

Pakistan reports polio case

QUETTA (PPI): Pakistan has reported the second polio case of 2024, according to a health official report on Friday. The second case of crippling disease of polio was reported in Chaman's Mir Ali Zai area where a four-year-old boy was confirmed with the disease. Earlier on Thursday, a spokesman for the National Ministry for Health said first polio case of 2024 in Pakistan was reported in Dera Bugti.



@thefrontierpost

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

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXI

No. 54

Regd. No. 241

RAMAZAN 05 1445 -- SATURDAY, MARCH 16 2024

PESHAWAR EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of US to Pakistan, Donald Blome, called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Handful miscreants bent on sabotaging Pak-IMF deal: Tarar

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ataulhah Tarar said on Friday said a handful of miscreants associated with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was bent upon sabotaging Pakistan's deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that was crucial for economic stability.

"In a bid to disrupt Pakistan's ongoing talks with IMF, some miscreants protested in front of IMF and World Bank offices in United States and indulged in sloganeering against Pakistan Army," he said while addressing a news conference here.

The protestors belonging to the PTI were urging the IMF to give funds to Pakistan only if their jailed leader was released, he said, regretting that "activists of an anti-national party" continued to hold sit-in and protest outside the IMF office. "This is a fashionable crowd and these are the enemies of Pakistan who are left with no love for the country," the minister said while paying tributes to the overseas Pakistanis who were sending their hard-earned money to the country by doing white and blue collar jobs abroad.

He said these people were protesting to stop funding to the people of Pakistan were wearing costly branded

shoes and carrying branded bags. They only wanted to sabotage the IMF deal because their dream was to make Pakistan default but Inshallah, Pakistan would make progress and the growth rate would increase soon.

The heinous conspiracies of anti-national elements would not have any effect on the IMF deal, the minister said emphatically, adding the imprisoned PTI founder chairman was involved in Tosha Khana fraud, 190 million pound scam and cypher case. He advised the PTI to approach courts of Pakistan for release of Imran as IMF and World Bank had nothing to do with his cases.

Tarar said that country was stable today with the sacrifices of martyrs, Ghazis and efforts patriotic political leaders. The Allah Almighty had always protected Pakistan from external and internal threats and the talks with the IMF were going on positively which was also reflected by the trends in stock exchange, he added. "We have been voted by the people to solve the problems in the country, not to increase them", he maintained. He said under the vision of the Prime Minister, efforts would be made for making the country prosperous through hard work. The Prime Minister, he added, had given a comprehensive agenda on economic reforms including restructuring FBR,

increasing tax network, reducing government expenditure.

He said since the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif took over the power, the economic situation has started improving. The minister said that the Prime Minister wanted an early solution to the country's problems and he had been pursuing the vision to chart the country on path of progress and prosperity. He said that international organizations like Bloomberg were hailing the appointment of Muhammad Aurangzeb as the Finance Minister of the country as he had command over economic affairs.

The minister said that unfortunately an anti-national party involved in May 9 incidents was conspiring and working against the interests of Pakistan. He said that the leadership of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz faced imprisonment due to fake cases but it never compromised on honour and dignity of the country.

Tarar urged the youth to side with Pakistan instead of any political party, adding "This is the mission of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and we will be moving forward with the same spirit." To a query, he said the PTI would be requested in the dialogues to refrain from taking any such initiatives that undermined economy or country.

Pakistan ready to transform ties with UAE, says FM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar received a congratulatory telephone call from his United Arab Emirates (UAE) counterpart Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Friday.

During the conversation, the two foreign ministers discussed the sustained momentum of multi-tiered cooperation between the two countries, FM Dar wrote on his X timeline. "I look forward to working closely with His Highness in transforming the bilateral relations with the UAE into a mutually beneficial economic partnership," he added.

After the formation of new government, Ishaq Dar has been inducted into federal cabinet led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on March 11 in which the portfolio of the foreign affairs minister was given to the senior politician. Dar has been a member of the Senate from 2003 to 2022. He has earlier served as finance minister from 1998 to 1999, then from March to May 2008.

Dar again led the finance ministry from 2013 to 2017 and then from 2022 to 2023. He was also the minister of industry and investment from February 1997 to July 1997 as well as commerce from December 1997 to October 1999. Previously, Dar was named as the Leader of Opposition in the Senate from March 2012 to June 2013. In January 2023, the UAE pledged additional \$1 billion loan to Pakistan grappling with a severe economic crisis, as well as agreed to roll over an existing loan of \$2 billion.

The UAE is also Pakistan's largest trading partner in the Middle East, and North Africa (MENA) region with an average annual trade of \$8 billion, with food and textile as major items to the gulf nation, while the volume of bilateral trade was hiked by 25.4% in 2021-22, amounting to \$10.6 billion.

NA passes resolution seeking extension in 7 ordinances

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Friday passed a resolution seeking extension in seven ordinances amid protests by the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC)-led opposition in the lower house of the parliament.

Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar tabled seven ordinances and two bills in the house, amid a strong protest by the opposition members. The bills that were laid before the House included, The Civil Courts Amendment Bill, 2024 and the Legal Aid and Justice Authority Amendment Bill, 2024. The chair referred the bills to the standing committees concerned.

The ordinances include Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (Amendment) Ordinance 2023, Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023, Pakistan Postal Services Management Board (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023, the National Highway Authority (Amendment) Ordinance 2023, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023, the Privatization Commission (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023 and the

Establishment of Telecommunication Appellate Tribunal Ordinance, 2023. Speaking on the point of order, the SIC leader Omar Ayub Khan said the opposition rejected the ordinances. He asked the speaker to take pictures of those favouring the ordinances as those were "passed to sell Pakistan".

SIC's Ayub said first the lawmakers must to see what the ordinance was. "Tell me what it was, tell me under oath how many people in the House have read it," he asked the lawmakers sitting on the treasury benches. He said an ordinance related to privatization was introduced in the NA. He said even Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) members did not know what they were doing.

"There are talks of selling these institutions of Pakistan, we are going on record on that," he said. Upon the opposition's commotion, NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq held counting of votes on the extension of ordinances. Following which, 130 votes came in favour of the resolution and 63 opposed it. Responding to the point of order, the law minister said pictures should be taken of those who were committing trea-

son against Pakistan and writing letters to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The opposition leaders should first read the ordinance before speaking on it, he suggested.

The law minister also suggested the opposition to stand for the country, not behind a "prisoner". The SIC members' tearing documents enraged the speaker, who said if it happened again then he would be forced to take disciplinary action. Tarar said the government would take opinion from all the allied parties. They legislated after extending old ordinances, he said, adding that they would take the house into confidence on the legislation.

The speaker referred the bills to the relevant committee. At the outset of the assembly session, Sadiq administered oath to five women who became MNAs on reserved seats. Following their taking the oath, the number of oath-taking ceremony in the NA reached 316. The new MNAs include Shaheed Habibullah, Ghazal Anjum, Asma Alamgir, Naima Kanwal and Naema Kishore. The NA session has been prorogued indefinitely.

FO rubbishes reports of IAEA team's visit to Pakistan as 'fake news'

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) on Friday rubbished reports of the visit of a high-level delegation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to the country as "fake news" and said there was no veracity to the matter.

Addressing the matter in a post on X, FO spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said: "Stories regarding the visit of a high-level IAEA delegation to Pakistan are fake news! No IAEA official is currently visiting Pakistan; Nor are any policy talks planned in near

future with IAEA." She said the IAEA DG had last visited the country in February 2023 and the FO had accordingly briefed the media on the occasion. Information Minister Ataulhah Tarar also responded to the FO spokesperson's clarification and said: "Fake news from an anchor based abroad clearly rebutted. Such blatant lies and propaganda to harm the state based on malicious intent will be responded to."

Make no mistake." The meeting shown in the viral video clip took place between the IAEA DG and PM Shehbaz place last

year in February when they met to increase collaboration in peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, particularly in agriculture and medicine, to the benefit of the country and its neighbours.

DG Grossi had spent two days in Pakistan during which he met with the country's leadership and visited numerous nuclear facilities across the country, some of which he inaugurated. The two also spoke about the worsening effects of climate change on Pakistan and how nuclear science and IAEA support were helping the country.

Zardari visits mausoleum of Bhutto family

F.P. Report

LARKANA: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday visited the mausoleum of the martyrs of Bhutto's family at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh.

He visited the grave of former prime minister and chairperson of PPP Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, laid a floral wreath at the grave and offered "Fateha". Asif Zardari also visited the graves of founder-chairman of PPP Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Madar-e-Jamhooriat late Begum Nusrat Bhutto, late Shireen Amir Begum, late Mir Murtaza Bhutto and late Mir Shah Nawaz Bhutto and laid floral wreaths and offered fateha.

