work passionately

PESHAWAR (APP): The Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali here Saturday urged young doctor to work professionally and passionately to mitigate the sufferings of humanity.

He was addressing the 5th convocation of Khyber Girls Medical College as a Chief Guest. Governor also stressed upon doctors to venture into emerging fields of medical technology and focus research to eliminate diseases for betterment of ailing community.

He also congratulated parents on completion of their children's education and said that it is duty of parents to support children in their education journey.

Governor also highlighted efforts of government to educate girls and said that the increased number of girl students in every institution is a proof that they are being provided equal opportunities of growth and development.

He urged doctors to serve people keeping in view their miseries and said that women doctors should provide medical help to female patients in their homes.

CM grieves over martyrdom of cop in firing

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur on Saturday strongly condemned the incident of firing and killing of policeman in district Tank.

In a statement issued here, the CM expressed grief over the martyrdom of the policeman and directed police chief to take necessary measures for immediate payment to bereaved family from Shaheed package.

The Chief Minister also directed the IGP to take measures for the immediate arrest of the elements involved in the firing.

He expressed condolences to the family members of the martyred official and prayed patience for them to bear the loss with fortitude.

Gandapur said the KP police have made eternal sacrifices in line of duty and the provincial government would not leave the family of the martyr alone.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur chairing a meeting of Mines and Mineral Development Department.

KMU celebrates Int'l Women's Day

PESHAWAR (APP): Zilli Huma, Dr. Aaiya Bukhari, Dr. Huma Atta alongside other esteemed women Associate and Assistant Professors of the University, gather with students.

In his address, VC KMU Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Haq expressed gratitude to all those committed to acknowledging and honoring the contributions of women in society, particularly in public health. He underscored the pivotal role of women across all spheres of life, stressing the importance of recognizing and appreciating their endeavors at all societal levels.

Dr. Zia Ul Haq underscored the recognition of women's significance in Islam and Pashtun culture, highlighting the collective responsibility to uphold their rights, enabling them to harness their full potential in societal service.

He commended frontline health workers for their vital role in polio eradication efforts, acknowledging their steadfast commitment and dedication.

The event provided a platform to accentuate the significance of women's empowerment through education and skill development, emphasizing their indispensable role in the nation's growth and development. VC KMU Prof. Dr. Zia Ul Haq called for concerted efforts to equip women with medical education and skills, enabling them to assume prominent roles across various fields, thereby fostering national development.

International Women's Day at KMU Peshawar not only celebrated women but also reaffirmed the University's commitment to promoting gender equality and empowering women across all facets of life.

Allied Colleges conclude literary week celebrating culture, talent

PESHAWAR (APP): The Medical Institute's (RMI) Allied Health Colleges Rehman College of Nursing (RCN), Rehman College of Rehabilitation Sciences (RCRS), and Rehman College of Allied Health Sciences (RCAHS) concluded their annual literary week on Saturday, marking a vibrant celebration of culture, artistic expression, and student talent.

The week-long event offered a variety of activities, fostering cultural awareness and providing a platform for students to showcase their creativity.

Renowned Urdu and Pashto poets, including Nasir Ali Sayed, Bakhtzada Danish, Munir Buner, Afsar Afghan and others captivated audiences with their powerful wordplay.

A thought-provoking poster competition explored diverse healthcare issues, showcasing the dedication of students from nursing, rehabilitation sciences, and allied health programs.

A special "Paint It Right" workshop and exhibition allowed students to hone their artistic skills and proudly display their creations.

The Trend Tradition Carnival showcased the rich cultural tapestry of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Traditional attire, exquisite handicrafts, and delicious local delicacies provided a glimpse into the region's unique identity. Besides a debate competition, digital book corner, and the launch of Dr. Tariq Saeed Mufti were also part of this splendid week.

The event was organized by the organizing team led by Chief Organizer Muhammad Imshad Khan, with organizers Rehana Nayab, Muhammad Numan, Hoor Ali Kakar, and Shazia Gul. Student organizers Yousaf ul Islam, Muhammad Musa, Azmat Ali Khan, and Muhammad Shayan played a pivotal role in the success of this event.

Seelay Srak Rehman, Director RCN, expressed her pride in the event's success. The week aimed to cultivate cultural understanding and provide a platform for student talent.

Students from all three colleges participated, showcasing the diverse cultures of Pakistan's provinces.

Small mercies

Faateh Nasir

Rudely awoken from one of the scant durations of sleep which she has been accustomed to calling a slumber, Shazia shuffles to find her feet as the soft wails of her son (Shams) land on her ears much like bombs being dropped across the coastline of the Eastern Mediterranean Sea. As she frantically searches for her slippers under the delicate and termite infested wooden frame of her makeshift bed, there is a loud thump, followed by an eerie silence which is all too familiar.

She is firmly instructed to pay no mind to the ramblings of a child that is no more than a mere reject and a blight on her husband's name and family. She has suffered enough insults over the past six years of her twenty-five year old life on this green earth to recognise the raspy yet unrelenting voice of her elderly sister-in law (Bilqeess). She has learned that sharp retorts will earn her no favours in her own house, but rather lead to coerced apologies on her part.

The charpoy on which Shams finds a few hours of respite, from the agony of stomach cramps and abdominal discomfort, is positioned strategically next to the door of Shazia's master bedroom. The door is left ajar to accommodate the seven-year old child's frequent visits to his parents during the dark hours of the night.

Ignoring the command given to her earlier, Shazia proceeds to gently lay her bruised hands on Shams's forehead and recites certain magical words taught to her by her late mother-in-law, the meaning of which she does not know, but only that her ailing son finds comfort and respite as soon as he hears them. Although she allows half a smile to

grace her rather expressionless face, hesitation rules over her heart as she removes her hand to prepare herself for a long day ahead. Motherly love allows her to roll up her sleeves and almost sprint towards the kitchen to concoct a humble breakfast for her child and place a lid over the pan to prevent any adulteration of her prince's meal by ghostly flies that occupy the settlement which Shazia calls her muhalla.

Shazia quietly brushes past her sister-in-law but briefly retreats to poke her head inside the lounge to remind Asia that she needs to feed Shams and provide him with his medicines in the afternoon. Asia lets out a grunt and with that everyday ordeal put to rest, Shazia exits the baramda to start her day. The lingering stench from the trash lining the shanty boundary of her house momentarily annoys her, but a few steps lead her to the main street where she finds herself insignificant amongst the zooming of motorcycles, the street cries of fruit and vegetable vendors, and a loud procession taking place near the main chowk of the road, from where she takes her bus to work.

As she approaches the bus stop, she is beset by the sight of a crowd of men and young boys. While she is eager to catch the 9:15 bus to her mistress's house, she notices something odd as the crowd gets nearer: none of the members of the group have anything in common. While she tries her best to gather the slogans being chanted, the appearance of these people had no uniting factor: everyone had different sets of clothes, most did not have any long beards, no skullcaps in sight, above all there was not even a semblance of the usual suspects who are often part of such

processions in her part of town. As the chants grew clearer, her heart sank, and a single thought possessed her mind: her head was uncovered.

Never had fear been greater nor had she felt such an innate sense of danger. She clutched her dupatta and draped it across her head, leaving the partition of her hair visible, while she firmly fastened her bag to cover her torso in a defensive manner. With the thumps of their march and every utterance piercing the noise of motorcars and horse carts, images of a woman trapped in Ichhra bazaar played before her eyes. Whilst she blankly stared at her feet as she neared the bench where she waits for her bus, she was prompted to briefly raise her head. In that moment her eyes caught the relatively innocent, sympathetic and slightly ashamed expressions of a boy who could not have been more than two years older than her own son. In his eyes she saw a natural disapproval of the movement that he was partaking in, yet it appeared that he had been possessed by Descartes' demon to announce his presence and throw his hands in the air. For this poor soul, the desire to reach the metaphysical could not have been greater, yet mired in the controversies of the world, somehow he found himself promoting a cause the zealousness of which he might not even comprehend. She understood his struggle but had neither the time nor the patience to dwell on the misfortune of this boy. She returned to conscious reality and briskly walked across the main road while trying her best to avoid any unwarranted collisions with the angry gentlemen, to nestle herself into the seat from which she observes the various paan-stained

patterns formed on the wall adjacent to the foot path where a poorly constructed bus stop rests.

A forty five minute journey brought her to the culmination of her life's journey, which was a house in a relatively posh suburban area, where Shazia was kept in the employ of a socially upstanding housewife by the name of Aneela. A woman well in her forties, Aneela has grown bitter over the years, partially due to the neglect of a husband who's attention is demanded by two occupations - an executive position within a telecommunications company and golf. Shazia quietly brushes past the first checkpoint within the house - a monstrosity of a gate to separate the small oasis of civilisation from the anarchy beyond - and opens the mesh-screen door to the grease kitchen.

To recover from her eventful morning, Shazia opens the cabinet which has been graciously stocked with steel cutlery and glassware for the house-help and retrieves a cup to pour some refreshing yet slightly salty water from the kitchen tap. She squats ever so gently to take a gulp of water, when suddenly she is startled to find Aneela standing before her with a furrowed brow. Her mistress proceeds to scold her with indignation for being late and reminding Shazia of her purported incompetence. Shazia conveys her sincerest apology, while studying the expressions of her mistress. She is then pardoned and ordered to start cleaning the lounge. Shazia places the vessel of water at once and almost skips towards the lounge.

While she makes her way to the lounge, Shazia's eyes are graced by the sight of a creature huddled up in one corner of the room with an array of crayons and markers scattered on a

hand-knotted Persian carpet. Shazia's heart floods with love, she squints and smiles while letting out a soft whisper, "Ahsas." A flash of chestnut brown hair followed by the emergence of a round rosy face and a loud whelp "shaaaazuuuuu api," enables a re-affirmation of the close bond that Shazia had formed with her ward. Shazia studies the features of her young mistress as she is embraced and discovers a sense of longing in those dazzling hazel eyes. When asked what young Ahsas was occupied with, Shazia is promptly apprised that preparations were taking place for 8th March. After all, the posters and placards needed colour and what better artist could be equipped than the little mistress.

This re-union was briefly interrupted by a now-thoroughly annoyed Aneela, who would not have any further delays to the all-important task of housekeeping. Despite being paid well-below the provincial minimum wage, Shazia receives a sharp rebuke in the form of a reminder that her services are not worth what she is paid and that if she does not get back to work immediately, she will be out of a job by the next day. A high-pitched voice interrupts Aneela's onslaught "Mama she works for us day and night, she looks after me and cares for me whenever you are gone, please stop." These words embalm some of the wounds inflicted by Aneela's remarks, yet Shazia is chilled with the thought that a few more years under Aneela's tutelage would do well to rid the child of any sympathy towards anyone lesser than them. Therefore, Shazia silently retreats to the small closet next to the kitchen and retrieves her paraphernalia to complete her daily chores.

A brief sift through the closet results in the location of the broom and Shazia proceeds to sweep the marble floor of the lounge. Engrossed in this mundane task, she feels a tuck on one corner of her kameez and she finds Ahsas behind her, asking her whether she would join them for the March. Before Shazia could offer an answer, Aneela interjects by reminding Shazia that there is a lot of work to be done at the house on that day. Aneela almost brags and taunts Shazia, querying whether there would be any point for Shazia to be amongst those demanding their rights. Her lip quivers and she fights nobly to hold back the torrent of emotions that push tears to her eyes, yet she fails in this quest and small pearls of rebellion fall to the ground as she sweeps and sweeps away.

At the end of her arduous day, she timidly approaches Aneela who is now laying on her plush seven-seater sofa, to allow her feet to dangle and massaged by Rakhshanda - her lady-in waiting. Shazia has been contemplating the next moments for the past three days and she carefully looks to Aneela with a view of informing her that all her tasks are now complete and that she would like an advance of Rs. 4,500 for Shams's medicines and groceries. Aneela shoots an irritated look at Shazia, and outright rejects her request. Shazia's voice starts to shake and she implores Aneela to grant her request, to which her mistress raises her hand to silence Shazia. In an act of benevolence, Aneela begrudgingly agrees to give an advance of Rs. 2,000 and also orders Shazia to come in for work on Sunday as remuneration for this favour. Shazia almost chuckles as she recalls a simile her mother-

in-law would often use: "If wishes were horses, beggars would ride." She quickly regains her composure and accepts the charity which Aneela offers.

It is now Maghrib and Shazia rushes to reach home, before making a brief stop at the pharmacy. Shazia's haste results in her barging through the front door, where she finds Shams standing in the middle of the baramda looking at the star-filled sky above. She leaves her bag on the ground and rushes to kneel before her shahzada while planting kisses on both his cheeks. Her jubilation is marred by a thunderous clap from the kitchen. She instructs Shams to go and look out for the north star on the terrace. She then darts to the kitchen to find a tall burly figure standing next to the counter-top. A thorny voice echoes throughout the chamber, "where is the money?" Shazia feels parched all of a sudden, she can no longer muster any courage, and with it no voice to offer a response. Although her vision falls on the brown tiles of the kitchen, she is suddenly grabbed by the shoulders and shaken violently, all the while being scolded for not getting the money from her mistress. She tries to break free, while fighting her own instinct to scream, not to alert Shams. She almost falls in her attempt to wrest control which she should've sought sooner, yet she is finally thrown to the ground by her very own beloved, Sajjad.

Recalling a similar moment during her pregnancy, Shazia collapses and unties the knot of her pallu to produce a 1000 rupee note which had been kept for an emergency like this. Sajjad snatches it out of her hand and walks out, without saying another word. He was never like this, she

thinks to herself, the first three years of their marriage had been happy ones, she had been treated much like a delicate rose in the midst of the desert - cherished and adored. Ever since, Bilqeess had introduced Sajjad to the pleasures of hashish to treat his back pain, he had become addicted to the point where he could not function without it. Without it, he would become rabid and forget that Shazia was the same woman to whom he had promised the world.

Shazia stares blankly, while straightening her kameez to retrieve whatever composure she had left, and entered her bedroom to lay down. While looking towards the wall adjoining her bed, she slides her hand beneath her pillow and retrieves a small object, which could not be bigger than a thimble. She turns to her side with her back towards the door to shield the object from any sight. She then begins to delicately place the object in her palm, and admires the smoothness of the white marble, while dragging her fingers across the indentations which formed a face and arms, while admiring the miniature gold ornaments chiselled into the figure. This figure is the only thread that connects her to the life before all of this. A life from which she was taken away, the day she transitioned from Shazia Bhagwandas to Shazia Sajjad. While attempting to pray with whatever knowledge she had retained, she cannot help but feel desperate. Many a times, she has thought of ending it all, for every day she dies only to live another miserable day. Yet she looks to the charpoy and remembers, that while she has virtually killed the woman that was once Shazia, she has to live as Mama, Begum, and Bhabhi.



In brief

Three killed in Karak mishap F.P. Report

KARAK: Three people were killed and five were seriously injured in a terrible collision between a passenger coach and a container vehicle at Spina Mor on the Indus Highway. 1122 ambulances and disaster vehicles reached the spot and started rescue operations. According to rescue sources, three people were injured in the accident. People have died, including Sohbi Mansoor son of Mansoor Mateen resident of Aligadi Kirk City, Muhammad Syam son of Muhammad Javed resident of Tapi Karak and Gul Nadir Jan son of Wali Jan resident of Siraj Khel Takht Nusrati. Winky Siraj Khel, trailer driver Khalil son of unknown name, Shamsur Rehman son of Safirullah resident of Aisak Chontra, Mushtaq son of Rasool Bakhsh resident of Alipur district Muzaffargarh and Masma Shamim wife Latif resident of Sialkot were seriously injured. The seriously injured have been brought to Peshawar hospitals. As a result of the accident, the two vehicles got stuck together, for which Rescue 1122 and other organizations have started rescue activities.

Complaint cell established F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: District Administration Khal has established a complaint cell to control prices of daily use items in Ramadan. The complaint cell has been set up in Khal Bazar following directives of provincial government to facilitate people in Holy month of Ramadan. Masses have been urged to register their complaints in the cell that would be sent to district administration through online system. Necessary staff has also been deputed in complaint cell to take prompt action on complaints of people regarding overpricing and profiteering.

Seminar held F.P. Report

D I KHAN: A one-day awareness seminar and mega farmers' field day was organized here at Ratta Kulachi Farm to guide farmers about modern techniques for wheat cultivation and enabling them to increase their per acre yield. The seminar was organized by the Agricultural Research Institute (ARI), Dera Ismail Khan in coordination with Pakistan Agriculture and Research Council (PARC), Islamabad focusing on productivity enhancement of wheat under the PSDP Wheat Project. PARC Islamabad Chairman Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali was the chief guest of the event while he was accompanied by a team from PARC including Dr. Shahid Maqsood Gill (Member NR PARC), Dr. Imtiaz Hussain (Member PSD PARC), Muhammad Arshad Farooq (DG P&DD PARC), Muhammad Sohail (National Coordinator Wheat PARC) and Dr. Ashiq Saleem (DG AZRC DI Khan). Besides, National Project Director of PSDP-Wheat Dr. Muhammad Yaqoob and University of Agriculture DI Khan (UAD) Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Shakeeb Ullah along with their respective teams were also present on this occasion. KP Agriculture Research Director General Dr. Abdul Bari welcomed the guests and briefed them on the functioning of the agriculture research system in the province. National Project Director of PSDP-Wheat Dr. Muhammad Yaqoob, while addressing the seminar, shed light on the current status of wheat crops, the impact of the PSDP project, and the advancements made under the project.



QUETTA: Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti talking to media persons.

KKKUK celebrates World Women's Day

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, marked the celebration of World Women's Day, with a vibrant seminar organized by the Girls Students Society under the patronage of Mrs Mehk Sana, Lecturer English Department. Dr. Noor Ul Haq, Head of the Department of Botany, in his address to the ceremony emphasized the need for women's empowerment as an inevitable factor for the country's development.

During the celebration, Dr. Noor Ul Haq underscored the role of women, stating that no nation can progress without their active participation. He highlighted the significance of empowering women for the overall advancement of society.

In his message on World Women Day, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Naseer Ud Din



expressed that universities play a vital role in providing better opportunities and fostering growth for women. He acknowledged the essential role women play in the nation's building process, emphasizing their importance in various spheres of life.

Dr. Rafi Ullah Khan, the Registrar, commended the efforts of the organizing committee, led by Deputy Provost Zulfiqar Ali Anjum, Mrs. Mehk Sana, and other dedicated members. He lauded the committee for organizing an incredible function dedicated to recognizing and celebrating women's contributions. Mrs Mehk Sana in her speech to the Seminar

highlighted the empowerment of women. Resident Warden, Uzma Manzoor spoke on the harassment issues of women. Lecturers Psychology Department Miss Irum and Zoology Department Miss Sadia in their speeches stressed the need for providing health environment to the women folk.

The ceremony also addressed by other organizers, who highlighted the pivotal role and importance of women both in family and social systems. The ceremony was attended by large number of female students, faculty and staff of Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak.

FATA Quomi Jirga holds rally in Jamrud

F.P. Report

JAMRUD: A protest rally against merging of the ex-tribal region into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) was held here at Bab-e-Khyber, Jamrud on Saturday. Under the banner of FATA Quomi Jirga, large number of tribal elders, workers of Qabailistan Tahaffuz Movement, Qabail Awami Party gathered at Bab-e-Khyber to resent the allegedly forced merging of ex-tribal region into KP.