He also prayed for the development and prosperity of the country. The president was accompanied by Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah on the occasion.

Earlier, on his arrival at Sukkur Begum Nusrat Bhutto Airport, the president was received by Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah, Mayor Sukkur Barrister Arslan Sheikh, DIG Sukkur range, Commissioner Sukkur and other top officers of the Sukkur and Larkana divisions.

PTI unveils Senate candidate line-up

LAHORE (INP): Former PTI provincial minister Mian Aslam Iqbal, who has been in hiding since the May 9 arson attacks stated that party has reached a consensus to nominate Zulfi Bukhari and Hamid Khan as the party's nominee for Senate. Party leader Col (retired) Ijaz Minhas has been nominated as a covering candidate on general seats, says in media reports.

Dr Yasmin Rashid and Brig (retired) Musadig would be women and technocrats seat candidates. Mr Iqbal, in another tweet, announced that the party had also nominated Sardar Shahabuddin Khan Sehr, Ali Imtiaz Warraich and Ahmad Mujtaba for Punjab Assembly finance committee.

Mian Aslam Iqbal has strongly criticized Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz for demanding the replacement of CM's bullet-proof car's tyres. He stated that the chief minister office had requested the finance department to release Rs27.3 million supplementary budget during the current financial year.

PTI Central Punjab President Dr Yasmin Rashid says incumbent rulers have rendered the courts a laughing stock by denying meetings with Imran Khan, despite repeated court instructions. In a written and signed statement issued on Thursday, Dr Rashid highlighted that lawlessness has reached unprecedented levels.

The PTI leader said that mobile and internet services were suspended under the pretext of combating terrorism, enabling historic rigging in the Feb 8 general elections. Dr Rashid noted that when the Rawalpindi division commissioner exposed mass rigging in the elections, the government suspended the X service to quell public backlash. As of now, the X service has yet to be restored. Incarcerated PTI Central President Parvez Elahi says the ban on meetings in Adiala Jail is unconstitutional. He told reporters on his appearance in the FIA court of Lahore that the PTI would protest nationwide until the return of its mandate, all the opposition parties would be seen on one platform very soon against election rigging.

Meanwhile, the process of submitting nomination papers for the Senate election commenced on Friday. The candidates vying for the 48 Senate seats can submit their nomination papers by March 16. The Senate election is scheduled to be held on April 2. It will encompass 12 seats each for Punjab and Sindh, 11 seats each for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, as well as two seats for Islamabad.

PM, US envoy discuss bilateral ties

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the United States of America to Pakistan Donald Blome paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here on Friday and discussed matters of mutual interest.

The prime minister expressed satisfaction on the present state of bilateral relations. He emphasized the need to maintain the positive momentum by regular convening of existing dialogue mechanisms, focused on trade, investment, energy, health, defence, education, agriculture and climate change.

The prime minister said that his government would focus on macro-economic reforms to stabilize the economy and attract foreign investment. In this regard, he also highlighted the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) that has been established to fast-track foreign investments in priority sectors in Pakistan.

A number of issues of bilateral and regional significance were also discussed during the meeting, including the situation in Gaza and the Red Sea, developments in Afghanistan, as well as the case of Dr Aafia Siddiqui, which was raised forcefully by the prime minister. While congratulating the prime minister on his re-

Shehbaz, cabinet members visits GHQ

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif accompanied by key members of the Cabinet, visited the General Headquarters (GHQ) Rawalpindi on Friday. The PM was received by Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir, and was presented guard of honour. Floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada was laid by the prime minister, to pay tribute to the martyrs.

During the visit, the prime minister and cabinet members engaged in discussions with military leadership on matters of national security, regional stability and military preparedness. They were briefed on the current security environment, threat spectrum, response to the security threats and ongoing counter-terrorism operations. The PM and cabinet members appreciated the professionalism, operational readiness, and sacrifices of Pakistan Army in war against terrorism and commended the dedication of the Pakistan Army in safeguarding the nation's territorial integrity and ensuring peace and stability.

election, ambassador Blome said that the U.S. considered Pakistan an important partner and hoped to work with the government to build stronger ties between the two countries.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif launched the countrywide spring plantation drive by planting a sapling here. Emphasizing the government's commitment, he announced to double the number of saplings planted in 2024 compared to the previous year's achievement of 240 million.

Speaking on the occasion, he highlighted the urgency to expand

Pakistan's forest cover, currently at a mere 5% of the total area, to mitigate climate risks. Quoting the Global Climate Risk Index, he underscored Pakistan's ranking as the 5th most vulnerable country to climate-related hazards, he stressed the necessity for immediate action.

"From 1999 to 2018, the country had to face the loss of 10,000 precious lives besides billions of dollars of financial loss; therefore it is crucial to create awareness about the climate change risks at all levels including educational institutions," the prime minister remarked.

KP CM, ADB delegation discuss mutual cooperation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Asian Development Bank (ADB) called on Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur at Pakhtunkhwa House, Islamabad on Friday and discussed with him matters related to mutual cooperation with special focus on development projects of public welfare being carried out in the province with the financial assistance of Asian Development Bank. Provincial Minister Arshad Ayub was also present on the occasion.

Talking on this occasion, the Chief Minister termed the Asian Development Bank as an important development partner of the provincial government and said that his government wanted to continue this partnership in a more integrated and an effective manner, adding that work on a number of development projects in the various sectors with the financial

assistance of Asian Development Bank was in progress.

However, the chief minister said that incumbent provincial government also wanted to further enhance and extend this mutual cooperation and partnership to different sectors including water supply, solar energy, flood protection, solid waste management, urban transport, agriculture, livestock, food security and other sectors of social services.

"We expect special cooperation from our development partner for the development of newly merged districts and other backward areas of the province", he said and added that providing employment opportunities to the people and promoting self-employment among our talented youth are the priority areas of his government. Apart from this, the government also plans to initiate a program for renovation of all major cities in the province.

He further stated that

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project assisted by ADB was an important project of the provincial government; we need special cooperation for implementing Phase-II of this project as well. "The provincial government has a lot to do in different sectors specially in tourism, health, education, PHE and others", he remarked and said that the government would like to work in a partnership with ADB for providing basic facilities in the sectors of social services.

Talking on the occasion, the delegates termed the coordination between the provincial government and ADB as exemplary one and said that performance of provincial government team regarding implementation of developmental projects had been remarkable adding that the ADB intended to further promote mutual cooperation and development partnership with the provincial government in different sectors.

PTI founder's interim bail extended

F.P. Report

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Friday extended the interim bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former prime minister Imran Khan in Jinnah House attack case.

The ATC judge Arshad Javed heard the interim bail pleas in three cases including Jinnah House attack. The court extended the interim bail till March 22 and told the PTI founder Imran Khan's lawyer Salman Salfar to present arguments at the next hearing. Earlier, Punjab home department banned meetings with the PTI founder in Adiala Jail, citing security threats.

The home department has imposed ban on meetings for two weeks the sources within the Punjab home department earlier said, while media coverage is also prohibited in front of Adiala Jail's gate no-5. The security officers stated that media

coverage has not been allowed and directed that the media teams should stay 2km away from the jail.

Violent clashes broke out across Pakistan after the former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Imran Khan were arrested at the Islamabad High Court (IHC). The protests were held in remote and major cities as the party workers were agitated due to their chairman's arrest, with Balochistan, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Islamabad summoning the armed forces to ensure law and order.

Army installations and Corps Commander's house in Lahore, also known as Jinnah House, came under attack during a protest by PTI workers. It is pertinent to mention here that former prime minister is currently in Adiala Jail, where he is incarcerated in Toshakhana, Cipher and illegal nikah case. Imran Khan has been

facing a number of legal challenges since his ouster in April 2022 through a no-confidence motion. Meanwhile, his party emerged as the largest group in the National Assembly in the February 8 elections.

Meanwhile, PTI leader Omar Ayub Khan's interim bail extended in vandalism case on Friday. The anti-terrorism court heard the bail plea filed by PTI's Omar Ayub and he appeared before the court with his lawyer. The court extended the interim bail and adjourned the hearing of the vandalism case till April 16.

Earlier, Omar Ayub Khan on Friday granted transit bail in six cases bail from Peshawar High Court (PHC). As per details, Omar Ayub along with his counsel Babar Awan appeared before the PHC Abbottabad bench to seek transit remand in six cases registered against the former minister in Mianwali, Faisalabad and Lahore.