Addressing on the occasion the jirga leaders including Malik Bismallah Khan, Malik Khan Marjan Wazir, Azam Khan Mehsud, Najeedur Rehman Aurkzai, Malik Tehmash Khan and others said that former FATA had been merged into KP without approval of tribesmen. Promises made with the tribal have not been materialized so far; however in the name of merging, all resources of tribesmen have been stolen, they remarked.

They went on that the patwar system, implemented in FATA, should abolish and restore structure based on local rites and tradition. Under the local Rasmo rewaj (traditional law) all problems of the tribesmen had been resolved in good manners that needed to be re-established, they opined.

They appealed to the Chief Justice of Pakistan to formulate a larger bench on the FATA merging case and keeping in view ground facts, restoring the previous status of the ex-tribal region. At the end the protestors while carrying banners and placards inscribed with slogans in favor of their demands, marched from Bab-e-Khyber to Jamrud Press club where it dispersed peacefully.

First ever BS Convocation of FATA University held

F.P. Report

DARRA ADAM KHEL: First ever BS Convocation 2024 of the FATA University was held here on Saturday at the Ajab Khan Auditorium FATA University, Darra Adam Khel to commemorate the academic accomplishments of students of academic sessions, 2016-20, 2017-21, 2018-22 and 2019-23.

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Jahanzeb Khan, Vice Chancellor, FATA University conferred degrees on graduating student's undergraduate programs. In total, 113 students were awarded degrees in undergraduate BS programs. At the convocation, 20 Gold Medals were conferred upon graduates of undergraduate programs who achieved top positions.

The Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Jahanzeb Khan congratulated the graduates and their parents on their mar-



velous achievements and said that the future of our country is dependent on the way we educate and groom them to understand the real challenges.

He said that the country's future hinged on the educated youth. The Vice Chancellor urged the graduates to better utilize their knowledge for the well-being and uplift of society and the country by making new inventions, innovations, and discoveries in their respective fields of study.

Dr. Muhammad Jahanzeb Khan said that Erstwhile FATA had an abundance of natural resources that needed to be explored and utilized. The

precious natural resources could be introduced to the world through effective research, he added.

The Vice Chancellor said that through the latest research and inventions, not only the country's remittances could be enhanced but poverty could be alleviated as well. He stressed the graduates to search the hidden treasures in their respective areas and bring them into use for the benefit of the local community as well as the country. The Convocation was attended by members from the Syndicate, Senate, and senior officials while a large number of parents were also present on the occasion.

Traders are backbone of country: MCCI

F.P. Report

MARDAN: President of Mardan Chamber of Commerce and the Central Organization of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Traders Provincial General Secretary Zahir Shah said that the traders community has to come in a row, if the traders are safe then the country will develop, the traders community is the backbone of the country's economy.

He is the organization of the Traders Motorcycle Auto Association Addressing the ceremony where he was the chief

guest, he took over his positions from the newly elected cabinet. On this occasion, Motorcycle Auto Association President Wajid Khan, General Secretary Tahir Khan, Patron-in-Chief Farman Syed Khan, Chairman Khan Zeb Mohmand were present. Vice Chairman Ishtyaq Khan, Senior Vice President Furqan, Vice President Taimur Khan, Deputy Secretary Ismail Khan, Finance Secretary Siyar Babu, Press Secretary and others were present in the event.

He said that the profession of trade is a prophetic

profession and the business community should consider this profession as a worship, the government should solve the problems faced by the businessmen and provide them a favorable environment for business. Pakistan is our country and for its stability We will not hesitate to make any sacrifice. More work will be done for the development of the Chamber from which the business community can benefit. At the end of the ceremony, Zahir Shah congratulated the Cabinet of Motorcycle Auto Association and assured full cooperation from his side.



HYDERABAD: Vice Chancellor ISRA University Dr. Ahmed Waliullah Kazi handing over degrees to graduates during 21st Convocation 2024.

KP and PTI: The story of unending love - but why?

Amir Hamza Bangash

PTI'S influence and percentage of votes in KP have grown consistently with each successive election. They secured 38 general seats out of 105 in 2013, 65 out of 99 in 2018, and 84 out of 115 in the 2024 general elections. The number of received votes has increased significantly from one election to the next since 2013. Various experts and representatives from different political parties suggested multiple causes for their dominance, with a prevailing theory that it was a deliberate strategy by the establishment to involve them in parliamentary politics and disrupt the existing two-party system in the country.

Some individuals suggested that the victory was due to widespread manipulation of public opinion in favor of PTI in various regions, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. However, it is acknowledged that while PTI may have initially received support from the establishment, it ultimately gained public support through their dedication, effort, and skill. It does not imply that their conduct was commendable or that their policies were correct. Although their policies were flawed and actions questionable, they strategically appealed to the people and gained their affection, resulting in a historic third consecutive win as the only political party in the history of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The main reason PTI's advancement in KP is the varied criteria for accepting public into its ranks. It appeals to people with a broad spectrum of beliefs, from conservative to highly progressive, attracting individuals from all walks of life. It was popular among both individuals adhering to traditional religious beliefs, following the old Islamic

system of Riyasate Madina, and those with liberal beliefs, advocating for dramatic reform and attempting to revolutionize the system. This method aided them in accepting individuals from diverse backgrounds in all regions.

This approach helped PTI to reduce the proportion of workers from all political backgrounds, including religious, moderate, and liberal. It also guaranteed their popularity in every district of KP, regardless of the literacy rate. Thus, it resulted in a significant and balanced support base throughout the Hazara belt, central districts, and even southern districts of KP, posing challenges to all major parties. The inclusive approach of inviting individuals from all ideologies helped garner support for PTI from both the left and right wings. Conversely, the other political groups in KP had a set ideology that made it difficult for people with differing perspectives to join them.

Females of all ages, from young girls to older women, participating in PTI's political events improved PTI's reputation among the liberal population of Pakistan, who were not associated with any political parties. This strategy also assisted the PTI in founding a comprehensive women's wing in all provinces, including KP. This tactic helped them engage and exert influence over the other women in the province. It improved PTI's international reputation by conveying that it supports women's empowerment.

However, its adversaries in the province only attempted to engage women in their political parties or events after observing PTI's actions. Despite their long tenure in power, in intervals, the rival political parties in KP failed to build a comprehensive women's wing within their party. Most of these political parties

had women serving as their provincial or federal party leaders for many years.

Research is needed to figure out which political party is supported by new voters. However, based on observations and chance interactions, it can be confidently stated that about 50% of new voters lean towards PTI. It is intriguing. You have a base of loyal, long-standing party supporters, but you also have systems in place to attract and persuade new party supporters, which is advantageous. Other political parties need a system to engage and appeal to the voters of the younger generation.

PTI's strength also stems from its dynamic strategy, which allows leaders and party workers to be physically present and visible among the people. PTI has benefited more from confrontational politics than any other political group. Their rhetoric becomes more intense over time and remains consistent even after winning elections. Imran Khan criticizes his opponents as 'thieves' and 'bandits' when he is in opposition, but when he is in power, he arrests them.

He is merciless. This tactic instills in his followers a sense of clarity regarding his thoughts and acts, regardless of the moral implications of his decisions. His communication technique, rooted in populist themes, allowed him to set the media agenda and public discourse. He desires to be on screen, regardless of the positive or negative reasons, as it benefits him and his party equally.

PTI excels in effectively utilizing both mainstream media and social media. Imran Khan is adept at crafting agendas for both mainstream media and social media. He does not allow his opponents to establish the foundation for their narratives. He

excels at sparking debate and bringing important problems to the forefront of public attention. He monopolizes people's thoughts with his addressed issues without allowing them to consider anything else. When he has a problem with the mainstream media, he redirects his focus to social media, which becomes more attractive to his fans and the public.

These activities may cause rival political parties to get defensive and respond to allegations by providing explanations, reasons, and excuses or by attempting to refute the narratives set by their opponents. This strategy prevents other political parties from setting up their media and public agenda on matters they deem significant. Therefore, people only perceive the stories presented by PTI and the topics they prioritize for the public. PTI has a deeper understanding of people's mindsets than other political parties. When rival political parties promote the core principles of democracy, political integrity, and tolerance, PTI influences them emotionally, and KP is the best example in this regard.

PTI has a charismatic leader in Imran Khan, who has had an avid following since his days as a cricketer. He is consistently present in people's lives through their challenges and triumphs. It is similarly crucial to be aware of the presence of leaders from other political parties. Where is Nawaz Sharif when he is not in power or jail? Where is Asif Ali Zardari when the PPP is not in power or facing unfavorable circumstances in Pakistan? Asfandiyar Wali Khan is the current leader of the ANP. However, he has been absent from public view for some years. How does it impact their party members, excluding new voters or the

wider public? These demotivational waves extend and integrate into people's memories.

Another benefit of PTI is that it has yet to reach saturation. There is ample room for leadership across many hierarchical levels. It may be the reason why it appeals to the younger generations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. They see their hope and future in the PTI to prosper in their political careers. Many new members have been introduced in the KP parliament, and this trend is ongoing. It was an unprecedented change for the residents of KP.

Other political parties in KP are failing by reusing the same old candidates, which has resulted in negative consequences for them. In saying this, I am not claiming that PTI is out of saturation; if their method of presenting fresh faces stops, then the people of KP will soon realize that, like others, they are also old wine in old bottles.

A close examination of the KP voters' mindset reveals that they value unmet goals more than achieved ones. I believe people in KP value contemplating their ambitions more than they do after achieving them. ANP is known for delivering significant improvements in KP by developing infrastructure, founding new universities, renaming the province, and securing provincial sovereignty with the Eighteenth Amendment.

It led many to believe that ANP had completed its goal and nothing new remained for them. I am not denouncing anyone but scrutinizing the ANP, PPP, QWP and PML (N) for not presenting new ideas. It provided ample opportunity for the PTI to promote its aspirations and draw in supporters. There is a prevailing belief that PTI has unresolved tasks at both the national and provincial levels. PTI in KP

focuses on problems that are not the people's genuine concerns. They remain silent on militancy, extremism, terrorism, and policing in the province, which are the core issues of the people. It requires great boldness and effort to divert people's attention from these issues and introduce new and irrelevant ones. This strategy benefits the Pakistani establishment when the public is distracted from the problems.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) improved its relationship with journalists, resulting in a more favorable public image despite the unfavorable circumstances. The province government's assistance to various press clubs in different ways also guaranteed more robust backing for PTI and its messages. The policies and initiatives of the KP administration, led by PTI, were not extensively covered by the media despite complaints from various sources. As a result, scandals and anomalies were kept out of public view and discussion. The meticulous media management using explicit and implicit tactics improved PTI's reputation locally and nationally.

At present, I don't foresee any replacement for PTI in KP if things continue with the same passion, direction and dedication. Things could only change if there is a change of mind on the part of people or a change of strategies on the part of the different political parties. It is still the narrative, image and strategy of one man, one political party and one ideology ruling over the millions in KP.

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Erdogan offers to host a peace summit with Russia

ISTANBUL (AP): Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, whose NATO-member country has sought to balance its close relations with both Ukraine and Russia, offered during a visit from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to host a peace summit between the two countries. Erdogan, who has repeatedly discussed brokering a peace deal, said at a news conference in Istanbul following his meeting with Zelenskyy that he hoped Russia would be on board with Turkey's offer.

"Since the beginning, we have contributed as much as we could toward ending the war through negotiations," Erdogan said. "We are also ready to host a peace summit in which Russia will also be included." Ukraine remains firm on not engaging directly with Russia on peace talks, and Zelenskyy has said multiple times the initiative in peace negotiations must belong to the country which has been invaded.

Zelenskyy said any peace negotiations must align with a 10-point plan he has previously suggested, which includes food security, restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity, the withdrawal of Russian troops, release of all prisoners, a tribunal for those responsible for the aggression, and security guarantees for Ukraine. "Any proposals for settling this war must start with the formula proposed by the state defending its land and its people," he said. "We want a fair peace."

The Ukrainian leader expressed hope that at the inaugural peace summit expected to be held this year in Switzerland, the possibility of reopening all Ukrainian ports, not only in Odesa but also in Mykolaiv in southern Ukraine, will be considered. Zelenskyy, who visited shipyards where corvettes for the Ukrainian navy are being built, said on X that agreements were reached on joint defense projects with the Turkish government and corporations. He said on Telegram that they also agreed to simplify trade and remove barriers to business.

Erdogan said the two discussed stability in the Black Sea shipping corridor and he reiterated Turkey's support for Ukraine's "territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence." The visit comes as Zelenskyy and other officials continue to press other nations for more munitions and weaponry to halt the advance of Russian troops trying to make deeper gains into the Ukraine-held western part of the Donetsk region and also penetrating into the Kharkiv region north of it in the third year of war.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said in Vilnius, Lithuania, where he was attending a meeting of the foreign ministers of



France, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, that "drop by drop" aid to Ukraine no longer works. "If things continue as they currently happen, it's not going to end well for all of us," Kuleba said. "What is required is an unrestricted and timely supply of all types of weapons and ammunition to ensure that Ukraine beats Russia and the war in Europe does not spill over."

An envoy from China, which has frustrated Ukraine and its Western allies by boosting trade with Russia and portraying the conflict and its causes largely from Moscow's point of view, was in Kyiv during a European visit for talks on settling what it calls the Ukraine crisis. Li Hui, the special representative for Eurasian affairs, met with officials from Russia, the EU, Switzerland and Poland before his stop in Ukraine and was scheduled to go on to Germany and France. Shortly after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Turkey hosted a meeting between the Russian and Ukrainian foreign ministers as well as unsuccessful talks between negotiators from the two countries aimed at ending the hostilities.

Later in 2022, Turkey, along with the United Nations, also brokered a deal between Russia and Ukraine that allowed the shipment of millions of tons of Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea. Russia, however, pulled out of the deal last year, citing obstacles to its export of food and fertilizers. During Li's visit to Kyiv, Ukrainian officials described the horrors of the war.

"It is very important that you hear firsthand about the situation on the front line, what is happening and where we are," Andriy Yermak, the head of the presidential office, said, according to a Ukrainian statement. It wasn't clear how Li reacted to the presentation. China released a terse statement saying only that Li arrived

in Kyiv by train at noon, held candid and friendly talks, and departed by train the same evening.

The war has created a sharp division between China and the West. The Chinese government avoids using the words "war" or "invasion" to describe Russia's attack and cites NATO expansion as a root cause of the conflict. The Ukraine statement said the two sides discussed the possibility of China's assistance in prisoner exchanges, the return of Ukrainian children in Russia and the return of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, which Russia took control of during fighting in 2022.

Ukraine Energy Minister Herman Halushchenko urged Russia to immediately comply with an International Atomic Energy Agency resolution calling for the complete withdrawal its troops from the Zaporizhzhia plant and return of the station to Ukrainian control. "Every day that Russians stay at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant increases the number of the existing problems and increases the threat of a nuclear incident," Halushchenko said on national television.

In other developments: Zelenskyy signed an order allowing the first demobilization of soldiers who were conscripted into the army before Russia's full-scale invasion. The order takes effect in April or May.

The soldiers, who had been required to continue their service after martial law was declared, can return home and remain in the army reserves, according to the order. It was not known how many troops are eligible because that information is classified. Indian authorities said that they are in talks with Russia about returning Indian citizens duped into working for the Russian army, a day after a federal investigation agency said it broke up a human trafficking network that lured people to Russia under the pretext of giving them jobs.

Armenia considering seeking EU membership

BRUSSELS (Reuters): Armenia is considering applying for European Union membership, foreign minister Ararat Mirzoyan said, as it seeks to forge closer ties with the West in the face of tensions with traditional ally Russia.

"Many new opportunities are largely being discussed in Armenia nowadays and that will not be a secret if I say that includes membership in the European Union," Mirzoyan said in an interview with Turkey's TRT World television station. He was speaking on the sidelines of a diplomatic forum in the Turkish city of Antalya on the Mediterranean coast.

Since coming to power in a 2018 revolution, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has deepened Armenia's ties with Europe and the United States, repeatedly drawing the ire of traditional ally Russia. Yerevan has repeatedly said that its alliance with Moscow does not stretch to the war in Ukraine, while Pashinyan has accused Russia of seeking to undermine his government. Armenia also accuses Russia of failing to defend it against longstanding rival Azerbaijan, which has drawn closer to Moscow in recent years.

Zelenskyy issues decree

KYIV (Reuters): President Volodymyr Zelenskyy issued a decree providing for conscripts serving in the two-year-old war against Russia to be discharged into Ukraine's reserves within the next two months. The decree will allow some respite for service members who have been engaged in the military since even before Russian troops poured over the border in February 2022.

In addition, those discharged will be exempt from further call-ups for 12 months. "Today, we have a decree for the discharge to reserves of conscripts -- those who were called up for military service before the full-scale invasion began," Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address. "At the request of the military command, several weeks are needed for preparatory procedures, replacing individuals in terms of defence tasks, and from April, conscripts will be transferred to the reserves."

A little more than two years into the invasion, Ukraine faces shortages of both men and equipment. Russia has made some gains along the 1,000-km (600-mile) front in the east and south, including the capture by Moscow's forces last month of the town of Avdiivka, but there has been little movement along the front lines. Western countries continue to pledge support to Ukraine's campaign to oust Russian troops, but a promised aid package from Washington has stalled amid disputes in the US Congress. A bill on mobilization to ensure sufficient numbers of Ukrainian service members in the campaign is making its way through Ukraine's parliament, punctuated by lively debate among deputies and in society at large.

As UN urges Sudan truce, Russia and China cite Gaza

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters): The United Nations Security Council called for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Sudan, prompting China to remind it not to forget about the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza and Russia to accuse the United States of double standards.

Russia abstained, while the remaining 14 council members voted in favor of the British-drafted resolution that called for an immediate cessation of hostilities during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, which begins early next week. War erupted in Sudan on April 15, 2023, between the Sudanese army and paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The UN says nearly 25 million people - half Sudan's population - need aid, some 8 million have fled their homes and hunger is rising. Washington says the warring parties have committed war crimes.

Between 10,000 and 15,000 people were killed in one city alone in Sudan's West Darfur region last year in ethnic violence by the RSF and allied Arab militia, according to a UN sanctions monitors report seen by Reuters in January.

Russia's deputy UN ambassador, Anna Evstigneeva, accused the US of "double standards" by "dragging out the adoption of a document on a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip," where health authorities say more than 30,000 Palestinians have been killed in the past five months.

"The USA time and again uses it to veto, plays for time and demands that we wait for some results from its direct diplomacy on the ground. Nothing of the sort is proposed for Sudan," she told the council before the vote. The United States has vetoed three draft council resolutions since the war began on Oct. 7 when Hamas attacked Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking 253 hostages, according to Israeli tallies. Washington's ally Israel retaliated with an air and land assault on the Palestinian militants in Gaza.