PID(P) 086/24

INF(P):522/2024

Sharjeel Inam Memon emphasized that PTI's behavior undermines the values of democracy and solidarity with oppressed people worldwide.



PESHAWAR: Adviser to KP CM on Health, Syed Qasim Ali Shah being briefed about dengue program in province.

Governor hosts ceremony for gold medalist students

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here Friday arranged a ceremony to give cash prizes among to top three gold medalist of Khyber Girls Medical College (KGMC). The ceremony was also attended by Mayor Peshawar, Haji Zubair Ali, Vice Dean KGMC, Professor Amir Muhammad, faculty members, students and parents of gold medalist students. The governor gave cash prizes to three students of KGMC including Tasneem Zehra of

Upper Dir who won gold medal in session of 2017-18, Mahnoosh Saleh winner of gold medal in session of 2018-19 and Ayesha Iqbal who was on top in 2019-20. Ten students of merged districts including four girl students of Mohmand, two of South Waziristan, and one student each from Khyber, Bajaur, North Waziristan and Frontier Region Peshawar were also given prizes. Cash assistance was also given to forty class IV employees of KGMC. Addressing the ceremony, governor congratulated students and their parents

expressing hope that new doctors would tirelessly work for betterment of ailing community with passion and professionalism. He also urged young doctors to focus research and find cure of those diseases that are so far incurable. He said that girls should also utilize their capabilities and come forward compete in new fields of medicine. Governor said that number of girl students in every institution is a proof that there are equally competent and capable to prove their mettle in fields that were considered domain of men in past.

Person missing



A mentally disable person named Shahzada son of Gulab Khan resident of Bannu district currently living in Kohat has been disappeared from last several months. If anyone has information please contact; Cell No# 0302-3633258.

Weather to remain dry

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The weather will remain dry in most of the districts of the province including Peshawar, while it will remain cold in the upper districts, said the Department of Meteorology official here on Friday. Light rain with strong winds and thunder in the upper districts and chances of snowfall on the mountains with the minimum temperature has been recorded as low as 12 degrees Celsius, said the official of the Meteorological Department. It is likely to rise to a maximum of 18 degrees Celsius and the humidity ratio in the air is 80 percent recorded, said the Meteorological Department official. During the next 24 hours, the weather will remain dry in most areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while it will remain cold in upper districts, he added.

Thunderstorms and snow fell on the mountains in the upper areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and heavy rain is expected on Friday in Galiyat, Naran, Kaghan, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Shangla, Astor, Hunza, Skardu, Neelum Valley, Bagh, Poonch and Havell, the official of the Meteorological Department said.

In the last 24 hours weather, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan received rain with strong winds and thunder and snowfall in the mountains, the official said.

Friendly attitude key for effective public services delivery: Chief Secretary

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Right attitude is the key factor for efficient and effective public service delivery. A good public servant must have a positive and friendly attitude while dealing with the people. These views were expressed by Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry on the eve of graduation ceremony of 39th Mid-Career Management Course (MCMC) here at National Institute of Management, Peshawar where he was chief guest on the occasion.

Director General (DG) Provincial Services Academy Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Zubair Asghar Qureshi, Secretary Administration Manzoor Ahmed, Special Secretary P & D Kamran Afridi and Chief Financial & Accounts Officer Establishment Divisions Shah Mehmood Wazir also attended the ceremony. The Chief Secretary also inaugurated Shaheed Nauman officers' cafeteria and IT Lab/ Offices- a participant from

Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) who attended 29th SMC and was martyred on duty while doing the course here at NIM Peshawar.

Chief Secretary further said that public servants have to guard their integrity and their reputation through exhibition of right kind of attitude and positive approach to public service delivery. Professional courses like MCMC, SMC and NMC inculcate the requisite skills and right kind of attitudes among the public servants. But after getting such trainings, the public servants should capitalize on the newly imbibed skills and knowledge. He added that public servants must be good readers to become good leaders in their fields.

DG NIM/PARD/PPSA Captain Usman Gul said that since inception, the three training institutions have trained about 48000 officers and about 50 % of them are from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said that during the past three years, the institutions trained more than 3000 officers. He paid special thanks to the government

of KP and Chief Secretary and his team for assistance in the infrastructural development like 50 rooms hostel facility, state-of-the-art cafeteria and IT Lab, employees' welfare center and solar tube-well in the campus with the financial support of Rs. 300 million by the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He also paid gratitude to Rector NSPP Dr. Ijaz Munir for his all-out support and patronage of NIM Peshawar together with all members of his faculty/team for their all-out support to run different courses round the year.

On this occasion, Chief Instructor MCMC Dr. Muqem -ul-Islam presented the course report. He said that 39th MCMC was comprising 39 officers including three female officers representing almost all linguistic entities and geographic areas of Pakistan including AJK. The nine modules taught to the participants during the 10 weeks training covered issues of local, national and international significance.

Minister inaugurates Ramazan Dastarkhwan

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru officially inaugurated the Ramadan Dastarkhwan at the Panah Gah run by the Social Welfare Department at the District Headquarters Hospital, Mardan.

Members of Provincial Assembly from Mardan Ifitkhar Ali Mashwani, Tufail Anjum, Abdul Salam Afridi, Ehtsham Advocate and Zarshad Khan besides Deputy Commissioner Mardan Muhammad Fayaz Khan Sherpao, Medical Superintendent of DHQ Hospital Dr. Javed Iqbal also participated in the inauguration ceremony.

The Minister of Food and Assembly members broke the fast with a large number of people. On this occasion, the Minister of Food was informed that Sehri and iftar facilities are regularly provided to common people including patients' caregivers.

Talking to the media on this occasion, Zahir Shah Toru said that at the moment a total of 11 Panah Gahs were functional in the province where quality food was provided in iftar and Sehri to the people. To a question, the Minister informed that a special campaign is going on throughout the province to control prices during Ramadan and a large number

of traders and shopkeepers involved in profiteering have been sent to jail during the last three days.

He said that during the month of Ramadan, the provision of Rs. 10,000 per poor family will be started in a few days. This will benefit more than 800,000 families. He said that a vigorous campaign is being conducted against those who create artificial price hikes and illegal profiteers in order to supply food items at reasonable prices to the people across the province. Zahir Shah Toru asked the public to identify the profiteers and hoarders so that action could be taken against them.

Agriculture Minister visits Crop Reporting Service

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Minister for Agriculture, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muhammad Sajjad on Friday paid a visit to the Crop Reporting Service (CRS) where he was given a detailed briefing by the DG CRS on performance and development projects of the department.

On the occasion DG CRS, Sayeed Altaf Ahmad Shah, Director Muhammad Kaleem, Director Zahid Ullah and Focal Person Jan Alam Khalil and officers were present. The minister was briefed on scientific crop expense and land requirement estimation system for various crops, vegetables and orchards. Keeping in view this vital information, the provincial government takes important decisions on agricultural import and export, the minister was told.

The minister also visited the modern Remote Sensing Lab of the CRS where he was told that through this state-of-the-art system a quick information regarding the crop-covered area could be ascertained and the crops could timely be saved from climate change effects. Likewise, the minister was told that through this system the crop production could also be enhanced.



PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry inaugurating Nauman Afzal Afridi Shaheed Officers Mess at National Institute of Management. DG NIM PARD PPSA Captain Usman Gul is also present.

Admn fails to control wave of inflation

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: It is not easy to control the wave of inflation, the district administration is helpless, the citizens are worried about increasing prices of meats, chicken, vegetables and fruits.

Price of live chicken increased by 10 rupees per kg, and the price of chicken sold at 440 rupees per kg. Similarly, the price of eggs is being sold at Rs 310 per dozen items, a sharp increase is witnessed in the price of eggs. Likewise, Onion 300 rupees per kg, tomato 150 per kg, white potato 110 kg fixed, Peas Rs 200, okra Rs 340, garlic Rs 650 and ginger Rs 580 per kg, according to the official price list issued by the district administration.

Lemon 220, Cauliflower 110, Capsicum 400 and Eggplant 180 per kg, Kabuli apple 300, golden apple 220 and Iranian apple 350 rupees per kg while Malta Punjabi 160, Malta Swat 320 while Kino 280 rupees per dozen sold. Strawberry 510, Guava 330, Pomegranate 480 and Banana 180 rupees per dozen fixed, according to the official price list.

Crackdown against profiteers

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The district administration is continuing its operations against the vendors in different markets of Peshawar, said an official here on Friday.

He disclosed that a total of 16 profiteers' vendors were arrested for robbing the people in Ramadan, including the lack of government rates. The operations would be carried out in the areas of Interior city, Karimpura Bazar, Ashraf Road, Hashangari Bazar, Pandu Road, Bhana Mari and Gulbahar, the official of the District Administration said.