"While adopting a resolution on a ceasefire during the month of Ramadan in the Sudan, the Security Council must not forget that the people of Gaza are still suffering under bombardment," China's deputy UN ambassador, Dai Bing,

told the council. "The international community must push for immediate ceasefire." The United States did not respond in the council to Russia and China's remarks on Gaza. The US is currently negotiating a draft resolution that backs "an immediate ceasefire of roughly six-weeks in Gaza together with the release of all hostages," but it has said it is not in a rush to put the text to a vote. UN aid chief Martin Griffiths said earlier that if there were a truce in Sudan the UN would pile in aid, adding: "Ten million Sudanese have become food insecure because of this conflict that should never have started."

During a Security Council meeting, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged a Ramadan truce. Sudan's UN ambassador, Al-Harith Idriss Al-Harith Mohamed, told the council that the president of the country's transitional council commended Guterres' appeal, but "he's wondering about how to do this." "All those who would like to see that appeal transformed into action are welcome ... to present a mechanism for implementation of it," the Sudanese ambassador said.

India busts network trafficking people to Russia

NEW DELHI (BBC): Authorities in India say they have busted a network of agents sending people to fight for Russia in Ukraine under the pretext of giving them jobs. The agents were luring people through social media, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said.

The network stretches across several states and about 35 people have fallen victims to the racket, the agency said. The development comes after two Indians, who were duped into traveling to Russia, were killed in the war. The CBI said in a statement that the traffickers were operating under an "organised network".

It said that agents were

using social media channels such as YouTube and their local contacts to lure "gullible" youth to travel to Russia by promising them "lucrative jobs". Earlier, a man from Uttar Pradesh state living in Moscow had told the BBC that he had been lured to Russia by a YouTube channel, promising a monthly salary of 150,000 rupees (\$1813; £1,415). "We were not told that we are being drafted in an army," he said.

The CBI said it had found that trafficked Indian nationals were being trained in combat roles and deployed at front bases in the Russia-Ukraine war zone "against their wishes, thus, putting their lives in grave danger". The agency

has filed cases against several private visa consultancy firms and agents, conducting searches at 13 locations, including Delhi and Mumbai. The CBI said it has seized cash worth 5m rupees, "incriminating documents" and electronic devices from these places and have detained some people for questioning.

India's foreign ministry had earlier acknowledged "that some Indian nationals have enlisted for support roles with the Russian army". It added that it was working with Russian authorities to get Indian nationals discharged from the army. The ministry has also urged "all Indian nationals to exercise due caution and stay away from this conflict".

Caribbean leaders call emergency meeting on Haiti

GEORGETOWN (AP): Caribbean leaders called for an emergency meeting in Jamaica with the United States, Canada and France on Monday to seek a way out of spiraling gang violence in Haiti. Members of the Caricom regional trade bloc have been trying for months to get political actors in Haiti to agree to form an umbrella transitional unity government.

So far they have been unsuccessful, and the 15-nation bloc said in a statement that "the situation on the ground remains dire." Gunfire again rocked the Haitian capital, as anti-government gangs battle police in the streets. The unrelenting gang attacks have paralyzed the country for more than a week and left it with dwindling supplies of basic goods. Haitian officials

extended a state of emergency and nightly curfew as gangs continued to attack key state institutions.

The Caricom statement said that while regional leaders remain deeply engaged in trying to bring opposition parties and civil society groups together to form a unity government, "the stakeholders are not yet where they need to be." "We are acutely aware of the urgent need for consensus to be reached," according to the statement. "We have impressed on the respective parties that time is not on their side in agreeing to the way forward. From our reports, the situation on the ground remains dire and is of serious concern to us." It is vital that this engagement be at as high a level as possible to send a clear message of unity between Caricom

and the international community as we work together to provide the critical support to the Haitian people at this time of crisis for them," said the statement.

In February, embattled Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry agreed to hold general elections by mid-2025, and the international community has tired to find some foreign armed force willing to fight gang violence there.

Caricom has also pushed Henry to announce a power sharing, consensus government in the meantime, but Henry is yet to do so even as Haitian opposition parties and civil society groups are demanding his resignation. Henry, a neurosurgeon, was appointed as prime minister after the early July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moise.

‘Generation Putin’ - young Russians reflect on his 24 years in power

MOSCOW (Reuters): Zaurbek, 27, sees President Vladimir Putin as the guarantor of Russia's stability. Egor, 18, says bluntly that Russia's leaders are "unworthy". What both have in common is that neither can remember a time when Putin, in power since the last day of 1999, was not in charge of Russia as president or prime minister.

In an election next week, he is set to win a new six-year term that - if he completes it - would enable him to overtake Josef Stalin and become Russia's longest-serving leader for more than 200 years. "We are Generation Putin. In a sense it is fair to say that we have not seen anything else," Zaurbek said in an interview in the southern city of Vladikavkaz. Putin enjoys approval ratings well in excess of 80% according to opinion polls, although the reliability of polling data is open to question in a nation at war that has cracked down harshly on dissent.

Young people, though, are somewhat more critical than the population at large of the way the country is heading. A February survey by Russia's best known pollster, the Levada Centre, said 72% of people aged 18-24

believed things were going in the right direction - a figure that fell to 64% among Russians aged 25-34. For the overall population, the number was 74%. In TV interviews with Reuters, young Russians in five different cities spoke about Putin and their hopes for the future.

Burnatsev lives in Russia's North Caucasus region, which in the years following the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union saw war, hostage-taking and bombings. He has a particularly vivid memory from his childhood. One day, as he walked home from school, his mother phoned in panic to find out where he was - a "terrorist act" had taken place at a local market. Today things are more stable, and he wants it to stay that way.

"What do I want? First, I want security and prospects for the future, for development and opportunities. What I observe now - from what I remember and what we have now, things have got better. Hopefully, it will be improving even further. God forbid that things should get worse." He spoke in an interview at Putin's election campaign headquarters in Vladikavkaz, where he works as a volunteer.

"Let us say, I support the incumbent president. I am going to take part in the forthcoming election and most probably I will vote for him." Lvov is critical of the authorities but he bristles at the idea he might consider leaving the country, as hundreds of thousands of others have done since the start of the war. "Why should I leave? Unworthy people have seized power in my country and have had a grip on it for the last 25 years. Why is it me who must leave and not them? I think it's time for them to leave or go to prison," says Lvov.

Earlier this year, he supported the election campaign of Boris Nadezhdin, a would-be Putin challenger who spoke out against the war in Ukraine. Nadezhdin was disqualified on technical grounds, but Lvov says it was remarkable that the campaign happened at all and "nobody tried to beat us on the head with a stick". He is mindful of the laws introduced since the start of what Putin calls his "special military operation" (SMO) in Ukraine, under which people can go to prison for "discrediting" the armed forces or spreading false information about them.

Program that allows 30,000 migrants from four countries into the US each month upheld by judge

HOUSTON (AP): The Biden administration can keep operating a program that allows a limited number of migrants from four countries to enter the US on humanitarian grounds after a federal judge dismissed a challenge from Republican-led states.

US District Judge Drew B. Tipton said Texas and 20 other states had not shown they had suffered financial harm because of the humanitarian parole program that allows up to 30,000 asylum-seekers into the US each month from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela combined. That was something the states needed to prove to have legal standing to bring the lawsuit. "In reaching this conclusion, the Court does not address the lawfulness of the Program," Tipton wrote.

Eliminating the program would undercut a broader policy that seeks to encourage migrants to use the Biden administration's preferred pathways into the US or face stiff consequences. The states, led by Texas, had argued the program is forcing them to spend millions on

health care, education, and public safety for the migrants. An attorney working with the Texas attorney general's office in the legal challenge said that the program "created a shadow immigration system."

Advocates for the federal government countered that migrants admitted through the policy helped with a US farm labor shortage. The White House welcomed the ruling. "The district court's decision is based on the success of this program, which has expanded lawful pathways for nationals from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela who have a sponsor in this country and pass our rigorous vetting process, while dramatically decreasing the number of nationals from those countries crossing our Southwest Border," White House spokesperson Angelo Fernández Hernández said.

The Texas Attorney General's Office did not immediately reply to messages seeking comment. An appeal by Texas and the other states seemed likely. Since the program was launched in fall 2022, more than

357,000 people from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela have been granted parole and allowed to enter the country through January. Haitians have been the biggest group to use the program with 138,000 people from that country arriving, followed by 86,000 Venezuelans, 74,000 Cubans and 58,000 Nicaraguans.

Migrants must apply online, arrive at an airport and have a financial sponsor in the US. If approved, they can stay for two years and get a work permit. President Joe Biden has made unprecedented use of parole authority, which has been in effect since 1952 and allows presidents to let people in for "urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit."

Esther Sung, an attorney for Justice Action Center, which represented seven people who were sponsoring migrants as part of the program, said she was looking forward to calling her clients to let them know of the court's decision. "It's a popular program. People want to welcome other people to this country," she said.

Valerie Laveau, one of the seven represented by Justice Action Center, sponsored her brother and nephew and they arrived in Florida from conflict-plagued Haiti last August. They are flourishing in their new lives, she said, and her nephew has a newfound normalcy and is able to do things like play basketball outdoors without having to worry about safety. Her brother is working in construction. Laveau said she is grateful for the legal outcome and people entering the country through the program are contributing to society.

"I am ecstatic, not just for my family but for all the other families who are still waiting," she said. During an August trial in Victoria, Texas, Tipton declined to issue any temporary order that would halt the parole program nationwide. Tipton is an appointee of former President Donald Trump who ruled against the Biden administration in 2022 on an order that determined who to prioritize for deportation.

Some states said the initiative had benefited them. One Nicaraguan

migrant admitted into the country through the process filled a position at a farm in Washington state that was struggling to find workers. Tipton questioned how Texas could be claiming financial losses if data showed that the parole program actually reduced the number of migrants coming into the US.

"The Court has before it a case in which Plaintiffs claim that they have been injured by a program that has actually lowered their out-of-pocket costs," Tipton said in ruling. When the policy took effect, the Biden administration had been preparing to end a pandemic-era policy at the border known as Title 42 that barred migrants from seeking asylum at ports of entry and immediately expelled many who entered illegally. Proponents of the policy also faced scrutiny from Tipton, who questioned whether living in poverty was enough for migrants to qualify. Elissa Fudim, a lawyer with the US Department of Justice, responded: "I think probably not."

Federal government attorneys and immigrant rights groups said that in

many cases, Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans are also fleeing oppressive regimes, escalating violence and worsening political conditions that have endangered their lives. The lawsuit did not challenge the use of humanitarian parole for tens of thousands of Ukrainians who came after Russia's invasion. It is among several legal challenges the Biden administration has faced over its immigration policies.

The program's supporters said each case is individually reviewed and some people who had made it to the final approval step after arriving in the US have been rejected, though they did not provide the number of rejections that have occurred. Decision "is a clear win and affirmation of humanitarian immigration parole being an indispensable, necessary and model program of the type of smart solutions we should be focusing on to relieve pressure on the border and modernize our failed immigration system," said Todd Schulte, president of immigration advocacy organization FWD.us.

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Afghan economy in global prism

THE Director of UNDP's Bureau for Asia and the Pacific has recently told reporters that 69 percent of Afghans are subsistence insecure and do not have ample basic resources. According to her, the Afghan economy, and especially regions affected by the devastating earthquakes in October last year, are still having a very harsh impact on the country. The Afghan economy has contracted by 27 percent and witnessed economic stagnation since the Taliban took over in August 2021. Unemployment has doubled and only 40 percent of the population has access to electricity. The country's finances have collapsed and there are no major sources of economic activity except small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and farming. The UN Official voiced concern over the situation of women and girls, who face severe restrictions imposed by the Taliban regime on their dress code, employment, and unaccompanied movement within the country.

The South Asian nation has continuously been in the global headlines for one or the other perspective over the past multiple years. Afghanistan continues to suffer from a multifaceted crisis, as the international community grapples with how to approach international engagement with the Taliban rulers to help support the people of Afghanistan. The country is experiencing one of the world's largest humanitarian crises, which is of great concern to the UN, the global community, and the regional states that have deep bonds with Afghanistan. Meanwhile, the Human rights situation, particularly for women and girls, and the terrorist threat are the key challenges for the United Nations and the global community which also have the potential to drag the Islamic Emirate into the post-9/11 situation once again. Because any major terrorist attack involving groups camped in Afghanistan can surely recast the past episode at any time in the future.

At the time, the Afghan economy faced grave challenges due to a lack of capital, skilled workforce, and technical cooperation dearly needed to revive the industry, diversify exports, and attain growth in the fields of education, healthcare, energy, Science and Technology, IT, Pharmaceutical industry, and others. However, the UNDP and several nongovernmental organizations are currently supporting Afghan women, farmers, and start-up businesses under their social protection programs providing cash and technical assistance to help improve the local economy and the livelihood of the masses. Yet, restrictions and hurdles from the global community and Afghan interim governments on NGOs' work significantly undermine the pace of development and social work in the country.

In the first go, the interim Afghan government picked its political agenda after gaining control of the country instead of focusing on public and economic issues, political inclusiveness, foreign policy, regional trade, and making efforts for a dignified return of Afghan refugees abroad. Such behavior not only conversely affected the domestic economy and gave birth to humanitarian crises but also spoiled foreign relations and added to the financial, political, and security issues of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA).

The global community desires to see a prosperous, peaceful, and stable Afghanistan that must be free from terrorism and ruled by an inclusive government. The majority of the nations argue that the Taliban must adhere to international norms if they want to obtain international recognition and receive economic and development aid from the international community. The international community appears to favour maintaining pressure on the Taliban, particularly regarding their policies concerning terrorism, and human and women's rights in Afghanistan. Amid such scenarios, the Afghan interim rulers seek extensive cooperation and trade with the regional states to gradually assimilate into the global arena without compromising their political agenda. Although, such dogma might assist the Afghan government in its survival yet it neither revives Afghanistan's economy nor benefits common Afghans which they deserve utmost.

The Balochistan question

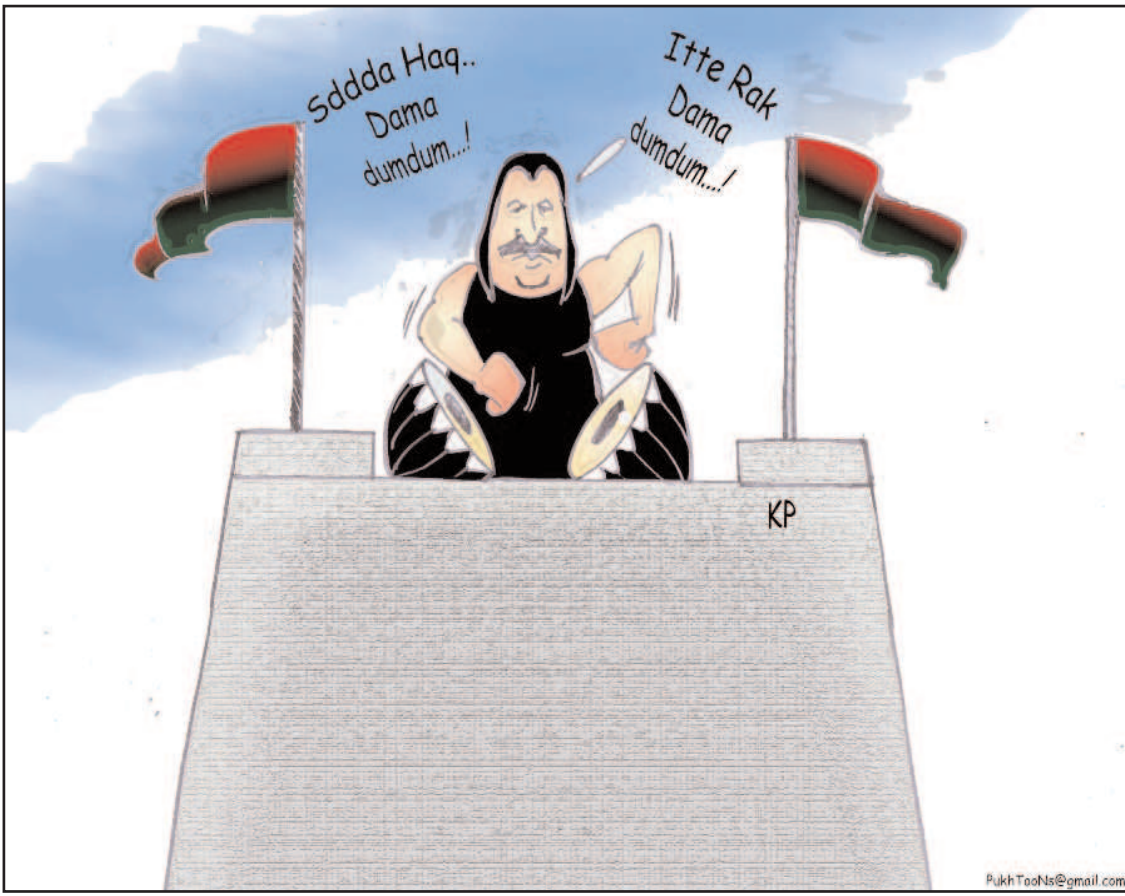
CHIEF of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir has recently promised the people of Balochistan that they will be supported by armed forces and law enforcement agencies for peace and prosperity in the province. According to him, the success of Balochistan is the success of Pakistan. The people of Pakistan are proud of the brave people of Balochistan who remained steadfast against all odds. Armed Forces of Pakistan and law enforcement agencies will continue to render their services in support of the people of Balochistan for peace and prosperity. During his visit to Awaran, the Army Chief interacted with the local elders, farmers, and families of shahada and assured them of the army's unstinting support for their security and welfare.

Some Baloch feudal and tribal warlords have waged a war against the state of Pakistan to protect their communal and monetary interests and promote feudalism in their areas. Selfish tribal Sardars played on behalf of foreign powers destroyed the peace of the province, and obstructed development and social work while blaming the government for the poverty and backwardness of the province. Ethnic insurgency has been a persistent issue throughout the past wherein a few tribal leaders and their sprogos have been fighting the government for their vested interests while exploiting the general needs of the masses. Historically, the common public has suffered from terrorist activities of the miscreants and far-flung areas could not be developed on par with the major population centers in the province.

The Pakistan military has not only sabotaged the nefarious designs of foreign pawns through kinetic Counter Terrorism Operations against Baloch insurgents but also undertaken certain socio-economic development and agriculture projects to help benefit the Baloch public and exploit the full potential of Balochistan. Currently, the government has initiated the Green Pakistan Initiative in the province under which farmers are provided with all kinds of agricultural facilities, including easy agricultural loans, seeds, fertilizers, solar tube wells, and experts' guidance to elevate the livelihood of the people of Balochistan. Although, the government and Pakistan Military implemented multiple strategies to establish the writ of the state and revive economic and social activities in the violence-hit regions. However, those endeavors need consistency and the same vigor to eradicate foreign-sponsored rebellion and maintain the pace of socio-economic growth, so that common Baloch live a peaceful and prosperous life.

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What went wrong with British media coverage of Israel's war on Gaza?

Zahera Harb

OVER the past five months, a lot has been said and written on the British media's coverage of Israel's war on Gaza. Experts, journalists and activists, including myself, have argued in numerous articles and interviews that the British media exhibits certain biases in its coverage of this war, and the broader issue of Israel-Palestine.

In a new report, based on the largest statistical analysis of the media coverage of the atrocities committed in Israel on October 7, and Israel's genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people in the first month of the war, the Muslim Council of Britain's Centre of Media Monitoring (CfMM) laid out the empirical evidence for these observations and concerns.