Vegetable and fruit sellers, grocery stores, butchers, milk and curd sellers are among those arrested, district administration officials said. Shops of people guilty of repeated peddling were sealed by the district administration, the officials said.

Chairman BoD KP Economic Zones visits Mohmand Zone

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chairman Board of Directors(BoD) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC) and Secretary Industries, Commerce and Technical Education (I & C & T E) Department Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah along with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Javed Iqbal Khattak, Chief Zone Management (CZM), and Chief Project Planning and Development (CPP&D), visited Mohmand Economic Zone

on the other day, said press release issued here on Friday.

During the visit, they examined the ongoing infrastructure development projects and also toured the operational industrial units within the zone. On this occasion, the Secretary Industries emphasized upon the significance of tree plantation in the Industrial Zone.

Similarly, in order to kickstart this initiative, he inaugurated the spring tree plantation drive in the Zone and personally planted a sapling in the zone office. It

is merit to mention that KP-EZDMC is going to plant at least 14500 saplings in all the economic zones across the province. This plantation will take place in Peshawar, Jalozaai, Hattar, Mohmand, Bannu, Ghazi and Gadoon Economic Zones.

While inaugurating the company plantation drive, the Secretary Industries said that plantation is a major source to protect from the negative impacts of climate change and global warming and stressed for plantation in the spring plantation drive.

Inclusive strategy required to increase students' enrollment in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The problem of bringing out of school children (OSC) under education net is persisting in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) despite the fact that education to students aged 05-16 years were declared free under the Constitution of Pakistan since 2010.

The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) 2021 Report has disclosed that the number of OSC children had swelled to about 22.8 million in the country including 4.7 million children aged between 5 to 16 years in KP which was matter of great concerns for the newly provincial government after education was devolved to provinces under 18th constitutional amendment.

Alarmingly, about 2.9 million girls and one million OSC in merged tribal districts were still out of schools, BISP report said, adding 74.4 percent of girls and 38.5 percent boys are out of schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due to poverty and socio-economic imbalances. Besides 77 percent OSC reported in Palas Kolai, 70 percent in Upper Kohistan and 69 percent in

Upper Kohistan, about 61 percent of such children in Torgar, 55pc in Shangla, 53 percent in Lakki Marwat and 51 percent each in Tank and Batagram districts.

In seven merged tribal districts of erstwhile Fata, about 66 percent of children are out-of-schools in North Waziristan, 63 percent in Bajaur, 61 percent in South Waziristan, 51 percent each in Mohmand and Khyber, and 47 percent each in Kurram and Orakzai. PML-N KP spokesperson Ikhtair Wali Khan while terming BISP's report as alarming said that it negates the tall claims of PTI leadership regarding an increase in children's enrolment in schools and uniform education policy.

He said neither promises of unformed education were fulfilled nor the dual education system was abolished in the province, adding the private schools continued sucking the blood of millions of people in KP with a roaring increase in tuition fee while PTI leadership has paid a deaf ear to it. "Under Article 25-A of the Constitution, the education sector

has been devolved to provinces and it was the responsibility of the provincial governments to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to metric level," said Syed Noman Bukhari, a senior lawyer and constitutional expert while talking to APP.

He said that poverty, socio economic imbalances, inadequate infrastructure and teachers' absenteeism besides missing facilities like clean drinking water, boundary walls and toilets in public sector schools in KP has largely been attributed to increased student drop out ratio in the province. Noman Advocate said that most small children in KP started attending school, but Free Compulsory Primary and Secondary Education Act, 2017 was not fully implemented in the province, resultantly many poor students were likely to leave their alma maters due to lack of financial resources with their parents. Poor driver Mustafa Khan who left school due to poverty after death of his father due to blood cancer at Pabbi Nowshera said, "I had aban-

doned school at class V to support my poor ailing mother and meet the education's expanses of my young brothers."

Earning about Rs1000 per day from Chingchi Rickshaw, the young boy has a desire to continue education, however, the financial position was a hurdle for him to accomplish his dream. Senior academician and former director elementary education, Professor Dr Muhammad Ibrahim said that the KP government needs to focus on provision of scholarship to poor students from primary level to combat illiteracy.

He said opening of schools websites with all relevant details, newsletters and starting video contents/blog posts would help increase students enrolments. "If a picture is worth a thousand words, a video is worth million which can improve students enrollment in public sector schools." He said the growth of government scholarship and home schools options besides increasing efforts by public schools systems and use of digital technology was

imperative to bolster students' enrollment in KP. Shahab Khan, senior planning officer of the Education Department told APP that students' enrollment drive has been started in the province and the target of bringing one million OSC children under schools net were set for all 37 districts of KP. He said the unnecessary use of mobile phone has been banned in public sector schools aimed to reclaim students' valuable time for academic pursuits.

The students and staff were mandated to surrender their mobile devices to school administration upon arrival, prohibiting their presence within classrooms, he said. "In case of emergencies, school heads would utilize landline phones to contact parents, while staff may only access their mobile phones during designated recess or free periods." Shahab said that a Rs3.7 billion project has been planned for education stipends to students of class 1-12 and Rs500 million for school bags and stationary in merged areas. He said 200 alternate learning pathways centers would be

opened for children aged 9-16 for OSC while Rs3 billion would be spent on converting two room schools to six rooms besides other necessary projects. The construction of 100 new primary schools was proposed for the upcoming fiscal year while 150 middle schools to secondary schools in settled districts would be achieved. He said a Rs. one billion project was proposed for the establishment of an early childhood education program to be executed next fiscal year.

He said that more than 4000 teachers in primary, secondary and middle schools recruited and about Rs30 million invested to support 489 literacy centers besides disbursement of Rs three billion scholarships among students of the hitherto neglected tribal districts. Similarly, more than Rs20 million have been spent on students reading in madrasas in four-year , while free textbooks and bags have been provided to more than 600,000 students in tribal districts besides over Rs 20 million for digital skills of students in 2018-22.



In brief

Two tribesmen killed in Bajaur F.P. Report

KHAR: A prominent tribal elder named Malak Lal Zareef has been killed by bomb blast at Aseel Targhaw area of Barang tehsil, Bajaur district, on Friday. According to details, the tribesman Malak Lal Zareef was targeted by bomb attacked planted on roadside in Aseel Targhaw in which he was killed on the spot after explosion. Meanwhile, unknown armed men shot killed prominent tribal businessman Haji Hassan resident of Ghundo area of Khar tehsil. The deceased was successful trader in Rawalpindi, however, unknown culprit shot killed in bright daylight. Additional Station House Officer claimed that police has been deployed in the premises for arrest of culprits but to no veil as the murderers escaped from scene.

NDMA provides compensation F.P. Report

T A K H T B H A I : National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) distributed compensation cheques among 21 families for damages caused by recent downpour in Takhtbhai tehsil, on Friday. According to details, Assistant Commissioner Mahen Hassan in the presence of Additional AC Rashid Ali, former Member Provincial Assembly Jamsheed Mohmand, former Nazim Mian Abdur Rehman and Hameed Safi distributed cheques among the victims. AC had argued that the participants that government had prioritized public welfare at every cost. NDMA provided financial assistance to victims named as Muhammad Inam, Muhammad Rafiq, Niaz Muhammad, Noor Ali Shah, Rehman Gul, Roman Khan, Nizakat Bibi, Fareed Gul, Naik Amal, Wajid Ali, Shahid Ali, Abdus Sattar, Muhammad Alam, Noor Muhammad, Sultan Zarin, Shahzad, Kheer Ullah, Yousaf Shah, Fida Muhammad and Faiz-u-Rehman along with others.

Admn commits to end monopoly F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: On the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Mohammad Naeem Sindhu, Assistant Commissioner and Administrator Municipal Committee Kamalia Ghazala Yasin Chadhar made a surprise inspection of Fruit and Vegetable Market Kamalia, on Friday. The inspection was held early in the morning where she reviewed the issues of fruit and vegetable auction. Also checked the prices of vegetables and fruits and their quality. Assistant Commissioner said that fruits and vegetables should be sold at the fixed price and legal action will be taken in case of violation. While inspecting the cleaning arrangements, she directed that the cleaning arrangements should be improved further.

Labourer shot dead

BUREWALA (INP): Two brothers gunned down their neighbour over gas bill dispute here on Friday, police said. According to details, labourer hailing from Burewala had acquired gas connection from labourer. However, due to economic issues, he was not able to pay full bill due to which the lenders of gas connection got furious and shot at him leaving him critically injured.



MARDAN: Provincial Minister for Food, Zahir Shah Toru talking to media persons.

GPS Tutki building collapse due negligence

F.P. Report

KARAK: The building of Government Primary School Tutki of Tehsil Banda Dawood Shah, built 50 years ago, has fallen into disrepair, due to the collapse of the school building, the lives of children are in danger. Despite the fact that the school building has not been repaired, the chances of the roof of the school building collapsing during rains are high, when it rains, the school children are dismissed, due to which the future of the children is also bad.

It is feared that this is the only primary school for the village of Tutki with a population of 6,000, in which the number of children is more than 400, while according to the school administration, the school has a capacity of 250 children, more due to the deterioration of the school building. But the parents are refusing to admit more children, due to which the

admission campaign is also feared to be affected, District Education Officer Karak Zahoor Khan says that due to lack of funds, the repair work on the school has stopped, local people has demanded the construction work on the school building from the district administration and the elected representatives, saying that due to the failure of the school building, sending children to school does not give satisfaction that the children will return from school safely or not. If the school building is no longer usable, if there is any damage to the children, the district administration and elected representatives will be responsible.

Meanwhile, the electricity transformer of Mahalla Abbas Khel of Khuram Mohammad Zai area of Tehsil Banda Dawood Shah could not be repaired or replaced despite the lapse of two months. The residents worried about the lack of drinking water and

darkness demanded the top authorities of Pesco to take immediate notice of the situation. Social figure Tanveer Khattak and other leaders of Mohalla Abbas Khel of Khuram Mohammad Zai have told "Sadaye Media Group" that the electricity transformer installed for the residents of the area has been broken for two months and the electricity supply in the area has been suspended.

Due to lack of drinking water in the area and due to lack of electricity in the month of Ramadan, people are facing severe difficulties in Sehri and Iftar. We repeatedly contacted O and demanded the repair of the transformer, but they are turning us away. They have come down on injustice and cruelty, they have demanded from the higher authorities of Pesco to take immediate notice of the situation and repair the electricity transformer immediately.

UoM holds seminar F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: To live a happy and peaceful life in this world and in the life hereafter, it is vital to follow the teachings of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (peace be upon him) in letter & spirit in our daily lives.

This was stated by Vice Chancellor UoM Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad while addressing a seminar on Youm-e-Tahaffuz-e-Namoos-e-Risalat (Peace be upon him).

The event was organized by the Directorate of Students Societies in collaboration with the Department of Islamic Studies, University of Malakand. The Resource Persons were Dr Janas Khan & Dr Najam ul Hassan, Department of Islamic Studies who shed light on various aspects of the finality of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (peace be upon him) and highlighted that it is the responsibility of each and every Muslim to ensure protection of the finality of prophethood law.

Pro-VC Prof Dr Atta ur Rehman also addressed the participants of the seminar. The VC UoM Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad & Prof Dr Atta ur Rehman pledged that faith in the finality of prophethood is the foundation of the Muslim Ummah and the entire nation is united and committed to the cause of the finality of prophethood law. The event was attended by faculty members & students.

Pakistan to expose Israel F.P. Report

HUB: Senior leader of Pakistan People's Party, President of Hub district and candidate for PB-21 Hub and spokesperson of President Asif Ali Zardari for Balochistan Mir Ali Hassan Zehri has expressed deep sorrow and anger over the ongoing brutality of Israel on Palestine and expressed his deep concern.

He said in his statement that Pakistan has serious reservations about the Israeli aggression on Palestine in the Middle East. Hundreds of Palestinians are being martyred on a daily basis, even in the blessed month of Ramadan, Israeli brutality and aggression on the Palestinian people continues. He said that the Muslim Ummah should take a blunt stand to solve this problem and take concrete steps to immediately stop the ongoing Israeli brutality in Palestine. He also said that the Israeli aggression and bloodshed is a slap on the face of humanity.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said in his statement that schools, hospitals and even ambulances are being targeted in Israeli attacks, which is also against the principles of international war. Thousands of Palestinian Muslims have been martyred in Israeli brutality. He said that we are concerned about the ongoing Israeli brutality in the Middle East and the fragile and fragile situation of Palestine. He said that Pakistan supports a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian issue in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations and the OIC. Pakistan has always consistently advocated a two-state solution for lasting peace in the Middle East.

LG councilors observe 'Black Day' against KP govt

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Councilors observed 15 March as "Black Day" against unavailability of power and funds here in Landi Kotal on Friday.

It is to be stated here that two years back on 15 March, the councilors took their oath after they were elected in Local Bodies election. Led by Tehsil Chairman Haji Shah Khalid



scores of Village and Neighborhood chairmen recorded their protest in Tehsil Municipal Authority office while carrying black flags and placards inscribed with slogans in their favor.

Speaking on the occasion Haji Shah Khalid said that two years back on that day, they had taken oath after their election in Local Bodies election. But ironically power and funds had not been released to them

that was injustice to them, he added. Conducting LB election was the Constitutional binding however the then provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) made an amendment in Local Government Act to deliberately usurp rights of forty-two thousands councilors, he remarked. He demanded of the incumbent provincial government of Pakistan Tehreek-

e-Insaf to honor the will of the forty million people, forthwith withdraw the amendment in the 2013 Act and restore it in its original form. He argued for the formulation of provincial financial commission and grant power and funds to the councilors. Later on, a letter was written to the Chief Minister KP for restoration of funds and authorities to the councilors.

'Suthra Punjab' initiated for public welfare

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Chairperson Chief Minister's Special Initiatives and Ex-Federal Minister Saira Afzal Tarar has said that 'Suthra' Punjab and 'Negheban' Ramazan Package are people friendly, historic and people friendly programmes of the Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Ramazan package is being given to the poor and less resources people at their doorsteps on merit transparently in the province including district Hafizabad which is an ideal and great program of its nature as well as reflecting love and affection of the Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif with the people.

She expressed these views while addressing a meeting held at District Complex Hafizabad, on Wednesday to review pace of work and progress of 'Suthra' Punjab and Negheban Programmes.

Deputy Commissioner Sundas Irshad, MPAs Mian Shahid Hussain Bhatti, Aoun Intisar Bhatti, prominent social worker Sheikh Gulzar Ahmad and officers of different departments attended the meeting.

Chairperson said that 'Suthra' Punjab Campaign was launched in urban and rural areas simultaneously for cleaning our streets, bazars and other public places.

All politicians and government officers/official have to work as a team with the passion of serving the nation and team work could be proved result-oriented, she said. She said that special teams were constituted consisting of political and social workers to make the 'Suthra' Punjab Campaign in Hafizabad, Pindi Bhattian, Jalalpur Bhattian, Sukheki Mandi and other areas of the district.

DC Sundas Irshad informed the meeting that under 'Suthra' Punjab Campaign, not only clean-

ing the urban and rural areas but encroachment and wall-chocking were also removed whereas streets lights have been restored. She also told that choked sewerage lines were also cleaned while heaps of garbage from different places were also lifted. She apprised that ration bags 'Negheban' Ramazan Package of the Punjab government had been given to 22 thousand families at their doorsteps in transparent manners under in the district so far.

DC disclosed that she herself was monitoring distribution of Ration bags and other all initiatives of the Chief Minister of the Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif. Earlier, DC visited Ramazan Bazar and fair price shops setup at Model Bazar and checked quality, availability of essential commodities to the consumers. She said that more than 13 edibles items were being sold at fair price shops on 25 percent discount prices.



CHINIOT: Women in long queues of at main Jhang Road to receive cash payment of BISE programm.

Highway Workers Union hold protest

F.P. Report

LARKANA: Highway Workers Union took out a rally from the office and held a protest at Jinnah Bagh Chowk, where they raised red flags and placards in their hands and shouted slogans. On the occasion, leaders Asadullah, Mir Ahmad Chandio, Muhammad Yasin Jatoti, Ali Hassan Abro, Azizullah Bhutto, Ghulam Farid Solangi and others said that our legitimate demands have not been recognized for a long time, due to which there is disagreement among the employees.

Restlessness is widespread. They demanded from the relevant authorities of the Sindh government, including the government, to give jobs to the children of the senior employees, to give utility cards and health cards to the employees of grades one to five, while the retired. The restlessness should be removed by

accepting other legitimate demands including giving group insurance to the employees, otherwise the scope of the protest will be expanded.

On the other hand, even after 12 days in Larkana, the University of Larkana Employees Association will continue its protest against the suspension of employees' salaries for the past 3 months. taken out. The rally passed through different roads of the city and reached Janah Bagh. The demonstrators had banners and placards in their hands.