Looking at some 180,000 video clips from seven United Kingdom broadcasters and three international broadcasters, as well as about 26,000 news articles from 28 British media websites, CfMM has assessed whether the UK media have reliably informed the public on the conflict and shared the positions of all concerned parties responsibly.

In line with the findings of smaller-scale studies conducted thus far, it found that Israeli narratives, voices and grievances were favoured over Palestinian voices, narratives and grievances in the coverage. "Israel's rights" were insistently emphasised, often resulting in the exclusion and erasure of the rights of the Palestinians. Emotive language was consistently used for Israeli victims of violence, but not as much for the Palestinians. Representatives and supporters of Israel were allowed to dehumanise Palestinians on air, with no considerable pushback from news presenters and talk show hosts. Analysing the coverage under six themes - contextualisation, language, framing, claims, the undermining of Palestinian sources and the misrepresentation of pro-Palestinian protesters - the research found that many news outlets have opted to present news from an Israeli perspective, often with significant lapses in basic fact-checking and verification.

Remarkably, the analysis unveiled that Palestinian symbols, such as the Palestinian flag, were overwhelmingly "used to illustrate stories on anti-Semitism". It also exposed

the many Islamophobic aspects of the coverage, such as the framing of pro-Palestine protests and support as inherently dangerous and akin to "a terror threat" often because of the Muslim presence among them. The report revealed that the Islamophobic trope of "Islam being an anti-Semitic religion" was repeatedly presented - by editors, analysts and columnists alike - as the driving force behind the growing opposition to Israel and its treatment of Palestinians. This led to the misrepresentation of the 75-year conflict in Israel-Palestine as a "religious war" between Muslims and Jews, rather than a matter of oppression and occupation. The report determined that pro-Palestinian voices and Palestinian activists have repeatedly been misrepresented by many British media outlets since the beginning of the conflict. It found that the right-wing media has been particularly hostile towards pro-Palestinian voices, "framing them as supporters of terrorism and anti-Semites as well as being hostile to British values".

The analysis also unearthed many instances of misinformation through deliberate omission. The context of decades-long Israeli oppression of Palestinian people and occupation of Palestinian territory was absent from most of the coverage. The coverage was framed in a way that implied the conflict started on October 7. The report showed how some reportage on the ongoing war failed to even mention that the West Bank is Palestinian territory occupied by Israel, and that, according to international law, Gaza has also been effectively under Israeli occupation prior to October 7 - despite the absence of a military presence on the ground since 2005. There were also many instances of apparent "mistakes" and misinformation being given a pass on British TV screens, as long as they reaffirmed Israeli narratives. In one instance, a defence analyst claimed on TV that "the West Bank is occupied by Palestinians". Despite such a claim not having any basis in international law, or any current or historic reality on the ground, the presenter did not correct him or seek clarification. Misleading use of imagery in some newspapers is another failure identified in the analysis.

For instance, distressing images depicting the flames and extensive destruction caused by Israeli air strikes on Gaza were paired with headlines referencing the atrocities committed by Hamas in Israel on October 7. In one case, a horrifying image of frightened, injured Palestinian children in Gaza was juxtaposed with a headline about "mutilated babies in Israel". Using misleading imagery, omitting facts, allowing guests to spread misinformation without challenge and sharing unverified information as fact are examples of irresponsible and unethical journalism. And such acts could have grave consequences. Misinformation and disinformation breeds hate speech, which can result in harm being inflicted on innocent individuals. Misrepresentation of the current conflict as a "religious war" between Jews and Muslims, coupled with the dehumanisation of Palestinians and vilification of their supporters around the world as terrorists or "terrorist-adjacent" has exacerbated anti-Muslim, anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian sentiments. As a result, hate directed towards British Muslims has manifested itself on the streets and screens across the UK. According to Tell Mama, the leading hate crime monitoring agency on measuring anti-Muslim hate in the UK, between October 2023 and February 2024, there were more than 2,000 anti-Muslim hate cases in the UK - a shocking 335 percent increase compared with the same period in the previous year. Research conducted by UK NGOs More in Common and the Together Coalition since the beginning of the war in Gaza, published on March 3, highlighted the prevalence of anti-Muslim sentiment in the country. Among those who responded to the survey, 21 percent - one in five - said they have a "very negative" or "somewhat negative" view of Muslims.

Media's false labelling of pro-Palestinian protesters as "terror threats", "pro-Hamas", "extremists" and "opposing to British values" undoubtedly contributed to this unprecedented rise in anti-Muslim hate and prejudice in the country. Indeed, anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiments among British Palestinians,

Arabs and Muslims are currently faced with in their schools, universities and places of work could - at least in part - be tied to the predominantly one-sided coverage of the war on Gaza detailed in the CfMM report. The negative labelling of pro-Palestinian protesters as "anti-British" and "anti-Western" merely due to their support for Palestinian rights and self-determination leads to the unjust tarnishing of entire communities. It feeds into existing prejudices and could flame interreligious and inter-communal tensions and even violence. Alongside the harm caused to Muslim, Arab and Palestinian Britons, the bias expressed by the media in the coverage of this conflict also harms Palestinians in Palestine and the wellbeing of the wider region.

The report's findings imply that numerous journalists and commentators in Britain have knowingly or unknowingly aided a propaganda campaign aimed at providing false legitimacy for Israel's relentless assault on Gaza - an assault that, according to the International Court of Justice, could plausibly amount to genocide. The point of the CfMM report, and this article, of course, is not to make unfair generalisations about a diverse, rich media landscape and tar all UK journalists with the same brush. Many journalists in Britain and on the ground in Israel-Palestine have produced balanced and informative journalism about the Gaza war for British media and examples of this are also included in the CfMM report. But the report, and the many problems and shortcomings that it highlights, should be seen by those working in the British media and covering this war as a wakeup call. They should treat this extensive report and its findings as a valuable learning tool and reassess their output on Israel-Palestine according to the just and meaningful criticisms laid out within it. The extent of the tragedy still unfolding today in Palestine, and the demonstrable impact it has had on intercommunal relations here in Britain, necessitate every journalist contributing to the coverage of this war to think carefully about what they are communicating to the public, and take extra steps to uphold the values and principles that define the profession.

Even if Ukraine announced mass mobilization, who is left to fight?

Michael Bociurkiw

FEW places ooze the pain Ukrainians have been subjected to over the decades more than Lychakiv Cemetery in the western city of Lviv. Among its rolling hills you'll find the final resting places of many of the figures of Ukrainian independence - from renowned poet Ivan Franko, to composer Volodymyr Ivasiuk, whose mutilated body was found hung from a tree in 1979, a widely-believed victim of KGB brutality.

These days, Lychakiv has become the burial ground for hundreds of service men and women killed in the most recent wave of Russian aggression. The sense of pain is palpable. When I visited the cemetery a few weeks ago, howling winter winds competed with the heart-breaking sound of wailing mothers and wives mourning the loss of their loved ones. Many of the downed fighters are in their 20s - in the prime of their lives.

I've been coming to Lychakiv since the early weeks of the war to get a better sense of the human cost. Amid the high-level diplomatic wrangling over long range ATACMS missiles and F-16 jets, this is the true face of the conflict that often gets neglected in international headlines.

Here in Ukraine, the losses are so vast that they touch pretty much every family, contributing to the sense of weariness that has covered the country like a cold blanket of snow. It's time the West recognized the human cost of the war - not only the deaths but also the injuries, displacement and tearing apart of the social fabric brought by massive dislocation. My friends in the medical profession speak of a coming catastrophic tsunami of mental health problems once soldiers return from the battlefield en masse.

With no end in sight to the war and with Lychakiv and other cemeteries bursting at the seams, officials are forced to make room for fresh graves. While the number of war dead has, until recently, remained a tightly-held state secret - President Volodymyr Zelensky on Sunday pegged the number at 31,000, far below the 70,000 cited by US officials last August - it is those who've been silenced who remind us of the amount of blood spilled in the fight to push back Russian forces. "There are such cemeteries as Lychakiv all over Ukraine," Lviv resident and community activist Lesia Krepyakevych told me. "While the pain is great, so is the pride since those who voluntarily went into battle went to protect us. Now it's become a place of pilgrimage, where we gain strength of spirit."

Several people told me that small villages around Lviv have been completely depleted of men. The wave of volunteer fighters who flooded recruiting centers at the start of the war have all but gone. It makes me wonder: between those who've died, been permanently put out of action by injuries, have fled overseas or have paid off officials to have their names disappear from draft lists, who's going to be left should a

mass mobilization be introduced? (Under Ukrainian law, men between the ages of 18 to 26 can't be drafted, though they can volunteer). Now, as Republican lawmakers return to work after a two week recess it remains unclear whether Speaker Mike Johnson will allow the mega supplementary bill - which includes \$60 billion in aid for Ukraine and approved by the Senate - to come to the House floor. For weeks it's been tangled up in political gridlock under the direction of former US President Donald Trump.

In considering the way forward, Johnson and his Republican colleagues should note the number of Ukrainians who paid the ultimate price to not only defend Ukraine, but also to slow the onslaught of Russia's land-grabbing, creeping authoritarianism. The battleground is in Ukraine, but the stakes for democracy go beyond borders. The Biden administration has heretofore done a poor job of convincing the American people what a great deal its military aid to Ukraine - roughly \$46 billion - has been. For about 5% of the annual US military budget, Ukrainians have managed to destroy about 50% of conventional Russian military capability. With virtually no navy, Kyiv's stealth strikes on the Black Sea fleet have forced Russian commanders to move ships to safer waters and it has busted apart a unilateral Russian blockade of the western Black Sea, re-opening waterways for food shipments to world markets.

There's a dangerous disconnect between those who argue against aid for Ukraine and what the reality could be, should Putin have his way. While millions of Americans feel that they are suffering economically, the pain could be even more acute if the Russians disable Ukrainian ports such as Odesa - a crucial component of the global food supply chain. Just look at how bottlenecks created in the Red Sea by the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels have thrown supply chains into disarray.

Perhaps that's why French President Emmanuel Macron didn't rule out the idea of sending European troops to Ukraine, when asked Tuesday. Even though other European nations quickly threw cold water on the idea and Russia responded with threats, it's an indication that if the US slides in its commitment to Ukraine, Kyiv will feel it has no better friends than its immediate European neighbors. Tying Ukraine's hands in this David and Goliath fight will exact horrific costs, far beyond the amounts paid out by Washington since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion two years ago. In fact, along the 1,000 km frontline, guns pointed towards advancing Russian forces have already fallen silent due to lack of ammunition. For the US to give up on Ukraine now, as some Republican lawmakers wish to do, is to give up on America itself and what it stands for. In many ways, this is also America's war - except that the Ukrainians are the ones fighting and dying in it.

Push in the right direction

Zhang Jianping

The interests of developing countries. China's WTO reform proposal firmly upholds the rules-based multilateral trading system, adheres to openness and cooperation, and supports the status and rights of Global South countries in international trade. Reflecting the interests and needs of the Global South, the proposal aims to make the multilateral trade system more inclusive and sustainable. China's Position Paper on WTO Reform sets out three basic principles: WTO reform should uphold the core values of the multilateral trading system, safeguard the development interests of its developing members, and adhere to the mechanism of decision-making through consensus.

Based on these principles, the Global South can promote the reform of the WTO in the following ways. First, collaborate to

enhance negotiating power. Globalization has increased the interconnectivity among countries and the overall strength of developing economies. However, with dominating powers in the world economy and politics, developed countries are attempting to impose various restrictions on the Global South to maintain and consolidate their own advantages.

The Global South must defend the special and differential treatment of developing members, adhere to multilateralism, advocate the restoration of the Appellate Body, protect the legitimate rights of all members, and effectively utilize the WTO's functions of review, oversight and dispute settlement. This will make the WTO a more equitable, reasonable, inclusive and coordinated organization. The Global South should actively participate in discussions on multilateral negotiations and new issues, such as e-commerce, investment facilitation, the environment and climate change. This involvement should seek to achieve more consensus and agreements within the framework of the WTO while ensuring the openness and eligibility of the most-favored-nation treatment. Third, proactively pursue initiatives in digital trade and green trade.

Digital trade can reduce costs, improve efficiency, expand volume, promote innovation and increase value. However, it also faces network and personal data security risks arising from cross-border data flows. Green trade can reduce the adverse environmental impact of trade, enhance trade quality and efficiency, strengthen trade competitiveness and sustainability, promote trade transformation and upgrading, and make public inter-

est. But it is also threatened by climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental pollution. Therefore, the Global South should advocate the establishment of WTO rules that promote the development of digital trade and green trade, as well as to settle disputes in these areas. While maintaining openness and inclusiveness, efforts should be made to address the security risks and threats posed by these developments.

The global development of digital trade and green trade requires the collaborative efforts of the Global South and developed countries. Taking into full consideration the circumstances and interests of all parties, the Global South should cooperate with developed countries within the framework of the WTO with an open mindset, a spirit of cooperation, and innovative approaches, to jointly steer digital trade and green trade in a more fair and reasonable direction.

Europe should brace itself for loss of US protection

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sulami

THE European community was taken aback when former US President Donald Trump last month made a startling declaration: that, if reelected, he would allow Russia free rein with American allies who fail to contribute adequately to their own defense. These remarks drew widespread criticism across Europe, reigniting memories of Trump's contentious stance toward the continent during his presidency, albeit now with escalated intensity.

The sharpness and hostility of his words were particularly alarming given the current geopolitical landscape in Europe, marked by the Russia-Ukraine conflict, which represents the gravest threat to the continent since the Second World War. Moreover, various regions are witnessing heightened competition and threats to US influence, amplifying concerns that Washington may either disengage or adopt an isolationist stance under Trump's leadership, potentially undoing the progress made in transatlantic relations during President Joe Biden's tenure in the White House. Over the decades, transatlantic relations have been deemed reliable and largely beneficial, with Europe receiving substantial resources and the protection of its interests through its alliance with the US. In return, the US bolstered its international standing through its alliance with Europe. Even after the Cold War, Europe remained an indispensable strategic and defense partner of America. Until recently, the dissolution of this strategic alliance seemed inconceivable to many.

Trump's remarks can be

viewed as a wake-up call for Europe to assume a greater role in financing its security. It is worth noting that such pressures on Europe are not exclusive to Trump but have been the subject of discussion since the reign of Barack Obama. European countries have responded positively to US demands, with many nearing the fulfillment of their defense expenditure commitments according to a specified timetable. In fact, some countries have already surpassed the required threshold. In the current dynamic, Europe finds itself caught between two contrasting views: Biden, who regards it as the paramount US asset abroad, and Trump, who perceives it as a burden to be shed. Consequently, there are factors at play that exacerbate the erosion of confidence and necessitate a reassessment of the prevailing pattern of dependence.

Firstly, this relationship has become entangled in partisan competition and division, reaching unprecedented levels of discord within the US political landscape. This discord poses a potential danger to Europe, as evidenced by the halt in urgent aid to Ukraine due to partisan differences, which resulted in a shift in the balance of power on the ground in favor of Russia. Secondly, the relationship has been impacted by changes that have reshaped the structure of the international system previously established by the two parties. The era of global peace has ended, giving way to a resurgence of geopolitical conflicts, prompting Washington to reconfigure its international alliances to safeguard its hegemony and global

influence.

Meanwhile, NATO faces challenges within the continent and relies heavily on Washington, leaving it seemingly incapacitated in the absence of strong US support. Additionally, there are European factions advocating for greater autonomy, particularly in matters of defense. Hence, it appears that reality may compel Washington to adopt unconventional policies toward its European allies; a situation not unfamiliar to the US. The shifts witnessed in the US' relationship with its allies in the Middle East serve as a recent example, as the region's importance has waned within US strategy over the years. Internationally, Washington reduced its engagement, sending a message akin to Trump's message to Europe: allies must assume greater responsibility for their own defense. Concurrently, this approach afforded arch-rival Iran an opportunity to bolster its regional influence, resulting in unprecedented upheaval, the effects of which persist to this day. Moreover, Biden, who garnered European support following the Russian aggression in Ukraine, has displayed selectivity in his alliances with the Europeans.

The breakdown of transatlantic coordination will also carry significant consequences for Europe and numerous international issues. The Iranian nuclear deal felt the strain of discord in transatlantic relations during Trump's presidency. European countries diverged from Trump's approach of withdrawing from the deal and reinstating sanctions and pressure on Iran. This lack of

alignment resulted in Iran accelerating its nuclear activities, edging closer to the nuclear threshold. Furthermore, Iran found encouragement in aiding Russia in its conflict against the West from Ukrainian territory and it became one of Moscow's allies in helping it circumvent sanctions. This discord suggests a potential lack of coordination on other issues. For instance, unresolved differences could leave the Ukraine situation festering, emboldening Russia to escalate its actions and intensify efforts to undermine NATO, altering the dynamics of the conflict in Europe.

The looming concern is that Europe could suddenly find itself devoid of the protective shield provided by the US. If this were to happen, Europe would be left on its own to face Russia's formidable nuclear arsenal with limited defensive capabilities and a relatively modest deterrent force. Years of military complacency and heavy dependence on Washington have fostered the notion that US support is boundless and unconditional. Moreover, European countries harbor distinct and at times conflicting interests. Consequently, relying on the EU as an alternative remains an impractical option in the foreseeable future.

After years of heavy reliance on American military equipment and personnel, it is imperative for European countries to reassess and rebuild their defense policies. NATO has initiated extensive efforts and thorough reviews, signaling Europe's swift adaptation to anticipated fluctuations in US policy to avert the potential emergence of a new Middle East marred by chaos and turmoil.

A Black man's view on what Biden should do for the White working class

Keith Magee

As a Black American academic with a keen interest in US politics, I'm often asked during this fractious, deeply worrying time in our democracy why a small but not insignificant number of Black voters appear to be turning to former President Donald Trump. I always point out that that is entirely the wrong question.

Yes, growing numbers of Black Americans are telling pollsters they're considering voting Republican, perhaps for the first time in their lives. And yes, this is a source of real anxiety for Democrats, who are mobilizing even as I write this in an effort to keep those voters in the fold.

But as I see it, the far more pressing question is why so few working-class White people say they intend to vote Democrat for president. In fact, Republicans have won the White vote in every election for nearly the last 50 years. Could President Biden, who claims to have labor-friendly policies, be the one to turn the tide by appealing to the White working class and giving his party a much-needed electoral boost in the process? After all, issues affecting poor White voters, such as health care, higher education and increased access to child-care have long been traditional Democratic priorities. So, what is going wrong?

If you are White, even if a high school degree is the most education you have attained, you have won the "racial lottery" in America: As a result of our shocking racial wealth gap and systemic racism, you are still more likely than your Black or brown peers to have savings to fall back on, and your family may well have up to eight times more wealth. And you are still less likely than your Black or brown fellow citizens to live in a low-income household, be killed by police violence, die in pregnancy or childbirth. And yet, White working-class resentment continues to simmer.

In his 1935 book "Black Reconstruction in America," W.E.B. Du Bois described the "public and psychological wage" that racism served up to White workers in the post-Civil War South. Any White person, he argued, whatever class they were, was treated with more deference and possessed more power than any Black person. But the privilege of White skin might be perceived as being far less of an advantage in 21st century America if you are hard-working but poor. And it might be of little comfort if - rightly or wrongly - you feel under-valued and ignored. One group that springs to mind are Rust Belt workers, many of whom lost jobs while others saw their earning power erode in the 1990s and blame then-Democratic President Bill Clinton and concessions he made under the NAFTA trade accords. Democratic presidential contenders ever since - including his wife, 2016 presidential candidate Hillary Clinton - have been paying dearly for the trade deal. They've garnered diminishing support from blue-collar White voters who have been convinced - rightly or wrongly - that the trade deal was responsible for the outsourcing of US jobs.

Many poor Whites, around the time of Trump's ascent, told pollsters about lost prosperity and social standing, and described their future as bleak. Amid the hyped-up culture wars and battles over identity politics that have raged ever since, many MAGA supporters clearly feel seen by Trump. Some non-college educated White voters likely think Democrats are out to belittle them - Hillary Clinton's horrendously misjudged "basket of deplorables" comment no doubt still rankles for more than a few. That gaffe echoed Obama's off-the-cuff remark in 2008 that "bitter" low-income voters "cling to guns or religion" - comments that didn't endear him to the White working class, either. That feeling of grievance is an area where White and Black voters differ dramatically: As Dr. Caroline Graham of the Brookings Institution has pointed out, poor Black Americans tend to be remarkably optimistic about their prospects, pos-

sibly due to higher levels of resilience, but also in recognition of their admittedly very gradual gains in economic status and life expectancy. Some White voters of modest means perceive Democrats as being determined to secure equality for minority groups at their expense. Others fear they are in danger of losing the huge advantage that being White once automatically conferred on them - and are sadly blind to the extent to which they continue to benefit from this privilege.

When I worked on President Barack Obama's first presidential campaign, I heard many working-class White men expressing the hope that a Black leader would understand the plight of the underdog and would therefore want to lift them up too. Once Obama was in office, however, this group just didn't feel they were profiting from economic

one of them. Biden already has done some of that. During a speech to United Auto Workers in Michigan last month, he evoked his own parents' financial difficulties, saying, "There used to be a theory called trickle-down economics - not a lot ever trickled down to my dad's kitchen table." Still, Democrats need to do more to communicate a robust social and economic message that makes it clear that Biden grasps these two simple but essential truths: There is great dignity to be found in every kind of work, and every kind of work deserves to be rewarded.

Then there is the thorny issue of inflation, which is proving to be one of the top concerns for American voters, particularly for those of limited means. Even as the Consumer Price Index ticks steadily downward, the price of food and other essentials remain stubbornly high. Biden's war on "shrinkflation" obliquely

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change. The gradual recovery from the 2008 financial crisis largely failed to improve the lot of poorer White households (even as Black and Latino households were harder hit). And working-class White Americans tended for some reason not to perceive Obamacare - the president's signature social policy achievement - as immediately benefiting them. One could argue that there is an analogue to the current political moment, with some Americans failing to give Biden credit for an improving economic picture. Anger and resentment seem to make some working-class White people more receptive to dog-whistles from politicians like Trump, whose message to them is that what matters most is preserving White privilege and stoking White grievance.

For all that, White and Black voters want the same things: financial security, recognition of their hard work and the prospect of a better life for themselves and their families. I have to believe there are enough such White voters to swing November's election definitively in the Democrats' favor - if only Biden can convince them he's on their side. It's time for the Democrats to admit publicly that America's White working class has been left behind - and to devise concrete plans to urgently address this, so everyone is raised up together. Governed by his own "Bidenomics" approach, the president already has made admirable efforts to enact legislation to directly benefit the working class, including the Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. If the party is to woo potential MAGA enthusiasts away from Trump, it is going to have to show struggling White communities that the President not only is like them, but that he is here for them - that he is, in fact,

addresses the issue, but not nearly aggressively enough to provide real relief at the grocery store to low wage earners. I hope the president will use Thursday's State of the Union address to show White working-class voters he stands shoulder to shoulder with them. I hope he'll promise he will push Congress harder to pass the \$15 per hour federal minimum wage (or even the \$17 minimum wage that some Democratic lawmakers are calling for), double down on addressing the crisis in affordable housing, and build on the support his administration has already offered small businesses. A recent poll found only 27% of US adults think the American Dream - defined as "if you work hard, you'll get ahead" - still holds true. The figure was even lower for people with a high school degree or less education (22%) and those who earn less than \$50,000 a year (18%). Still, respondents want to believe that the hope for a better future can be within their reach again one day. If Democrats can tap into such an aspiration, they'll have a chance to unite the working poor of every ethnicity in a common cause. Martin Luther King, Jr. himself was on the cusp of doing just that with his Poor People's Campaign when he was assassinated. In the name of equality and inclusion, it's high time that particular dream was realized. Will Biden manage to persuade working-class Americans, whatever the color of their skin, that he can deliver true recognition, higher wages, and more affordable housing? If he doesn't, he might miss the opportunity to make inroads with an underappreciated group that too often is overlooked by his party - one that could help provide the winning votes he'll need in a closely-fought presidential contest later this year.

CNN

Tory Islamophobia ensures Sunak's words ring hollow

Chris Doyle

WHILE Islamophobia in Britain is a centuries-old phenomenon that further took off following the 9/11 and 7/7 attacks, the last two weeks have witnessed a veritable tsunami of anti-Muslim abuse. Most alarmingly, much of it has emanated from some of the most senior political figures in the country.

It particularly accelerated after the House of Commons debate on a motion for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza on Feb. 21. Reports indicated that some members of Parliament have been threatened - a serious charge given that two MPs have been killed in public since 2016. The details are not clear, in terms of the who or the scale. What we do know is that, in the aftermath, a whole slew of comments emanated from figures on the extreme right of the Conservative Party.

Kicking off this firestorm of hate was former Home Secretary Suella Braverman. In October, she had referred to pro-Palestinian protests as "hate marches," but did not lose her job for that inflammatory rhetoric. This time, Braverman claimed that "Islamists are in charge of Britain now ... they have bullied our country into submission." No, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has not converted to Islam and joined Al-Qaeda. The notion was absurd, but Braverman's use of far-right language and conspiracy theories was nothing new; she had previously called the arrival of refugees an "invasion" and insisted that 100 million people around the world qualify for asylum in the UK, "and let's be clear: They are coming here." She has not been censured or kicked out of the Conservative Party. This is reminiscent of when Boris Johnson said Muslim women wearing burqas "look like letter boxes." That bout of anti-Muslim rhetoric did him no harm and he went on to become prime minister. Braverman has

ambitions to follow in his footsteps.

Another to escape suspension was former Prime Minister Liz Truss. She toured the US last month and shared a platform with Steve Bannon. The latter praised the far-right British racist and extreme Islamophobe Tommy Robinson as a "hero." Truss stayed silent. Another Tory MP rehearsed the age-old smear of "no-go areas," saying that certain areas of London and Birmingham were off-limits to non-Muslims. He retracted these malicious claims but no action was taken. One politician who has been suspended from the Conservative Party is Lee Anderson, an MP who, until mid-January, was the Tories' deputy chair. Anderson spoke to a right-wing TV channel, GB News, and said of Sadiq Khan, the first Muslim mayor of London: "He's given our capital city away to his mates. I don't actually believe that the Islamists have got control of our country, but what I do believe is they've got control of Khan, and they've got control of London." The Muslim takeover claims mirror the racist Jewish takeover tropes, both of which need to be cracked down on. What was so much more disturbing, however, was the way in which Sunak and his ministers attempted to brush off Anderson's comments. The prime minister and his colleagues refused to name the crime for which Anderson had the whip removed. It was tortuous to listen to the endless interviews in which ministers would only say Anderson was wrong but refuse to say, when probed, that what he had said was Islamophobic.

Deputy Prime Minister Oliver Dowden argued that the problem was that the comments could have given the impression of Islamophobia. Susan Hall, the Conservative candidate to challenge Khan in the London mayoral

election in May, said nothing. Many Tory MPs argued that Anderson should be allowed back into the party. While the Conservative Party has lambasted the left on every occasion for even a whiff of possible antisemitism, it has never dealt with the rampant Islamophobia in its own ranks. In part, this is because any credible investigation would have to highlight comments made by some of the most senior figures in the party. But it also exposes just how weak Sunak is because, politically, he cannot tackle the problem within his own party.

A survey of Tory members published last week found that 52 percent believed parts of European cities were under Shariah law and were no-go areas for non-Muslims. And some 58 percent of Conservative Party members think Islam is a threat to the British way of life. The national figure is alarming enough at 30 percent. Islamophobia is also rampant in much of the right-wing media. Here are just two recent examples of many. Guido Fawkes, the pen name of a leading right-wing blogger, posted that the "Labour Party have chosen to seek unsophisticated Muslim support for numerical reasons at the expense of sophisticated Jewish support." Trevor Kavanagh, a leading political columnist at the right-wing Sun newspaper, was just as bigoted when he said on TV: "By the very definition of being a Muslim, you are going to be anti-Jewish." The major shareholder of the right-wing GB News has also been found to have been posting and resharing Islamophobic comments and conspiracy theories; a charge he denies.

All of this comes against the backdrop of rising Islamophobia. Reports of anti-Muslim hate have risen by 335 percent since Oct. 7. Ever since the Oct. 7 attacks in Israel, the dominant thread - not

least among those trying to act as apologists for Israel's subsequent atrocities in Gaza - is that there has also been a surge in antisemitism, that the protests in London and elsewhere are hate marches and that Jews feel terrified to walk the streets. A major rise in antisemitic incidents of 589 percent has been reported. It is indeed alarming.

Yet, regarding antisemitism, the government and the Labour Party have rightly taken action. They have made countless statements, increased funding and done everything to try to reassure Britain's Jewish community. For the most part, it is treated with the seriousness it deserves. This contrasts with the reaction to Islamophobia. It is rarely called out. The government barely references it and, unlike in the case of antisemitism, barely devotes any parliamentary time to the issue. It will not even agree to a formal definition, like it has done for antisemitism.

Perhaps most alarming of all is that Islamophobia, which is also linked with its twin brother anti-Arab racism, is likely a key reason that the British government has failed to call out Israeli atrocities in Gaza. It seeks to stoke divisions between communities and fight culture wars. The calculation has long been that the Conservatives can profit electorally from this approach. This all makes Sunak's speech on Friday, when he called for a crackdown on extremism, ring hollow. He is trying to blame the overwhelmingly peaceful demonstrations against Israel's possible genocide in Gaza for this climate, yet refuses or is unable to crack down on the extremism in the party he leads. He will not acknowledge that his government's horrific policy on Gaza exacerbates tensions. The unfair demonization of Muslims cannot and must not be allowed to continue. If this is not tackled, anti-Muslim attacks will continue to rocket, with profound long-term effects.

The China Daily

Security meeting shows Western leaders no honest peace-brokers

Chen Weihua

THE Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine conflicts topped the agenda at the 60th Munich Security Conference from Feb 16 to 18, but it is mission impossible for such a gathering to help end the conflicts. The reason is quite simple. The gathering is not representative, let alone being inclusive. Russian and Iranian officials were not even invited to the conference despite the MSC's proclaimed Munich Rule: Engage and interact with each other; Don't lecture or ignore one another.

On the other hand, Ukraine was represented by President Volodymyr Zelensky, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, and other government ministers, parliamentarians and representatives of other institutions. The MSC is still a talk shop for the United States and its European and NATO allies, which all have taken sides with Ukraine and Israel. Such one-sided conversation is not conducive to finding a way to end the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine conflicts simply because the other side has been ignored.

The bigger problem is that none of the panelists was discussing a solution through diplomacy and dialogue, which is really the only way to restore lasting peace between the conflicting parties. Every senior official from the US, NATO and the European Union focused on how to continue to provide military aid to Ukraine so it can "defeat" Russia. They blocked the negotiations between Russia and Ukraine in the spring of 2022 and have been pouring cold water on calls for a cease-fire and the peace plans proposed by China, Brazil, South Africa and many other countries to help end the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

They have done so despite knowing full well that the issue cannot be resolved on the battlefield. Continued fighting only means more destruction and bloodshed for both Ukrainians and Russians. The same is true for the Israel-Palestine conflict. While the Hamas killed about 1,200 Israelis and foreigners in the Oct 7 attacks, the Palestinian death toll in the Gaza Strip hit 29,195 according to

the Gaza-based Health Ministry on Tuesday, and a majority of them have been women and children, not Hamas fighters.

While many Western leaders at the MSC mentioned the number 1,200, none of them even uttered the alarmingly high number of Palestinian deaths. Many of them said they were horrified by the Oct 7 attack, but none was "horrified" by what has been happening in Gaza since then. In fact, the Western leaders, including US Vice-President Kamala Harris speaking on the opening day, did not even dare to mention who killed the thousands of Palestinians. US Senator Chris Coons wore the number 133 during his panel speech, saying it is the number of days Israeli hostages have been held by Hamas. But will he ever wear the number of Palestinian children killed by the Israeli forces using many of the weapons supplied by the US? The number is more than 12,000 and counting.

Everybody knows who is responsible for the atrocities in



CCP to begin negotiation with Russia’s FAS

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) begins negotiations with the Federal Antimonopoly Service (FAS) of the Russian Federation for bilateral cooperation. The Federal Government has approved the commencement of negotiations.

Under the leadership of Dr Kabir Ahmed Sidhu, the CCP has intensified its efforts to forge partnerships with key regulatory bodies worldwide. This initiative is aimed at enhancing CCP’s international standing, with

a particular focus on improving its current rating of three stars out of five.

The FAS is at the forefront of implementing a robust digital agenda. Russia has enacted legislation to facilitate the digitalization of the economy. Pakistan stands to gain valuable insights and expertise from the Russian experience in this regard.

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Russian regulator is expected to facilitate capacity building for CCP, especially in the realm of digitalization. The collabora-

tion will also pave the way for joint research projects in crucial enforcement areas, which will further strengthen CCP’s enforcement capabilities.

Both CCP and FAS recognize the importance of promoting fair competition, enhancing market efficiency, and safeguarding consumer welfare. The proposed MoU aims to establish a framework for bilateral relations based on principles of equality and mutual benefit.

By partnering with FAS, CCP aims to gain valuable insights into emerging challenges such as digital mar-

kets and cross-border cartelization. This collaboration will also help in eliminating entry barriers and addressing anti-competitive practices, thereby creating opportunities for Russian companies to invest in Pakistan and contribute to the development of various markets in the country.

Overall, the collaboration between CCP and FAS aligns with CCP’s broader objectives of enhancing its international presence and promoting a positive perception of Pakistan on the global stage as attractive marketplace for investors.



RAWALPINDI: People purchasing food items in connection with upcoming Holy Fasting Month of Ramadan at Banni Chowk.

Dove, myco up to bring to life documentary ‘Her Right To Play’

F.P. Report

KARACHI: On the auspicious occasion of International Women’s day, myco.io & Dove Pakistan teamed up for an exclusive premiere of their original documentary “Her Right To Play”. In an event attended by the esteemed Garshash group board members, Unilever Pakistan, Pakistan Football Federation, media outlets and various women influencers and leaders, a documentary on the struggles and achievements for women football players in Pakistan which will be streaming on the myco web and app platforms from 8th March onwards.

The myco is focusing on promoting all forms of sports for all genders and strongly believes in the importance of women on and off the field. This collaboration comes with a purpose of shedding light on the plight of women in sports and their struggles but more importantly their determination to keep trying harder and to serve as an inspiration for other women to believe in their dreams.

The film covers the journey of Pakistan Women Football team, as they travel around the world playing various games against much experienced opponents and the challenges

they face along the way and in hopes of making history for Pakistan.

The myco is a global blockchain based video streaming platform having more than 9 million registered users, with over 700k videos on the platform & 1000+ premium watch hours. Myco has been at the forefront of sports streaming with their unique watch & earn model and having streamed over 200+ live sports including the ICC World Cup 23 and the PSL9 & 10. Having funded over 50+ projects for young filmmakers and originals myco also hosts a rich library of influencer partnerships.

Gold rates up by Rs1,600

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs1,600 and was sold at Rs230,200 on Saturday compared to its sale at Rs228,600 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs1,372 to Rs197,360 from Rs195,988 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs180,913 from Rs179,655, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs2,600 and Rs2,229.08 respectively. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$18 to \$2,198 from \$2,180, the Association reported.

Plastic material export increased

ISLAMABAD (APP): The export of plastic materials from the country witnessed an increase of 53.79 per cent during the first seven months of the current financial year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

Pakistan exported plastic material worth \$215.161 million during July-January (2023-24) as compared to the export of \$139,909 million during July-January (2022-23), showing growth of 53.79 per cent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

In terms of quantity, plastic export also surged by 118.18 per cent from 97,905 metric tons to 213,613 metric tons, the data revealed.

Meanwhile, year-on-year basis plastic exports increased by 102.83 per cent during January 2024 as compared to the same month of last year.

The plastic material exports in January 2024 were recorded at US \$36.283 million against the export of \$17.888 million in January 2023, the PBS data revealed.

On a month-on-month basis, the exports of plastic also surged by 7.77 per cent in January 2024 when compared to \$33.666 million in December 2023.

NCHR organises multi-stakeholder dialogue — to discuss issues faced by HBWs

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Extensive discussion was held on Issues faced by women home-based workers and the collaborative effort required to solve these issues, at a dialogue held to commemorate International Women’s Day (IWD). The dialogue was organised by UNDP in collaboration with National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) partnering with HomeNet Pakistan, All Pakistan Women’s Association Multan and Multan Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Aligned with this year’s theme of IWD “Invest in Women: Accelerates Progress,” the “Multistakeholder’s Dialogue on Investing in Pakistan Home-Based Workers for Accelerated Progress Towards Gender Equality” was aimed at discussing the multi stakeholder approach required for real-world outcomes for the right holders.

The speakers at the dialogue highlighted the fact the in Pakistan, home-

based workers face a myriad of challenges amidst a backdrop of widespread human rights and labour violations, particularly prevalent in the informal economy. They said that this sector is rife with forced or bonded labour, child labour, gender-based discrimination and a pervasive lack of adherence to labour standards, exacerbated by the absence of an enabling environment for women’s equal participation in the economy.

It was shared that the informal nature of employment in Pakistan including in the textile sector which is Pakistan’s largest export industry, from cotton picking to manufacturing, leaves informal workers vulnerable to exploitation, as they lack legal protection and are often arbitrarily dismissed without recourse.

Speaking on this occasion, Chairperson NCHR Rabiya Javeri Agha stressed the need to empower women home-based workers so that they can claim their rights as

well as redress if their rights are violated. She said that NCHR is working on the empowerment of women and this event was the first of the series of skilled awareness raising education and also is the part of the NCHR’s initiative of business and human rights. She ensured Commissions complete support for protection of the home-based women workers.

The speakers said that home-based workers, predominantly women, endure excessive working hours, hazardous conditions, and exploitative relationships with intermediary contractors resulting in income well below the national minimum wage. They said that these challenges underscore an urgent need for comprehensive reforms to safeguard the rights and dignity of home-based workers in Pakistan’s business landscape.