On which were written demands for release of salaries. Abdul Jabbar Chandio, Sahir Hussain Pechuho, Fayyaz Hussain Rajpar, Huzur Baksh Dipar, Najaf Ali were present in the rally.

Asif Ali Tanyu, Muzaffar Ali Gadehi, Saifullah Chandio and many other employees participated. Addressing the rally on this occasion,

the top leaders said that a university called the University of Larkana has been created by merging all the campuses of Larkana. In which the salaries of nearly 500 employees have been stopped for the last three months. Due to the stoppage of salary of the employees, the house of the employees is closed and the employees are forced to starve, which is a violation of human rights. We condemn this action. And we are the President of Pakistan Honorable Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has requested the Sindh CM Syed Murad Ali Shah that the new VC of the university should issue the three-month wages of 500 employees at once so that the employees can take a breath of fresh air. Otherwise, they will continue the protest and go on strike.



HYDERABAD: Anti-encroachment staffer loading roadside vendors handcart to their vehicle for clearing encroachments from Station Road.



Ukraine holds out despite stalled US aid, fears ‘deep advances’ by Russia

KYIV: Russian rhetoric has been dialled up in the run-up to President Vladimir Putin's expected re-election. Putin reminded the world of Moscow's nuclear readiness, and military reporters amplified battlefield skirmishes against Ukrainian defenders. But not all of Putin's pre-election news coverage went as planned.

Ukraine scored drone attacks against Moscow and Russian oil facilities, and anti-Kremlin fighters made their presence felt on Russian soil. Putin's nuclear threat - the second in as many weeks - was measured. In a pre-recorded television interview he said Russia's nuclear forces were ready "from a military-technical point of view" and touted them as the most advanced in the world. His comments, made six days after Sweden officially joined NATO as its 32nd member, were mild compared with a warning two weeks ago after French President Emmanuel Macron left open the possibility of sending troops to Ukraine. "They must realise that we also have weapons that can hit targets on their territory. All this really threatens a conflict with the use of nuclear weapons and the destruction of civilisation.

Don't they get that?" Putin said on February 29. Putin is running for a third consecutive six-year term. He has passed constitutional amendments suspending a ban on more than two consecutive terms for himself personally. It allows him to rule until 2036 and has led both Russian and Western critics to label his continuing to hold office as illicit. In October, the



Council of Europe described his presidency as a "de facto dictatorship" and urged its member states to "recognise Putin as illegitimate". Russian forces continued to make marginal advances on the eastern front for a fourth straight week after the fall of Avdiivka on February 17, but the pace of these advances has slowed considerably, suggesting Ukraine has managed to absorb Russian momentum.

On Friday, geolocated footage showed they entered the village of Tonenke and advanced towards Berdychi, both west of Avdiivka in the Donetsk region. Russian forces had already been on the edges of both settlements a week earlier. Ukraine's Tavrta Group of forces, which is fighting in the area, said this front had stabilised. "The advance has actually

stopped. The Russian military is making small movements in this direction," spokesperson Dmytro Lykhovyi said. There were other minor Russian advances in Donetsk. Russian forces have been trying to roll back Ukrainian gains west of Bakhmut, and on Sunday, geolocated footage showed they had entered the village of Ivanivske. Russian forces captured the village of Shevchenko, southeast of the city of Donetsk, on March 10 and the following day advanced in several places along the front in the area. Towards the northern end of the front, geolocated footage showed that Russian forces approached the village of Terny from the east and reached the outskirts of Synkivka, two settlements in Donetsk and Kharkiv, respectively. On the whole, though, these

advances were measured in hundreds of metres (hundreds of yards), and the overall shape of the front remained unchanged. What seems to continue to be instrumental in Russia's minor successes is the use of glide bombs. These are normally massive conventional inertial bombs carrying 675kg (nearly 1,500lb) of explosives, fitted with fins and tails to fly farther and strike with greater accuracy. The German tabloid Bild reported that Russia is now mass producing the weapons. Russian military reporters said Russia also produced an improved glide bomb design this year, including engines and satellite guidance systems that increased its range from 40-70km to 95km (25-45 miles to 60 miles). These powered bombs enable Russian planes dropping them to fly farther away from the front, reducing their vulnerability to Ukrainian air defences, which claimed 15 aircraft in February and early March. While holding the front more or less steady, Ukraine focused on striking deep inside Russia. On Saturday, several explosions were recorded in Rostov, less than 100km (60 miles) from the Ukrainian border, with at least one geolocated to a Beriev plant repairing and refurbishing A-50 radar and reconnaissance planes. Ukraine has targeted these planes, destroying two this year, because they spy on Ukrainian positions and give fighter-bombers their coordinates.

Russia's Ministry of Defence claimed on Saturday that it had shot down all 47 drones over four border regions, including Rostov. Ukraine

again sent a large salvo of drones - this time targeting energy infrastructure. Russia's Defence Ministry said it shot down 58. Ryazan Governor Pavel Malkov said one drone struck the Ryazan refinery, 180km (110 miles) southeast of Moscow and about 500km (310 miles) from the Ukrainian border, starting a fire.

Ukrainian news outlet Suspilne quoted Security Service sources as saying two further refineries had been targeted, in Rostov and St Petersburg, as well as two airfields. There was no evidence that those attacks had succeeded.

Ukraine's military intelligence said pro-Ukrainian Russian forces had staged a border incursion, clashing with Russian forces in border villages in Belgorod and Kursk. The Russian Volunteer Force and Freedom of Russia Legion are anti-Putin paramilitaries that first attacked Russia in March 2023. Russian sources first denied the incursion, then claimed to have repelled it. Whether it succeeded in the past week, Ukraine has been following through on tactics that have succeeded in the past, striking oil refineries and sinking or disabling as much as half of Russia's Black Sea Fleet.

But in interviews with Western media, Ukrainian fighters on the front lines are raising the alarm about shortages of ammunition as United States military aid remains frozen in a Republican-controlled House of Representatives. The latest such warning came in Germany's Der Spiegel news magazine when Ukrainian servicemen warned they could not hold out forever under cur-

rent conditions. Even Ukraine's new commander-in-chief, Oleksandr Syrskii, warned that "there is a threat of enemy units advancing deep into our battle formations."

"Ukrainian shortages of ammunition and other war materiel resulting from delays in the provision of US military assistance may be making the current Ukrainian front line more fragile than the relatively slow Russian advances in various sectors would indicate," wrote the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank. Ukraine's European allies have been trying to make up for the US shortfall. Britain announced it would spend \$160m buying 10,000 drones for Ukraine. Czech officials said they had raised enough money from partners to buy 300,000 artillery shells from around the world for Ukraine.

The Czech Republic is leading an effort to locate 800,000 artillery shells outside Europe and deliver them to Ukraine. Germany, which refrains from sending its medium-range Taurus missile to Ukraine because Russia said it would consider it an escalation, was reportedly discussing a plan to send the missiles to Britain as replacements for Storm Shadow missiles Britain would send to Ukraine. The administration of US President Joe Biden said it was sending \$300m of urgently needed military aid cobbled together from savings in the US defence budget. But none of this makes up for the absence of \$60.1bn in military aid the US was planning to send in 2024. — Aljazeera

Nigerian leader rules out ransoms for abductees

ABUJA (AP): Nigeria's leader has ruled out the payment of ransoms for nearly 300 schoolchildren abducted from their school in the conflict-hit north a week ago, raising questions from analysts about how best to rescue the children without hurting them.

Meanwhile, at least two people with extensive knowledge of the security crisis in Nigeria's northwest told The Associated Press the abductors of the schoolchildren in the state of Kaduna are known and are hiding in the vast ungoverned and unoccupied forests of the region. They both urged the government to engage in dialogue with the armed groups to resolve the protracted conflict.

At least 1,400 students have so far been kidnapped from Nigerian schools since the first major school abduction - in Borno state's Chibok village in 2014 - stunned the world. Most of those eventually released only regained their freedom after ransom payments, according to their schools and parents, even though the Nigerian government does not admit to paying ransoms. Nigeria's information minister Mohammed Idris told reporters that President Bola Tinubu directed security agencies to urgently rescue the schoolchildren and "in the process to ensure that not a

dime is paid for ransom."

No group has claimed responsibility for the Kaduna attack. Local residents blamed bandit groups known for mass killings and kidnappings for ransom in northwestern and central regions, most of them herders in conflict with host communities. Unlike the Chibok girls, who were seized by Islamic militants from the Boko Haram group, no religious motive is suspected in the most recent abductions. The mastermind of the Kaduna abduction is known, as are other bandit leaders, said Murtala Ahmed Rufa'i, an associate professor of peace and conflict studies at Usmanu Danfodiyo University, in Sokoto state, and one of Nigeria's foremost conflict researchers.