Findings of a study titled “Homeworkers in Garment Supply Chain” conducted by HomeNet South Asia was also shared at the

event. The study was conducted with 110 women homeworkers (HWs) in Karachi in the year 2022. The survey showed that 83 percent of HWs complained of eye strain or headache followed by backpain and neck/shoulder pain, cuts and wounds from needle, hip/leg pain and a feeling of tiredness and sadness. Around 76 per cent said they didn’t take any protective measures. Average monthly income of these workers was Rs 6545, as compared to minimum monthly wage of Rs 19000 as per Sindh government.

China’s PPI down 2.7% in February

BEIJING (APP): China’s producer price index (PPI), which measures costs for goods at the factory gate, went down 2.7 percent year on year in February, the National Bureau of Statistics said Saturday.

The decrease widened from a 2.5-percent decline in January. On a monthly basis, the PPI edged down 0.2 percent, the data showed.

As industrial production slowed down due to the Spring Festival that fell in February this year, the PPI decline widened, said NBS statistician Dong Lijuan.

Demand for steel and cement dropped in February as construction projects halted during the holiday period, sending the prices of the ferrous metal smelting and rolling industry as well as the cement producing industry down 0.4 percent and 1.4 percent month on month respectively.

The PPI of coal mining and washing industry edged down 0.7 percent month on month in February, compared to a 0.1-percent increase in January, due to decreased heating demand as temperatures rose in the country’s northern regions. CPI, a main gauge of inflation, edged up 0.7 percent year on year in February, NBS data showed.

Türkiye’s 1st neuroscience research center opened

ANKARA (APP): The Neuroscience and Neurotechnology Center of Excellence (NOROM), Türkiye’s first multidisciplinary neuroscience center, will make a “significant contribution” to protecting and improving brain health, as well as developing new methods to combat diseases such as Alzheimer’s, autism and migraine.

NOROM head Hayrunnisa Bolay Belen at a press briefing in Ankara provided details about the center, which was established in collaboration with Gazi University and Middle East Technical University in Ankara.

Using Siemens Healthineers’ MRI system, NOROM aims to advance brain research in Türkiye. The system, which can obtain detailed brain

images and is the first of its kind in Türkiye, is critical for measuring brain activity, understanding the interactions between brain regions, and diagnosing, treating, and researching brain diseases.

NOROM and Siemens Healthineers Türkiye are preparing to sign a research contract to contribute to the development of medical imaging technology in the near future. Belen said the center will attract researchers from all over the world.

Despite being a “very new center,” with infrastructure that can be preferred by the “best in different parts” of the world, she emphasized that NOROM aims to actively engage in neuroscience and neurotechnology research globally.

“We prioritize discovering molecular, biochemical,

imaging and electrophysiological fingerprints specific to neuropsychiatric disorders and brain diseases and defining new treatment targets,” she added.

NOROM aspires to be a “leading hub” for researchers worldwide, attracting talent through its mission, infrastructure, and diverse research opportunities, Belen pointed out.

Metehan Cicek, the head of the NOROM Neuroimaging Unit, said on the occasion that Türkiye’s three important universities have “very strong teams in different fields.” They have formed a “great union of forces,” Cicek emphasized, adding, “NOROM is a national center, open to all researchers and scientists with projects. Anyone with a project can use this center.”

Seminar highlighting women’s mental health

F.P. Report

KARACHI: On the occasion of International Women’s Day, celebrated globally, Karwan-e-Hayat, Institute for Mental Health Care, one of Pakistan’s leading mental healthcare organizations, working towards the prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of mental illness in the marginalized sections of the community, held a small seminar at a leading local hotel to highlight mental health in women.

The seminar, titled “Women’s Mental Health”, explained in detail why women are more susceptible to mental health disorders and have been reported to experience higher levels of depression and anxiety in their daily lives. Domestic violence and stressful events, especially the Covid-19 pandemic, have added an extra burden to the already multifaceted lives of women.

In her talk, Prof. Dr.

Qudsia Tarique emphasized that domestic violence and current ongoing events had an overwhelming influence on the mental state of women.

While the statistics portrayed a grim picture of the ongoing mental struggle of women in Pakistan and other countries, the seriousness of the situation could also not be understated enough.

Other esteemed speakers at the event included Prof. Dr. Unaiza Niazi, who was the Guest of Honour, Prof. Dr. Iqbal Afridi and Prof. Dr. Nasim Chaudhry. Each speaker eloquently elaborated on the challenging environments that women had to navigate through, beginning from a very early

stage. Their growth over the years stemmed from their resilience to overcome obstacles, particularly in matters related to female health, and taking charge of situations in spite of various societal pressures.

Karwan-e-Hayat - Institute for Mental Health Care (KeH) was established in 1983 and is a 110-bed hospital situated in Keamari. It is registered under section 42 of the Companies Act 2017 and has a tax-deductible status under section 2(36) of the Income Tax Ordinance 2001. It is an ISO 9001-2015 certified company and is fully Shariah-compliant. Additionally, it is recognized by Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP).

Rice export down 7.2

PHNOM PENH (APP): Cambodia had exported 90,153 tons of milled rice in the first two months of 2024, down 7.2 percent from 97,153 tons over the same period 2023, said a Cambodia Rice Federation’s report released on Saturday.

The country earned a total revenue of 65.4 million US dollars from the export of the commodity during the January-February period this year, also down 9.9 percent from 72.6 million dollars over the same period 2023, the report said. The Southeast Asian country’s rice had been shipped to 50 countries and regions by 40 exporters, it added.

Court Notice

In the Court of Qaisar Khan Afridi Additional District Judge II/Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Dagar. Appeal No. 82 /13, Institution 23/9/2022. Date of hearing 27/3/2024. Zahir Shah Vs Mst Rabia etc. Notice to No. 2. Behram Shah s/o Sher Khan. 16/1. Ahmed Zeb. 16/2. Luqman sons of Zaren late. 14/5. Msts Bakhtan Bibi. 14/6. Mst Husan Zeba ds/o Ajab Khan late. 15/1. Ismail. 15/2. Haron ss/o Mohamad Fazil late. 15/3. Mst Hasena Bibi.15/4. Mst Safena Bibi ds/o Mohamad Fazil late. 8. Shah Zaren s/o Bahadur. 17. Sheren s/o Bashar. 19/1/1. Bakhti Lal. 19/1/3. Norsahid ss/o Mst Sherbanu late. 19/1/6. Jamela d/o Mst Sherbanu late. 31/1. Waris Khan. 31/2. Ezat Khan. 31/3. Osama ss/o Mst Khajra late. 31/4. Mst Marha. 31/5. Mst Khalifat ds/o Mst Khajra late resident of Charorai Watwa in the limit Nagrai Tehsil Mandan District Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case, the mentioned defendants cannot 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 9 a.m. dated 27/3/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Envoy for deep economic cooperation, logistics improvement

LAHORE (APP): Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan Ullanbek Totuaiev has emphasized the deep historical, religious, and cultural ties between Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan, highlighting the significant potential for bilateral cooperation across various sectors. He underscored the importance of prioritizing trade, economic relations, and investment, noting the mutual benefits for both nations.

He was speaking to the business community here at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Saturday. LCCI President Kashif Anwar presented the address of welcome while Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, former SVPs Kashif Younas Meher, Amjad Ali Jawa, EC members Raja Hassan Akhter, Jabbar Khalid, President Kyrgyz Trade House Dr. Shahid Hassan and former EC member Hussain Raza Mirza were also present.

The Ambassador said that former Lahore Chamber’s SVP Kashif Younis Meher has been appointed as the honorary Consul General of Kyrgyzstan and the establishment of the Kyrgyz Trade House in Lahore was hailed as a positive step to enhance bilateral relations.

Ambassador Totuaiev emphasized Kyrgyzstan’s conducive

investment climate, with liberal laws attracting foreign investment and facilitating large-scale projects. He stressed the ongoing efforts to elevate economic cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan.

He said that joint business forums have been instrumental in fostering collaboration, with plans for more forums in the upcoming year to facilitate the participation of major companies. The Ambassador highlighted Kyrgyzstan’s interest in various sectors such as agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and textiles from Pakistan, while acknowledging challenges such as price competitiveness with other markets. He said that the embassy of Kyrgyzstan offered to provide comprehensive information on sectors like energy, agriculture, and food production to the Lahore Chamber to further bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

The Ambassador addressed logistical challenges, including border closures between Pakistan and Afghanistan, and highlighted the significance of the quadrilateral trade transit agreement among Pakistan, China, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. He commended initiatives such as the NLC-operated route through Karakoram, reducing transit time significantly.

Moreover, he mentioned the

ongoing establishment of railway connections between China, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan, welcoming Pakistan’s involvement through Afghanistan in this project. Ambassador Totuaiev also celebrated the significant presence of 12,000 Pakistani students in Kyrgyzstan, contributing positively to cultural exchanges between the two nations.

In his welcome address, LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan are members of important international organizations like Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) etc. Both countries have been enjoying sound diplomatic relations since 1992. “We share religious and cultural ties with strong bonding of brotherhood.”

He said that according to the State Bank of Pakistan, Pakistan’s total exports to Kyrgyzstan were around US \$ 2.6 million in 2021-22 which increased to US \$ 9.9 million in 2022-23. On the other hand, Pakistan’s imports from Kyrgyzstan are quite negligible. Pakistan’s exports to Kyrgyzstan are dominated by pharmaceutical products. The main reason of such a low volume of trade is

lack of knowledge about each other’s market. “We are keen to get better share in total imports of Kyrgyzstan that were around US \$ 9.6 billion in 2022.”

Kashif Anwar said that Pakistani products including value-added textiles, surgical instruments, sports goods, leather products, automotive parts, processed food and engineering goods have great scope in Kyrgyzstan. There is also a great potential of Joint Ventures (JVs) in the sectors of tourism, logistics, information technology and e-commerce. He mentioned that over 15,000 Pakistani students are pursuing higher education in the Kyrgyz Republic. Both countries can exploit significant potential for cooperation in education sector as well.

“Lahore Chamber has been talking about exploiting the untapped potential of trade in Central Asian Republics,” he said, adding that Kyrgyzstan and China share a long border. He said that Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan should make good use of CPEC for attaining better connectivity to deeply explore each other’s markets. “We expect a supporting role from the Embassy of Kyrgyzstan to make things move in the right direction.”

Kashif Anwar informed the

house that the 4th Session of Kyrgyz-Pakistan Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade-Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation was held on 10th November 2023 in Bishkek. During the session, both sides had stressed upon improving connectivity through the advancement of rail, road, and air links, alongside promoting increased people-to-people engagement. He said that both sides also discussed the need for early completion of CASA-1000 project for transmission of surplus renewable energy from Central Asia to South Asia. We are hopeful about swift implementation of these important initiatives.

He said that there is a need for a robust plan of action to address trade barriers and in this connection, the Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment can play an important role. Both sides should finalize the Transit Trade Agreement as the year-round accessibility of the Karakoram Highway presents a key opportunity for facilitating transit trade and strengthening bilateral economic ties.

He said that the commercial sections of our respective embassies have to play a positive role in this connection. Similarly, in order to increase people to people contacts and bilateral

trade, the embassies and chambers should collaborate with each other on regular basis and provide every possible support.

The LCCI President especially mentioned about the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) established by the Government of Pakistan to primarily focus on expediting new investments in five areas including defence, agriculture, minerals, information technology/telecommunication and energy. He hoped that the envoy would apprise the investors from Kyrgyzstan about these investment opportunities in Pakistan under SIFC.

He requested to the Ambassador to encourage investors to invest in Pakistan through Joint Ventures. In addition to that the government of Punjab is making an all-out effort to improve doing business in the province by facilitating international and national investors through one window operations in the Business Facilitation Centre.

The LCCI President said that increasing the frequency of direct flights, organizing trade delegations and holding single country exhibitions on reciprocal basis would prove to be effective in opening new avenues that are much needed for enhancing the mutual trade relations.

**In brief****Player died while playing hockey**

CHITRAL (APP): A young player died falling down from the ceiling while playing snow hockey in the Kalash Valley, Police Control Chitral confirmed the incident. According to details, the people of Kalash Valley were playing their ancient cultural games ice hockey after the recent heavy snow-fall. In the meantime, a player died while getting the ball from the top of a Police Station roof. A young player, namely Sher Anjum son of Sultan Rome, who is said to be 25-years old, is resident of Broontar village in front of Pahlawanandeh. He was playing a snow game that contains a wooden ball that is black-colored so that it does not disappear in the ice because the color of the ice is white, so the ball is black. During the game, the ball fell to the roof of the under-construction police station. Sher Anjum climbed the roof of the Police Station and threw the ball down, but because of the heavy snow, he did not realize and fell down on the floor below the ceiling, causing him to his death. His father, Sultan Rome, had also died in a similar kind of incident, falling from the roof top while his one brother is a local taxi driver and the other is in Dubai.

Sri Lanka beat Bangladesh

SYLHET (Agencies): Nuwan Thushara's five-wicket burst, including a hat-trick, after Kusal Mendis struck a 55-ball 86 handed Sri Lanka a 2-1 series win against Bangladesh in Sylhet on Saturday. Thushara blew away the Bangladesh top order with a hat-trick in his first over - the fourth of the innings. He became the sixth Sri Lankan to achieve the feat. Rishad Hossain and Taskin Ahmed, also Bangladesh's best bowlers on the day, provided some respite with the bat, but Sri Lanka had done enough damage in that initial phase to get to a comfortable win. Rishad struck seven sixes in his 30-ball 53, the most by a Bangladesh batter and the second most by a batter batting at No. 8 or lower in the batting order. But the day belonged to Thushara. Thushara rips through Bangladesh Thushara, who only entered the XI because Matheesha Pathirana was ruled out with a hamstring injury, started bowling in the fourth over and immediately got the ball to swing - he got one to shape into the left-handed Najmul Hossain Shanto and rearranged his stumps. Towhid Hridoy was up next, and Thushara got another one to swing similarly, this time the movement away from the right-hander. The ball ended up at the deep-third boundary, but only after uprooting the off stump. As a Sri Lankan fielder retrieved the ball, the rest became involved in an altercation with Hridoy, who had to be held back by umpire Tanvir Ahmed. The chaos gave way to the sublime when Thushara handed out that same treatment to Mahmudullah, trapping him lbw. The ball once again dipped and then swung in front of the batter. For those who witnessed the three balls, there's bound to be debate about which was the best of the three. Kusal Mendis puts on a show When Sri Lanka battled after losing the toss, Kusal Mendis was Bangladesh's biggest threat, and he ended up scoring almost half of Sri Lanka's 174-run total. Kusal Mendis' 86 off 55 balls, peppered with half a dozen sixes and as many fours, was also his highest score in T20Is.

Kings keep their playoffs hopes alive after a thrilling win over Qalandars

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Karachi Kings secured their fourth win of HBL PSL 9 by defeating Lahore Qalandars by three wickets at National Bank Stadium, Karachi on Saturday night. Batting first, Lahore posted 177-5. In return, Karachi chased the total on the last ball of the final over, keeping their chances for playoffs alive. The home side won the toss and elected to field first. Opening batter Mirza Tahir Baig (4, 7b), replacing Sahibzada Farhan, lost his wicket cheaply as he fell to Anwar Ali in the third over. Abdullah Shafique joined Fakhar Zaman in the middle to construct a 70-run partnership that stabilized Lahore's innings. Fakhar got to work in the powerplay, hitting a six and a four in the fourth over and then a boundary in the sixth to help the side get to 44-1 at the end of powerplay. Fakhar and Abdullah then hit a six each against Shoaib Malik in the ninth over, milking 15 runs from it. Shortly after, Fakhar was run out as Muhammad Irfan

Khan perfected his throw at the stumps from midwicket. The left-handed batter walked back in the 11th over after scoring his first half-century (54, 35b, 5x4s, 2x6s) of HBL PSL 9. In the next over, Abdullah and Shai Hope hit a boundary each against Zahid to keep the scoreboard ticking. Zahid bowled a double-wicket over, taking out Hope (9, 11b, 1x4) and Shaheen Shah Afridi (1, 3b) for single-digit scores with the scorecard reading 122-4 after 15 overs. Abdullah brought up his first half-century of HBL PSL 9 in the 16th over. In the subsequent over, he was caught at deep square by Anwar off Blessing Muzarabani and had to walk back for a dogged 55 on 39, on the back of five boundaries and a solitary six. An unbeaten sixth-wicket partnership, producing 46 on 20, between David Wiese and Sikandar Raza helped Lahore end with a competitive total of 177-5. Wiese, who hit three sixes, contributed an undefeated 24 on nine. Raza chipped in with

an undefeated 22 on 16, with two fours and a six. Zahid had two wickets while Anwar and Muzarabani had one each. Tim Seifert and James Vince, opening the batting for Karachi, gave their side an inspiring start with 58 runs amassed in the powerplay. After seeing off Shaheen's first over, the two took on Ahsan Hafeez Bhatti to produce 17 in the second over on the back of two fours and a six. They followed that up with at least a boundary each in the remaining powerplay overs. Tayyab Abbas provided the breakthrough for Lahore, with Vince caught behind for 42 off 27, on the back of six fours and one maximum. Shan Masood, batting at three, managed to add 24 from 16 with the help of three fours, before Raza disturbed his stumps with a stunning delivery in the 12th over, breaking the 40-run second-wicket stand. In the next over, Pollard was caught behind after nicking one off Tayyab and returned for a paltry five ball three.

Garnacho gives Man Utd cause for optimism in Everton win



MANCHESTER (AFP): Erik ten Hag hailed the "huge" contribution of Alejandro Garnacho after the 19-year-old won two penalties in Manchester United's 2-0 win over Everton on Saturday. Bruno Fernandes and Marcus Rashford converted from the spot to keep United's Champions League hopes for next season alive. Victory takes Ten Hag's men to within eight points of fourth-placed Aston Villa and three off Tottenham in fifth. Garnacho scored a goal of the season contender when the sides last met in November with a stunning overhead kick. The Argentine was again the difference between the sides as it was his quick feet that twice provoked spot-kicks. "Garnacho is progressing very well and we're very pleased. His contribution today again

was huge," said Ten Hag. "When he keeps this attitude he will improve from game-to-game." Garnacho has been one of few positives for United in a difficult second season for Ten Hag. Back-to-back defeats to Fulham and Manchester City had dented a charge from the Red Devils towards the top four. But with Villa and Tottenham facing off on Sunday, Ten Hag remained confident his side can still chase down a place in the Champions League next season. "We had one bad result against Fulham in this calendar year," added Ten Hag. "We had to put this right and keep the pressure on the teams above us. "There are many games to play. Now we are back. We will keep pressure on them and see what happens." "Need to work" Defeat extended

Everton's winless run in the Premier League to 11 games and leaves the Toffees still just five points above the relegation zone. Scoring goals has been Everton's shortfall all season and it was a familiar tale for the Toffees, who had 23 shots on goal without finding the net. "I've never been here, with all due respect to the squads I've had, and had that many chances and created that many opportunities," said Everton boss Sean Dyche. "The most important stat, of course, is the final scoreline. We're getting into key areas and we need to work continuously to change it." James Tarkowski was the first Everton defender lured into a mistimed challenge on Garnacho, 10 minutes in, and Fernandes rolled home his eighth goal of the season. Garnacho then danced through a series of challenges on the edge of the box before he was chopped down by Ben Godfrey. Just like he did at Goodison Park earlier in the season, Fernandes passed over penalty duties to Rashford. Jordan Pickford was unable to deny his England international teammate as Rashford fired home his fifth goal in nine Premier League games.