"His father is alive," he said of the suspect behind the Kaduna abduction. "These bandits are people that are known by their names, families and by their locations. If you want to engage, you talk to the parents. They are criminals (but) still have parents that they listen to," he said. At least 100 of the schoolchildren abducted in Kaduna are estimated to be aged 12 or younger, fitting an established pattern, with children seen as easy targets to mount pressure on the government. The children's abduction is not driven by the need for ransoms

and such abductions can only be resolved through negotiations with the armed groups, according to Sheikh Ahmad Gumi, a Nigerian cleric known to have access to the bandits and who has negotiated with them in the past. "It is more than an economic motive," Gumi said, saying there is "an underground ethnic war" between the herdsmen from the Fulani ethnic group and other, more urbanized parts of Nigeria. His comments echoed claims made previously by the herdsmen that they struggle with less development than other regions. Security operations to rescue those kidnapped sometimes stretch into months, leaving families desperate to meet the ransom demands. "People whose relations are kidnapped don't cooperate with security agencies. Otherwise, some of these money being paid, since they are not electronically transferred, could be traced," said Mike Ejiofor, a former director with Nigeria's secret police.

The minister's comments suggests the government has "other alternatives to use to free those people," said Ejiofor. However, the use of force could have serious consequences, he warned. "To go and do it forcefully, I think we will have some collateral damage," he said.

Belarusian woman who died after attack laid to rest

WARSAW (AP): A young Belarusian woman who died after being attacked and raped in central Warsaw was laid to rest, with both loved ones and strangers turning out to mourn the loss of a young woman who had sought a better future in Poland.

Lizaveta Hertsen, 25, was remembered as a woman who had never been on an airplane until she left Belarus a few years ago to begin a new life in Poland, from where she traveled across Europe and found a supportive partner. At the graveside service, Hertsen's brother and friends paid silent tribute, refusing to speak to the many journalists who showed up to cover the story that has gripped so many people. A prepared text was read out paying tribute to the woman widely known as Liza, an eyelash stylist who had begun creating knitted caps that she sold.

"We are here because what happened broke our hearts. Most of us gathered here today did not know Liza personally," a woman who led the ceremony told mourners. "In the face of such a great tragedy, our hearts are filled with despair. We confront what is beyond our control. ... It could have been any of us." She described how Liza and her brother came from a troubled home but would sit together over tea and dream about a future filled with happiness and love.

The crime has caused shock and indignation among Poles and the many Belarusians and Ukrainians who have sought refuge in Poland in recent years. For many, the crime has cast a light on how women's rights are still not fully protected in the traditionally Roman Catholic nation. Female pallbearers dressed in white carried the white casket holding Hertsen to her final resting place in a Warsaw cemetery. Mourners wept and threw white roses and white rose petals onto her white casket in the freshly dug grave. Hertsen died in a hospital on March 1, several days after she was attacked on her way home at night. Warsaw police said the attacker approached his victim from behind and put a knife to her throat. Choking the woman and covering her mouth, he forcefully dragged her to a nearby gateway.

Polish media reported that there were witnesses who did not stop to help. She was found naked and unconscious early on the morning of Feb. 25. The crime was especially shocking to many because it happened in an exclusive neighborhood in a city where such brutal attacks are extremely rare. A 23-year-old man identified only as Dorian S. was detained by police for the attack hours later.

US Senate leader calls for new Israel elections amid Gaza war

WASHINGTON: The top legislator in the United States Senate, Chuck Schumer, has offered his most strident criticism of Israel since the war in Gaza began, calling for a leadership shake-up in the country. Schumer, a Jewish-American Democrat, took direct aim at Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a speech from the US Senate floor, saying the Israeli leader has been "too willing to tolerate the civilian toll in Gaza".

Schumer pushed Israel to hold elections to replace Netanyahu and said the prime minister had "lost his way" in his pursuit of "political survival". "There needs to be a fresh debate about the future of Israel after October 7," Schumer said, referring to the date when the Palestinian group Hamas launched an attack on southern Israel, spurring the present-day war. "As a democracy, Israel has the right to choose its own leaders, and we should let the chips fall where they may," Schumer continued. "But the important thing is that Israelis are given a choice." Schumer, the Senate majority leader, did not suggest a timeline for any eventual vote, though. More than 31,341 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since the start of the war, many of them children. The spiralling death toll has prompted widespread condemnation and fears of genocide in the territory. But President Joe Biden and other prominent US leaders have largely been circumspect in their criticism of Israel's military campaign.

The US is a longtime ally of Israel, and it contributes approximately \$3.8bn in aid to the country every year. Still, Schumer's words - and more vocal criticisms from Biden himself - have signalled a shift in the approach Democratic leadership is taking towards Israel, amid mounting public pressure to seek a permanent ceasefire. "We should not let the complexities of this conflict stop us from stating the plain truth: Palestinian civilians do not deserve to suffer for the sins of Hamas, and Israel has a

moral obligation to do better," Schumer said in his speech. "The United States has an obligation to do better." Schumer added that Netanyahu was one of several "major obstacles" to a two-state solution that might eventually resolve the conflict. Netanyahu has repeatedly rejected the notion of a two-state solution, despite the Biden administration insisting it should be a cornerstone of any post-war plans. Given the Israeli government's refusal so far to change course, Schumer hinted that the US may be forced to "play a more active role in shaping Israeli policy by using leverage". The speech marks one of the most direct and biting speeches given by a high-ranking US political leader during the war's first five months. And it quickly prompted a response, both from the Israeli government and the Biden administration. Speaking to reporters, US Department of State spokesperson Matthew Miller said Schumer's comments were his own and did not represent the stance of the administration.

"There are a number of things we wanted to see Israel do differently," Miller acknowledged nevertheless. Far-right Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich weighed in as well, condemning Schumer's remarks. "We expect the largest democracy in the world to respect Israeli democracy," Smotrich said.

US Republicans, for their part, used the speech to blast the Democratic leadership. Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell, for instance, described Schumer's call for new elections in Israel "grotesque and hypocritical". "The Jewish state of Israel deserves an ally that acts like one," McConnell said. Schumer attempted to preemptively fend off such criticism during his speech, underscoring his pro-Israel bona fides. As the highest-ranking Jewish person in US government, he also drew on his family's history with the Holocaust to underscore his sympathy for the Israeli plight. "If the

events of the last few months have made anything clear, it is that Israel is surrounded by vicious enemies, and there are many people around the world who excuse and even support their aims to expel and kill Jews living in their hard-won land of refuge," Schumer said. But while Schumer and other top Democratic leaders have remained stalwart in their support of Israel, their rhetoric has shifted in recent weeks to be increasingly critical of its military campaign.

Biden, for instance, has warned Israel about pursuing a ground operation in the southern city of Rafah, calling it a "red line". Officials have also denounced Israeli impediments to the distribution of aid in Gaza. Still, critics of the administration have said such words are empty without more material action. Earlier this week, for instance, eight US senators - including Vermont's Bernie Sanders - issued a letter to the president calling on him to premise aid to Israel on the condition that access to humanitarian aid in Gaza be expanded - and any impediments removed. Schumer's speech also came as the US announced more sanctions on Israeli settlers and illegal outposts in the occupied West Bank - one area the Biden administration has shown more willingness to act. The US Department of State said the outposts known as Moshes Farm and Zvis Farm had been bases for violence against Palestinians. Sanctions also targeted three illegal Israeli settlers. The administration in February imposed sanctions on four Israeli men it accused of being involved in settler violence in the occupied West Bank, which has surged since October 7. "It is critical that Israel take additional action to stop settler violence and hold accountable those responsible for it, not just for the sake of the victims of this violence, but for Israel's own security and standing in the world," Miller, the State Department spokesman, told reporters. — Aljazeera

Opposition leader given six-month suspended sentence

ABUJA: An Algerian court has issued a six-month suspended sentence and a 50,000 dinars (\$372) fine to the prominent democracy activist Karim Tabbou, according to a local rights group. One Algerian activist, who did not disclose his name for fear of reprisal, said that the wording of the sentence indicates that Tabbou will not serve jail time. However, observers see the sentence, handed down, as part of a broader campaign of harassment and arrest against activists from Algeria's pro-democracy Hirak movement.