Cavs hold off Timberwolves in overtime, Lakers win thriller

LOS ANGELES (AFP): The Cleveland Cavaliers, fueled by 34 points from Darius Garland and 33 from Jarrett Allen, notched another big NBA victory on Friday, outlasting Western Conference contenders Minnesota 113-104 in overtime. The Cavs, who overturned a 22-point fourth-quarter deficit to stun the league-leading Boston Celtics on Tuesday, held on for the win over a Timberwolves team that came in as Western Conference leaders but finished the night half a game behind the Oklahoma City Thunder -- who beat the Miami Heat 107-100. Cleveland, without injured starters Donovan Mitchell, Evan Mobley and Max Strus, found the firepower to overcome Minnesota, who were coming off a draining victory over the Indiana Pacers on Thursday. Allen's career-high in points included 10 in overtime when the Timberwolves had to make do without star center Rudy Gobert, who fouled out with 27 seconds left in regulation. Angry at the sixth foul call against him, Gobert made a

finger-rubbing "money" gesture toward a referee and was promptly charged with a technical foul. Garland made the technical free-throw to tie it up at 97-97 and force overtime. Gobert said he thought his reaction was "the truth," but he admitted it was an ill-judged gesture. "It cost my team the game," he said. "It was an immature reaction. It's not just one call. Everyone makes mistakes, but when it's over and over and over again, of course it's frustrating." Micah Nori, who stood in for Timberwolves head coach Chris Finch after Finch began feeling ill before tip-off, called Gobert's actions at a crucial moment in the game "unacceptable." "He was obviously frustrated, both teams were, but we have to be smarter," Nori said. Naz Reid scored a career-high 34 points for Minnesota and Anthony Edwards added 19 but was held scoreless in the fourth quarter and overtime. Meanwhile, Oklahoma City erased a 14-point deficit to beat the Heat. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 23

of his 37 points in the second half to fuel the turnaround. The Thunder put together a 17-0 scoring run early in the third quarter to take a 68-65 lead and never trailed again. Lakers hang on Elsewhere in the West, D'Angelo Russell scored the game-winner with 5.9 seconds left, lifting the Los Angeles Lakers to a 123-122 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks. The Lakers were without superstar LeBron James, who was sidelined with a sore ankle. Anthony Davis was slowed by an apparent shoulder injury in the second half, but Russell picked up the slack, scoring 21 of his season-high 44 points in the fourth quarter. "I just tried to do whatever I could do," Russell said. "Scoring, assisting, whatever it may be, whatever they need from me... Bron was out, so a lot of guys stepped up." The Lakers withstood Giannis Antetokounmpo's triple-double of 34 points, 14 rebounds and 12 assists. After trailing most of the game, Milwaukee took the lead on an Antetokounmpo jump shot with 2:53 to play.



KARACHI: Fakhar Zaman slammed a quick half-century.

PCB Chairman to attend ICC meeting in Dubai

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), Mohsin Raza Naqvi, will attend the meeting of the International Cricket Council (ICC) in Dubai from March 13 to 15. He will be accompanied by the PCB Chief Operating Officer, Salman Naseer, who will represent Pakistan in the chief executive meeting. The PCB officials will leave for Dubai on the night of March 12. According to sources, the PCB officials will meet with other board officials on the sidelines of the meeting and discuss various issues related to cricket. One of the possible topics of discussion is the bilateral relations with the Indian board, which have been strained due to political tensions between the two countries. The ICC meeting will also review the arrangements for the T20 World Cup to be held in America and West Indies later this year. The sources said that the ICC will also discuss the Champions Trophy arrangements to be held in Pakistan next year, which will be a major event for the country's cricket. The PCB Chairman will also interact with other board officials and share his views on the development and promotion of cricket in Pakistan and globally.

Pakistan Tennis Federation president visits SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): Pakistan Tennis Federation President and tennis player Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi and the youngest tennis player Zohaib Afzal Malik visited Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) on Saturday. SCCI President Abdul Ghafoor Malik welcomed the guests. During a meeting at the SCCI Auditorium, he said: "I congratulate Aisam on his selection as the Tennis Federation president. We hope that under his leadership, Pakistan will achieve its highest position in the game of tennis." The SCCI president said Zohaib Malik was Pakistan's first and youngest tennis player, who participated in two tournaments held in the USA, Spain, Nepal and Qatar, while he also won one gold medal and three silver medals in the tournament held in Tajikistan in April 2023.

Four KP players excel in South Asian Junior Badminton

PESHAWAR (APP): Four of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa players part of the South Asian Junior Badminton Championship recently played at Islamabad, got one gold, four silver and as many bronze medals. In the Pakistan team, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa players performed brilliantly. In the double Under-17 final, Fahad Ahmad won 1 gold medal, in U15 Abdul Haseeb Khan won silver in singles, Ryan Khan won silver medals and bronze medal and double, Qari Muhammad Umar claimed bronze medal in mixed double U17 and bagged silver medal in U-17 mixed team event and bronze medal in the U15 team even, all these players trained and coach under the

two prominent international coaches of the Directorate General Badminton Academy Peshawar including Muhammad Nadeem Khan, Hayat Ullah and Malik Faraz and Bushra. Talking to APP, international badminton player who represented Pakistan in the Canadian Open Badminton Championship Syed Sadaqat Shah appreciated the players of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for their remarkable performances in the recently concluded South Asian Junior Badminton Championship Islamabad-2024. He said winning one gold, four silver and four bronze medals of the junior players of Directorate General Badminton Academy needed

much appreciation. He also appreciated the coaches who did hard work with the junior players. He lauded Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Badminton Association President Zafar Ali Khan, Secretary Muhammad Amjad Khan with all coaches. He said besides Pakistan, teams from Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, Bhutan. The Pakistan Badminton Federation organized the Championship. Earlier, after reaching Peshawar Sports Complex, the four badminton players were warmly received and garlanded by the office-bearers of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Badminton Association and Directorate General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

India crush England by an innings to seal Test series 4-1

DHARAMSALA (AFP): Ravichandran Ashwin took a five-wicket haul in his landmark 100th Test as India hammered England by an innings and 64 runs in the fifth match to seal the series 4-1 on Saturday. England's James Anderson reached 700 Test wickets early in the day to be just the third bowler to achieve the feat, but the tourists were never in the game. Off-spinner Ashwin returned figures of 5-77 to help bowl out England for 195 inside three days at the picturesque Dharamsala stadium, overlooked by snowcapped Himalayan mountains, after India posted a mammoth 477. He rocked England's top- and middle-order after the tourists began their innings 259 runs behind and lost five wickets for 103 runs by lunch. After the match, Ashwin said he was "very happy" with his performance. "Win the Test and take wickets, what more can a bowler ask for?" Jonny Bairstow, also in his 100th Test, attempted to take on the spinners and hit Ashwin for three sixes but finally fell lbw to Kuldeep

Yadav after his 31-ball 39. At the stroke of lunch Ashwin bowled skipper Ben Stokes for two, taking down the star all-rounder for the 13th time in Tests. Joe Root resisted with his 84 and was the last man to go. He was dismissed by Yadav as India celebrated and the players shook hands. Ashwin finished with nine wickets in the match and his 36th five-wicket haul in a career which began in 2011. Skipper Rohit Sharma did not take the field due to a "stiff back", with fast bowler deputy Jasprit Bumrah in charge and taking two wickets of his own. Earlier, Anderson got Yadav caught behind for 30 to become the first paceman and third bowler overall to the 700 mark, after spinners Muttiah Muralitharan of Sri Lanka (800 wickets) and late Australian great Shane Warne (708). The 41-year-old held the ball aloft to the crowd as teammates gathered around him and England fans stood to cheer. It ended Yadav's stubborn 49-run ninth-wicket overnight stand with Bumrah. Spinner Shoaib

Bashir soon wrapped up the innings in the fifth over of the day when he got Bumrah stumped for 20, completing the 20-year-old's second five-wicket haul in his debut series. Rohit (103) and Shubman Gill (110) set up the huge victory on the second day with a 171-run second-wicket stand to put the England bowlers on the back foot. Rookie batsman Sarfaraz Khan (56) and debutant Devdutt Padikkal (65) also made useful contributions in India's sole innings in response to England's 218. India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal scored 57 and remained the leading batsman in the series with 712 runs, including double centuries in matches two and three. Yadav made his left-arm wrist spin count with his own five-wicket haul to bundle England out on day one after the visitors elected to bat first. England won the opener by 28 runs in Hyderabad with their attacking "Bazball" style of play, which came under fire by the critics in the next three losses, after they suffered regular batting flops.



RIYADH: Anthony Joshua punches Francis Ngannou during the Heavyweight fight between Anthony Joshua and Francis Ngannou on the Knockout Chaos boxing card at the Kingdom Arena.



In brief

ICT admin intensifies crackdown

ISLAMABAD (APP): Assistant Commissioners Islamabad led by the ICT administration teams on Saturday intensified their efforts to curb price hikes and tackle the menace of professional beggars across the capital. On the special directives of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, Assistant Commissioner Shalimar spearheaded a recent operation against price hikes, conducting rigorous inspections at the F-10 and F-11 Markaz and various other locations, said the ICT Spokesman, Dr Abdullah Tabassum. The crackdown resulted in the imposition of fines totaling Rs 40,000 on offenders found guilty of inflating prices. Additionally, 21 individuals were apprehended and handed over to police stations, while five professional beggars were also taken into custody. Moreover, inspections targeting the proliferation of polythene bags were carried out at various sites, addressing environmental concerns alongside economic ones. These operations are part of ongoing efforts to combat illegal practices and maintain order in Islamabad. With daily initiatives targeting illegal proposals, price hikes, and professional beggars, the administration is committed to ensuring a fair and regulated environment for residents and visitors alike.

Women's Day celebrated

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a vibrant celebration, the Mass Communication Department at IMCG (PG) F 7/4 Margalla College, Islamabad, on Saturday organized a dynamic program commemorating International Women's Day. The event showcased soulful songs and a compelling short stage drama, shedding light on the crucial role of women in society. The distinguished Vice Principal, also heading the History Department, graced the occasion as the esteemed Chief Guest. In her address, she emphasized the pivotal role women play in every sphere of life, highlighting their contributions and achievements. Dr Ambreen Saba, the Head of the Mass Communication Department, expressed gratitude to the Chief Guest and the audience for making the day a memorable celebration of women's empowerment. The event not only entertained but also served as a platform to acknowledge and appreciate the invaluable role of women in shaping a progressive society.

Students visit PSCA

ISLAMABAD (APP): LUMS and KPS Cadet School and College students visited the Punjab Safe Cities Authority here on Saturday. The delegation was given a detailed briefing on the PSCA work, and the shift commander showed it round various authority departments. The students were briefed about the Operations and Monitoring Center, 15 Emergency Call Centers, and the Electronic Data Analysis Center. The delegation was briefed on modern policing with the use of artificial intelligence. Safe City has developed AI-based software for automatic helmet and seatbelt detection and gun detection. It was informed to the delegation that facilities like live location of callers and conference calls with first responders have been introduced for those who call on 15. Smart Safe City projects are being implemented in 18 more cities in Punjab. The teachers and students said that the success of the modern Safe City project in Pakistan is a pride for them.



RAWALPINDI: Vendors preparing traditional food item Pheoni in connection with upcoming Holy Fasting Month of Ramadan at Banni Chowk. —APP Photo

Senator Ijaz denied presidential election vote despite production order

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senator Ijaz Chaudhry faced deprivation of voting rights in the presidential election despite the issuance of a production order. Initially permitted by the Home Department, Senator Chaudhry was prevented from casting his vote as prison authorities refused to transport him to Islamabad. Consequently, the PTI Senator's absence prompted slogans of support within

Parliament.

The Deputy Chairman Senate had previously ordered the production order for Senator Ijaz Chaudhry, currently detained on judicial remand. PTI Senator Barrister Ali Zafar urged for Chaudhry's immediate release, emphasizing the availability of high court orders for his release.

Expressing concern over Chaudhry's health issues, Zafar advocated for the formation of a medical board to assess his condition at

PIMS (Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences). Until then, he suggested Chaudhry be accommodated in Parliament Lodges.

Zafar underscored Chaudhry's right to participate in the presidential election and urged for the issuance of production orders in accordance with parliamentary rules. Failure to facilitate Chaudhry's participation, he emphasized, would be a disservice to the Senate's integrity.

Consensus and reconciliation is way forward: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Attaullah Tarar said on Saturday that PML-N and Pakistan People Party (PPP) demonstrated a best collation through consensus and reconciliation, today's presidential election was the best demonstration of that.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that PML-N and PP are natural allies and this alliance is very important to take the country out of the economic quagmire and put towards development. Tarar stated that the government desires to settle the country's problems through reconciliation, but the opposition must also be serious and refrain from making baseless allegations.

Aawaz II's community engagement achievements

ISLAMABAD (APP): Aawaz II organised a two-day learning and experience sharing forum with community leaders, members of Aawaz II forums, and youth volunteers from 15 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

The event highlighted community engagement and behaviour change efforts of Aawaz II in addressing critical issues like gender-based violence, child marriage, tolerance and social cohesion.

Henrietta Hamilton Deputy Development Director, FCDO in Pakistan emphasized the collective action needed to address complex challenges of GBV, child marriage and minority rights that has been exacerbated by factors, "Climate change adds complexities to GBV but together we can find long-term solutions for a more inclusive society."

Faizi, transgender rights campaigner from Aawaz II District Forum Toba Tek Singh shared how "If we want marginalised communities to be safe and protected, we need to integrate these communities into society and reduce the distances and differences between them. Today, it is not just me standing here before you but many others like me."

Rabia Javeri Agha, Chairperson National Commission on Human Rights highlighted that change in attitudes and mindsets requires continuous efforts and looked to the civil society in Supporting them.

Amir Muqam urges transparent inquiry into Shangla tragedy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Amir Muqam, President of PML-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, urged for an unbiased inquiry into the Shangla incident on February 9, stressing the need to uncover the genuine perpetrators and masterminds involved.

Talking to media, Amir Muqam, KP PML(N) President, questions PTI's delayed response to the Shangla incident on February 9, asking about their sudden attention after a month.

He stressed the significance of the children who lost their lives in the tragedy, likening them to his own sons. Moreover, he expressed remorse for the incident and urged for an immediate inquiry.

In the tragic event that occurred in Shangla on February 9, Amir Muqam said: "we lost two of our brethren/children. We deeply mourn their loss and stand in solidarity with their families during this time of grief."

In response to PTI's accusations, he stated that the PTI leadership has only now begun

politicizing the tragic incident after a month. He emphasized that engaging in blame games will not lead to any meaningful outcomes. Additionally, he mentioned his intention to address this issue during parliamentary sessions.

He insisted on a transparent investigation into the incident. Those responsible for orchestrating this tragedy must be held accountable, and the truth about those who exploited innocent lives for political gain must be exposed to the public.

Engr Amir Muqam stated that all evidence, including videos, has been shared, and an FIR lodged for the murder of two individuals. He cautioned against PTI's actions, likening them to the May 9 attacks on state institutions including Jinnah House, Radio Pakistan and Dir Scout etc.

He called for a judicial inquiry into the May 9 incident, emphasizing that PTI leaders are working against the nation, and the recent cipher case is now public knowledge. Engr Amir

Muqam criticized PTI for accumulating debt in the province over the past decade. He highlighted how social media influencers previously undermined their values. Moreover, he condemned PTI supporters for verbally abusing a PML-N female lawmaker and throwing water bottles at her.

He stressed that resorting to blame games is simplistic, affirming Pakistan Muslim League-N's commitment to advocating for the province and the nation as a whole. He questioned the whereabouts of those who previously championed the province's rights while holding government positions at both the center and the province.

Additionally, he queried the allocation of funds to merged districts and contributions to NFC during their tenure, insinuating their tendency to politicize every issue. MNA Sardar Muhammad Yusuf, along with MNA Idris Khan, Samiullah Barki, and others, graced the occasion with their presence.

Collective efforts required to ensure gender parity: Ambassador Tirmizi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan to the United Arab Emirates Faisal Niaz Tirmizi on Saturday emphasized the importance of investing in women's empowerment to accelerate progress.

He highlighted that addressing women's economic disempowerment is key. He underlined the importance of ensuring inclusivity by engaging women in political, economic and cultural spheres.

The ambassador warmly welcomed participants gathered to commemorate International Women's Day at a grand event held at the premises of the Embassy in Abu Dhabi, a press release said.

He said "This day is a reminder for our collective efforts to achieve gender parity and equality in all spheres of life. The current statistics on gender parity highlight the need for more concrete efforts and measures to achieve our goal of women empower-

ment."

Tirmizi said that the event's most special feature was an in-depth interactive panel discussion with inspiring Pakistani women with acclaimed successes and accomplishments in various fields of life which included Zulfia Nazir, football player/fitness Influencer, Kiran Malik actor/model/entrepreneur, Mehr F. Husain author/journalist/publisher and Shazia Ali Khan filmmaker/professor.

The panel discussion was moderated by Saba Karim Khan. The proud Pakistani women stars shared their impactful stories and journeys of untiring struggle, dedication, self-belief and commitment to the passion of what they wanted to achieve in life. The thrilling life story of each individual to reach the zenith of success in their professional careers and endeavors was undeniably impressive.

The ambassador con-

ferred special thanks to the panelists for joining the session and making it truly meaningful. He said that it was a treat to be listening to a bunch of confident, successful and impactful Pakistani women who were role models for young women and girls to get inspiration.

He also appreciated Amber, Ms. Sabah Karim Khan, Professor of Anthropology, New York University Abu Dhabi, Kiran Kazmi and Haniya Faisal for their efforts and assistance in making the event a success.

A special documentary showcasing dynamic Pakistani women from diverse fields made by Pakistan's Women Parliamentary Caucus was also shown during the event. Another documentary video highlighting the role of Pakistani women in various walks of life, prepared by Haniya with the assistance of Faisal Hussain, was screened during the event.

Chairman RBISE visits matric exam centers to check arrangements

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chairman, Rawalpindi Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (RBISE), Muhammad Adnan Khan on Saturday visited different centers and reviewed arrangements made by the board for matric first annual exams 2024.

He visited Government High School Jhata Hatial and Government Boys High School Sohawa in connection with the Matric First Annual 2024 examination.

The Chairman changed the superintendent of the examination center and ordered an inquiry for beating the students in the examination center

Sohawa.

During the visit, he reviewed the ongoing examinations in various examination halls and rooms and also checked the attendance sheets and roll number slips of the students. Speaking after the visit, the chairman said that separate raiding teams had been formed to make the monitoring of the examination centers effective.

While issuing instructions, he said that the monitoring teams should perform their professional duties without any discrimination. The controller of Examinations, RBISE, Prof. Sajid Mahmood Farooqui, also

visited Worker Welfare School Morgah and Government High School AOC, Morgah.

During the visit, he talked to the examination staff and said that Standard Operating Procedures issued by the board should be implemented strictly.

The staff was directed to provide all possible facilities to the students appearing in the exams. The reports are being taken on a daily basis from the central control room and the control rooms established in each district and the arrangements are being further improved in the light of the reports, he added.

NDMA to launch mobile app to provide warning of potential disasters

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is soon launching a mobile application to provide early warning of potential disasters and safety measures to the public. In wake of the rain forecast, the NDMA has issued instructions to the concerned departments in view of possible rain and snowfall in the coming week.

Rain and snowfall is expected in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit Baltistan, Murree and

Galliyat during the period. The contact roads are also likely to be blocked due to landslides and heavy snowfall. The NDMA has directed the concerned officials to take weather awareness measures to ensure the safety of tourists and travelers.

The authority has instructed all PDMA's and other concerned administrative bodies to be alert to deal with any kind of emergency. The local administration should take timely measures to ensure timely availability of emergency

personnel and machinery in mountainous and snowy areas. The NDMA has also given instructions to ensure timely evacuation of people from potentially at-risk populations.

The concerned departments should continue continuous monitoring of water flow in rivers and canals. All concerned departments should strengthen the communication and support framework. The NDMA has also directed the officials to ensure the availability of messages in local lan-

guages for public awareness and timely provision of emergency personnel and machinery in areas affected by landslide risk. The farmers are advised to carry out agricultural activities keeping in mind the weather.

While the tourists should plan their trip keeping in mind the weather conditions of the hilly areas. The tourists are also advised to keep the important numbers of the administration in the area with them where they intend to travel.



RAWALPINDI: A vendor selling fresh salad on his handcart at near Shamsabad. —APP Photo

Regional uplift discussed

KABUL (BNA): Political Commission of IEA, led by Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, convened a meeting at the Sepadar Palace. The gathering focused on evaluating recent decisions and actions, analyzing the latest developments in the region and globally and exploring avenues for strengthening relations and positive interaction with various countries. The esteemed members of Commission engaged in comprehensive discussions and exchanging ideas.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

Shabaan 28, 1445 — Sunday, March 10, 2024

Traders call for visa facilities

KABUL (Khaama Press): Some Afghan traders, in a meeting with JP Singh, India's special representative for Afghanistan affairs, have requested facilitation of the Indian visa process. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently announced that JP Singh, India's special representative for Afghanistan affairs, emphasized the need to boost exports and imports between Afghanistan and India during a meeting with Afghan national traders at the Ministry's headquarters.

IEA urges UN to be impartial in reporting about Afghanistan

KABUL (Ariana News): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) has called on the United Nations to "prioritize factuality and impartiality over superficiality and prejudice" in reporting about the country.

It comes after UN Secretary General issued a new report on the situation in Afghanistan and UN envoy for the country briefed the UN Security Council.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a statement strongly objected to the "baseless allegations in this and other UN reports, the non-academic mechanism of compilation, mention of non-mandated topics like internal disputes over narcotics ban, ethnicization of incidents and issues, categorization of law-enforcement efforts as arbitrary and human right violations, basing arguments on unfounded allegations, anonymous sources and previous false reporting instead of ground realities and verifiable data."

The statement also objected the "spreading a climate of fear in and showcasing Afghanistan as a



conflict-zone through distorted conflation of falsified information and isolated criminal incidents, and attempting to present Afghanistan as a potential threat to other countries by coming under the coercive influence of unsubstantial political narratives of a few particular countries."

IEA assessed positively

acknowledgement of the prevalent security and stability, economic progress, implementation of comprehensive ban on narcotics,

reception of forcefully expelled Afghans, rapid response to natural disasters and other efforts of the Islamic Emirate; detrimental impact of banking and economic sanctions on the Afghan people; and calls for continuation of humanitarian and steps towards basic-needs assistance to the people of Afghanistan underlined in the report of the UN Secretary-General and briefing to the Security Council by UNSG's Special Representative for

Afghanistan. "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, in the framework of the noble religion of Islam, national sovereignty and national interests, reiterates its commitment to transparent and result-oriented engagement with all world countries, including the organization of the United Nations, at any time and any place aimed at securing mutual interests and finding solutions to mutual concerns," the statement said.

Ministry conducts exam

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Higher Education under the caretaker government has announced that 51,000 religious scholars across seven zones in Afghanistan have taken the master's examination.

This move is part of a broader initiative to standardize and recognize the qualifications of religious scholars throughout the country. The national television, operated under the control of the Taliban, reported that Neda Mohammad Nadim, the acting minister of this department, traveled to Kandahar to oversee the examination process, marking the commencement of exams across all zones in the province.

Nadim assured participants of the examination's full transparency, emphasizing that this process would officially document the credentials of the scholars. This step is seen as a crucial measure in ensuring the integrity and recognition of religious scholarship within Afghanistan's educational framework. The Media Center of the Taliban in Kandahar also released a statement, noting that 7,396 religious scholars in the province had participated in the evaluation for their master's credentials.

The examination, held on Friday, at Kandahar University and the provincial military command, was organized by the Ministry of Higher Education.

However, amidst these developments, the Taliban's restrictive policies have led to significant setbacks in the realm of education, particularly affecting women and girls. A stark manifestation of these policies is the banning of girls' education beyond the sixth grade. This ban has been a point of international criticism, highlighting a significant regression in women's rights and access to education in Afghanistan.

Furthermore, the restrictive approach extends to higher education, with universities being closed to women. This move not only limits the professional and personal development of women but also significantly hampers the country's progress by excluding half of the population from contributing to its socio-economic development. These policies have drawn widespread condemnation from the international community, calling for immediate actions to restore educational access and rights for all, especially women and girls, in Afghanistan.

People's problems to be addressed: Hanafi

KABUL (Pajhwok): Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs Maulvi Abdul Salam Hanafi has stressed the role of religious scholars, influential figures and tribal elders in uniting society.

Hanafi met a number of scholars, influential figures and tribal elders from different provinces, the Presidential Palace wrote on its X handle.

The tribal elders asked the leadership of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to provide job opportunities for the people and implement development projects.

They praised the overall security situation in the country, the government's efforts for preventing drug



cultivation and trafficking.

For his part, the deputy premier said the role of religious scholars, influential figures and tribal elders was vital in uniting society.

He affirmed IEA's commitment to providing services to the citizens and

implementing development projects in all provinces of the country.

Referring to the demands of the people, Hanafi said the caretaker government take them into consideration within the available resources.

Woman establishes handicrafts workshop



FAIZABAD (TOLONews): At the same time as the International Women's Day, a woman in the city of Faizabad in Badakhshan province has established a handicraft workshop, providing vocational training and employment opportunities for about 50 girls deprived of education.

These girls said that due to unemployment, they face economic challenges, and now, with vocational training and work in this workshop, they can contribute to the expenses of their families.

The girls deprived of education in this workshop engage in sewing, embroidery, beadwork, lacework, and whitework.

"We have created jobs for 50 people here, of

which 25 are paid and 25 are unpaid apprentices," Mursal Ebrahimzada, the workshop in charge told TOLONews.

"The work environment has improved for us, not only do I manage my family's expenses with my salary; it's also good for these apprentices," Shekiba, a workshop worker said.

Some of these girls, who are pleased with the opportunity to learn various trades, ask the authorities to support them.

"After the schools were closed, our morale was very low, but coming here to work has made us happy, what else can we do," Haniya, a workshop apprentice said.

"Our request from the Islamic Emirate is to sup-

port us and to reopen the schools," Sumaya, another apprentice said.

Meanwhile, Badakhshan's Department of Industry and Commerce assured support for the activities of women entrepreneurs in the province.

"We support activities that are in accordance with Sharia and the culture of the Afghan people," Samaruddin Rahmani, the director of enterprise affairs at the Department of Industry and Commerce in Badakhshan, told TOLONews.

Girls deprived of education in Badakhshan are asking the current government to open the doors of schools and universities to all girls in the country for the new academic year.

Worn-out banknotes causes troubles to people: Residents

KABUL (TOLONews): Da Afghanistan Bank (Central Bank) said that in the past year, it has collected and burned approximately 5.2 billion worn-out banknotes from the markets of the country.

Haseebullah Noori, the spokesperson of Da Afghanistan Bank, assured that the bank's officials are trying to collect and destroy worn-out banknotes by implementing sensible monetary policies.

"The Central Bank of Afghanistan has always tried to offer banknotes in accordance with the market and monetary policies for

the convenience of the people of Afghanistan," Noori told TOLONews.

Meanwhile, a number of capital residents said that worn-out money is still circulating in Kabul's markets and causes problems for them in transactions. The capital's residents request the Islamic Emirate and the Central Bank to completely collect the worn-out money from the market.

"The worn-out money is so prevalent that it troubles all the people," Samir, a Kabul resident, said.

"The banknotes are old, and during exchanges, if someone gives us 500

Afghanis and we give them one 50 Afghanis note that is old, it causes disputes," Hamed, another Kabul resident said.

Economic analysts believe that to collect worn-out money, a specific mechanism needs to be established.

"The Central Bank is legally obliged to collect worn-out money systematically and to collect and burn it according to the law they have," Mir Shakib Mir, an economic analyst, told TOLONews.

"Initially, 20 Afghanis and 10 Afghanis notes were collected, and in the next

round, 50 Afghanis and 100 Afghanis notes were collected, and now 500 and 1000 Afghanis notes are being collected from the market. The Central Bank had ordered all banks to collect worn-out banknotes without any commission," Abdul Rahman Zirak, spokesman for the union of Sarai Shahzada money exchangers, said.

After the return of the Islamic Emirate to power, a Polish company for the first time printed Afghan banknotes, which included ten, twenty, fifty, and one hundred Afghanis, and transferred them to Afghanistan.

Kabul hopes Afghanistan, Pakistan can address mutual concerns

KABUL (Ariana News): Abdul Qahar Balkhi, spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has expressed hope that Afghanistan and Pakistan can address their mutual concerns.

Balkhi told Al Jazeera TV channel that both sides should find a "better pathway" that safeguards the "goodwill" that the government and people of Pakistan had shown towards Afghan refugees.

In October last, Pakistan gave illegal refugees a deadline to leave voluntarily or face forced repatriation.

The United Nations says that Pakistan has forced more than 450,000 Afghans out of the country.

Balkhi also dismissed fears that some refugees will be persecuted after return.

"We have maintained a



policy of general amnesty. Thanks Allah, we are Muslims. Unlike certain powers that killed and suffocated thousands of prisoners in containers, we declared a general amnesty, and we have shown in our deeds that the general

amnesty stands for anyone that collaborated with foreign powers. There are hundreds of thousands that are currently working shoulder-to-shoulder with the government of Afghanistan and government bodies. And there are

millions of others who are living peacefully and enjoying their lives," Balkhi said.

He said that Pakistan started expelling Afghan refugees without coordinating with Kabul and against international practices.

Zakia dedicates Paris Paralympic Gold to Afghanistan's women

KABUL (Khaama Press): Zakia Khudadadi, the former member of the Afghan National Para Taekwondo Team and European Para Taekwondo champion, clinched the gold medal in this round of competitions by defeating the European champion, dedicating it to Afghan women on the occasion of International Women's Day.

The Para-Taekwondo Committee of the World Taekwondo Federation reported on Friday, March 8th, that Zakia Khudadadi's victory in this competition has secured her a spot in the 2024 Paris Paralympic Games.

According to reports, she defeated Europe's champion, Karaul Sholbana from Russia, with a score of 14-16, claiming the gold medal in this round of competitions.

Following her victory in the final preliminary match of the Paralympic quota, Zakia Khudadadi dedicated the gold medal of this competition as an 8th of March, Women's Solidarity Day, a gift to Afghan women, stating that she fights for women.

Zakia emphasized, "Today is March 8th, and I have become a champion again," stressing, "I am here to fight."

Zakia Khudadadi, who currently resides in France, participated in these competitions under the flag of the immigrant team.

Previously, Zakia Khudadadi was a member of the Afghan National Para Taekwondo Team and participated in national and international competitions, achieving honors.

She has won seven medals, including the European championship title.

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International Women's Day:

Afghan women demand their full rights

KABUL (TOLONews): On International Women's Day, some women in the country called on the Islamic Emirate to ensure their rights fully.

They said that the lack of the right to work and education poses serious challenges for women and girls in the country.

22 year-old Wajiha said that going to school and university for girls, and also women having the right to work, has become a dream for her.

"It is International Women's Day, and we urge the Islamic Emirate to remove restrictions on women and allow them to study, learn, and work," she said.

Some women in the capital, in separate programs marking the occasion,

asked the Islamic Emirate for meaningful participation and involvement in society. "As half of the society, with a significant number of women and journalists representing this half today -- each working in a media outlet is the voice of a woman whose voice is not heard from the farthest corners of Afghanistan," said Shabnam, a journalist.

"Women who are present inside Afghanistan, are not ordinary women, and congratulations on this day for you are different than congratulations in other countries," said Fazila, a women's rights activist.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Emirate said on that the caretaker government is committed to ensuring full rights for women and

efforts are being made to do more in areas where there is ambiguity for women.

"Efforts to create jobs and business opportunities for our sisters and to enhance their capacity in certain sectors continue, and the Islamic Emirate is committed to ensure the rights of women in the framework of Islamic Sharia," said Zabihullah Mujahid, a spokesman for the Islamic Emirate.

Earlier, the leader of the Islamic Emirate emphasized the observance of some women's rights within the framework of Islamic laws in a six-point decree.

International Women's Day was first held in Germany in 1914 and has been celebrated annually worldwide since then.

Over 300 Afghan refugees transferred

KABUL (Khaama Press): Continuing the transfer of Afghan citizens to Canada, the Ministry of Immigration and Citizenship of Canada has announced the relocation of 333 Afghan refugees on a chartered flight to Calgary from Pakistan.

The ministry stated on Friday, March 8 on its social media platform X, that these refugees were transferred from Pakistan to Canada. According to the Ministry of Immigration and Citizenship of Canada, these refugees will be resettled in 33 locations, including Toronto.

Previously, the Canadian government had announced the relocation of 304 Afghan refugees to the city of Toronto.

It is worth mentioning that since the start of the transfer process of Afghan refugees, Canada has relocated 49,070 individuals to the country.

Following the rise of the

Taliban, more than 120,000 Afghan citizens sought refuge in various countries including Europe, the United States, and some other nations.

Prior to this, Afghan migrants arrived in Canada via chartered flights from countries such as Pakistan, Tajikistan, the United Arab Emirates, and Albania.

The dire situation of Afghan refugees in Pakistan has become increasingly concerning. Many of them face precarious living conditions, limited access to essential services, and lack legal protections. Despite these challenges, they are now being forced to return to Afghanistan, where the security situation remains highly volatile.

Forced deportation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan exacerbates their vulnerability, exposing them to potential persecution, violence, and economic



ic hardship upon their return. Many of these individuals have already endured immense trauma and displacement, only to face further uncertainty and danger.

The international community must urgently address the plight of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and ensure their safety and well-being. It is crucial to provide them

with adequate support, including legal protections, access to essential services, and opportunities for resettlement in safer countries, to prevent further harm and suffering.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir shaking hands with a jawan during his visit to field exercise in training area near Rahim Yar Khan.

CM KP directs formulation of new mining policy

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has decided in principle to formulate a new mining policy in the province and introduce rudimentary reforms in mining sector with the aim to align it on modern lines and ensure effective and prudent use of mineral resources for enhancing revenue of the province.

He directed the high ups of mineral department to impose ban on the issuance of mineral leases until the formulation of new policy and further directed them to submit detail of the mining leases already issued.

He was chairing a meeting of Mines and Mineral Development Department here. Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Principal Secretary to CM Amjad Ali Khan, Secretary Finance Amir Sultan Tareen, Secretary Mines & Mineral Development Hameedullah Shah and other relevant quarters attended the meeting.

The Chief Minister directed the high ups of the department to complete homework on the establish-

ment of a government-owned Mining Company, introduce mechanical mining in the province and E-bidding system for the issuance of mineral leases. He further directed them to shift the entire paper work of the department to paperless system.

Ali Amin Gandapur said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was blessed with precious mineral resources and the mineral sector had the potential to generate much revenue for the public exchequer, adding that it was need of the day to ensure prudent and effective use of the mineral resource to increase revenue.

The Chief Minister stated that the natural resources were the assets of the people of the province, and made it clear that no individual will be allowed to use their resources for his personal benefit. "Conducive environment will be ensured for the intending investors in the province, they will be encouraged to invest in the province and will provide all out facilities under the Ease-of-Doing Business policy of the provincial government," the Chief Minister remarked and

made it clear that the lease holders who do not accept the terms and conditions of the provincial government or not ready to give the government its due share in revenue, will not be allowed to work in the province.

FIA summons Shandana

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Cyber Crime Circle in Lahore has summoned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shandana Gulzar for questioning on March 14, following accusations of slandering state institutions and government officials on social media platforms.

The summons come in response to allegations against Gulzar for making derogatory remarks against state and government figures, as well as inciting people to revolt through her social media posts. Specifically, Gulzar is accused of implicating Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif in an audio leak scandal.

Ceremony held to honour Capt Faheem

Syed Adnan

HANGU: In a poignant ceremony held in Hangu, the bond between Pakistan's armed forces and its people was reaffirmed as the nation paid tribute to the sacrifice of Captain Faheem Bangash. The event underscored the unity and respect shared between the Pakistani nation and its military, highlighting their unwavering commitment to defend the country against terrorism and external threats.

Captain Faheem Bangash, a valiant officer who laid down his life in service to the nation, epitomized the spirit of sacrifice and courage. His dedication and bravery serve as a beacon of inspiration for all Pakistanis.

GOC Major General Zulfiqar Ali Bhatti, addressing the gathering, emphasized the indomitable spirit of Pakistan's armed forces, which have time and again thwarted the nefarious designs of the country's enemies. He reiterated that Pakistan's military remains steadfast in its resolve to defend the nation's sovereignty and protect its citizens from all forms of aggression.

The ceremony, which included the naming of a bridge after the fallen hero, Captain Faheem Bangash, was attended by his family members, including his father Asad Abbas, as well as Thal Scouts Commandant Lt Col Muhammad zijaz Anjum and local administration. It served as a solemn reminder of the sacrifices made by Pakistan's brave soldiers and their families in the ongoing struggle against terrorism.

In his address, Asad Abbas, the father of Captain Faheem Bangash, expressed pride in his son's selfless commitment to the nation and reiterated the family's unwavering support for Pakistan's armed forces. He echoed the sentiment that serving the country is the highest honor, and Captain Faheem Bangash's sacrifice will forever be remembered with reverence and gratitude.

10 more terrorists killed

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Ten terrorists were sent to hell, while three were injured in two separate engagements by the security forces in North Waziristan District.

Four terrorists were sent to hell during an intelligence based operation on 8 March. Whereas, during the follow up sanitization operation, four more terrorists were successfully neutralized by the security forces.

In a separate operation in North Waziristan District, movement of five terrorists, who were trying to infiltrate Pakistan-Afghanistan border, was picked up by the security forces. After an intense fire exchange, two terrorists, Terrorist Hazrat Umer & Terrorist Rehman Niaz were also sent to hell, while three other terrorists got injured.

Pakistan has consistently been asking Interim Afghan Government

to ensure effective border management on their side of the border. Interim Afghan Government is expected to fulfill its obligations and deny the use of Afghan soil by terrorists for perpetuating acts of terrorism against Pakistan. Security forces of Pakistan are determined and remain committed to secure its borders and wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the country.

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