According to the National Committee for the Release of Detainees, Tabbou was convicted of "incitement to unarmed assembly", "insulting a civil servant" and "defamation". Tabbou, 49, became one of the most well-known activists to emerge out of Hirak when antigovernment demonstrations erupted in February 2019. But while Hirak eventually led to the overthrow of long-

time President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, protesters were not satisfied. Many protesters continued to demand, unsuccessfully, the resignation of all figures affiliated with Bouteflika's government and the removal of the military from all civil affairs. Tabbou was acquitted of other charges, including "disrespecting the dead" and "undermining the integrity of national territory".

Previously, in 2020, Tabbou received a one-year suspended sentence after being convicted of "undermining national security", as a result of a video he posted online that criticised the army's control of public and political affairs. After being released on probation in 2021, Tabbou said that "Algeria's youth are determined to fight for their right to a dignified life." According to an Amnesty International report published in May 2022, at least 266 activists and protesters from the Hirak movement were imprisoned. Most were jailed for criticising

many of the challenges facing the Hirak movement in Algeria. Many scholars and activists have argued that the movement has practically died out due to measures that the government adopted to crush Hirak, including outlawing any association from receiving foreign funds without authorisation, as well as expanding antiterrorism legislation.

The government has also been accused of attempting to co-opt political parties that supported the movement to divide and stamp out the momentum of the protests.

For his part, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune has previously insinuated that Hirak activists could carry out "non-innocent activities" that "attempt to hinder the democratic process". An Algerian activist, who spoke to Al Jazeera on condition of anonymity, added that the government has also "bought" social peace, by giving out stipends of money to unemployed youth. — Aljazeera

Chemicals in plastics far more numerous

LONDON (Reuters): At least 3,000 more chemicals are in plastics - from food packaging to toys to medical devices - than previously estimated by environmental agencies, a report published found, raising questions over pollution and consumer safety.

While the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) had previously identified around 13,000 plastic chemicals, the report by a team of European scientists found more than 16,000 chemicals in plastics - a quarter of which are thought to be hazardous to human health and the environment.

The report, funded by the Norwegian Research Council, comes as government negotiators grapple with devising the world's first treaty to tackle mounting plastic pollution, as some 400 million tonnes of plastic waste are produced every year. "To robustly solve plastic pollution, you actually have to look at the full life cycle of plastics and you have to address the chemicals issue," said report co-author Jane Muncke, managing director of the Swiss nonprofit Food Packaging Forum.

That's because plastic chemicals can leach into water and food. "We're finding hundreds, if not thousands, of plastic chemicals in people now and some of them have been linked to adverse health outcomes," Muncke said. Such impacts include fertility issues and cardiovascular disease. "When we look into ... products that we're using on a daily basis, we usually find between hundreds, if not thousands of chemicals in an individual plastic product," said lead author Martin Wagner, an environmental toxicologist at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Kimberly Wise White, vice president of regulatory and technical affairs for the American Chemistry Council, an industry group whose membership is dominated by plastics makers, said the findings sought to "advance a hazard framework that ignores real-world exposures and paints an incomplete picture for regulators and the public." While the plastics industry has said any global treaty should promote recycling and reuse of plastic, only addressing plastic waste

doesn't go far enough to protect people, the report's authors said. Scientists flagged the need for greater transparency on what chemicals - including additives, processing aids, and impurities - are going into plastics - including recycled products. A quarter of the identified chemicals lack basic information on their basic chemical identity, the report said. "At the core of the problem is the chemical complexity of plastics," said Wagner, who also serves on the board of the Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty. "Often producers don't really know which kind of chemicals they have in their products and that comes from very complex value chains." Only 6% of the chemicals found in plastics are regulated internationally. Without regulatory pressure, "there is no motivation to disclose what's in the plastics," he said. That's something a plastics treaty could help to address. Negotiations continue next month in Ottawa, Canada, with the aim of finalizing a treaty come December in the South Korean city of Busan.

The Frontier Post

Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

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

Political icebreaking, a sane idea

PRESIDENT Asif Ali Zardari hailed the recent meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, saying it was time to begin the process of healing the divisions, restoring confidence in democracy and keeping Pakistan above all. The president's statement connected with the ice-breaking development wherein the K-P chief minister met with Shehbaz Sharif on March 13. He asked the Prime Minister for civic engagement with the PTI founder, Imran Khan.

The recent outreach between the ruling coalition government and the PTI-led opposition is a major development and ice-breaking activity in a highly polarized and split society. There had been wide-ranging admiration for the meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz and the KP Chief Minister during which Gandapur raised the issue of impending payments to the province on account of Hydel power reality along with disbursement of 3% NFC share under the 25th amendment for development and integration of newly merged districts of Erstwhile FATA. Prime Minister Shehbaz and his team assured Chief Minister KP of fulfilling all financial needs of the province despite monetary constraints and economic slowdown in the country. Both sides displayed political resilience, and maturity, throwing away the baggage of the unpleasant past and moving forward with fresh team spirit and motivation to build a better future for the country and the public who gave them the mandate to steer the nation out of prevailing crises.

Historically, the nation suffered enormously from continued political clashes and economic crises that significantly polarized society and brought the country to the verge of an economic collapse. The unceasing political instability resulted in a zero-sum game that neither benefited the opposition nor rescued the treasury. There are certain rules and limits for political work, civic activities, opposition, and criticism that are determined by the country's interests and public needs. During these pages, the Frontier Post has been advocating for securing national consensus, achieving a charter of democracy, and a charter of the economy to draw clear lines for the politicians and civic groups not to endanger the country's democracy, risk the economy, and violate foreign policy. Politics must cover public issues but not trade in national interests, the country's prestige, and territorial sovereignty.

In fact, political resilience is essential for democratic countries to navigate uncertainty, adapt to changing circumstances, and protect their citizens. Political consensus on national issues plays a crucial role in fostering stability, progress, and sustainable peace within a country. Addressing national issues through consensus contributes to lasting peace and prevents cycles of crisis and instability. Our nation consists of multiple communities, tribes, and clans with diverse traditions and pluralistic cultures. A variety of political views and affiliations hence no single party can claim a 100 percent mandate from across the country, wherein each civic group represents a specific school of thought and political legacy. This country belongs to 240 million people, not a single clan, ethnic group, or a political entity. Hence, all stakeholders must accept each other political worth, mutual consensus and peaceful coexistence are the only way forward. There is a divided mandate and no single party is in the position to solely form its government. If the sole purpose of our leaders and civic groups is to steer the nation through prevailing challenges there is no way forward except dialogue, engagement, teamwork, and cooperation.

The recent contact between the two political opponents has lowered the boiling political temperature and rekindled the hope of reconciliation, and cooperation in the larger interest of the nation. The ruling coalition must respond positively by engaging with the PTI leader to forge consensus and better working coordination across the political spectrum. Our leadership must demonstrate political maturity and resilience, which is the essence of politics, to overcome current challenges and pave the way for a better future.

Dilemma of illegal migration

ACCORDING to the media, nearly 60 people have drowned on a vessel carrying migrants across the Central Mediterranean from Libya to Italy or Malta. The SOS Mediterranean, a charity rescue organization and Italian Coast during their joint operation in the Central Mediterranean Sea rescued 25 people; at least 60 others perished on the way, including women and at least one child. The survivors departed from Zawiya, Libya, seven days before when their boat engine broke apart midway, causing a human tragedy in the ruthless sea. Months ago, another boat loaded with scores of migrants sank off Libya's coast resulting in 61 deaths and several missing who never met their loved ones again.

The Central Mediterranean is one of the world's most dangerous sea migration routes which caused multiple incidents of ship swamps in recent years. This risky route is being used by illegal migrants from Asia, and Africa to reach wealthy nations in Europe, and North America, wherein dozens of those uncalled guests lost their lives during the attempt to cross the dangerous sea which stretches between Europe, Africa and Southwestern Asia. According to the UN Migration Agency (IOM), almost 2,500 migrants using it died or went missing last year, and this headcount reached 226 in 2024. The Western nations are tired of swarms of these unwelcome guests into their countries and using multiple strategies such as offering money, equipment and expertise to LLibya and Tunisia to stop such unlawful departures from their shores. Interestingly, the far-right Italian Prime Minister Georgia Miloni has offered a development package to African nations in a bid to halt illegal migration to Italy that is the biggest victim of illegal migration in Europe.

Despite multiple carnages of mass killings, border shootings, and ship swamps every year that cost thousands of lives of innocent migrants in the Adriatic/Mediterranean seas yet the mass exodus from Africa, Asia and Latin America does not come to a pause. In fact, poverty, unceasing armed conflict, ethnic and religious rivalries, and violence immensely contribute to legal and illegal migration from least-developed nations, where people are fleeing their native countries in search of economic opportunities and a peaceful life in developed Western nations. It is a matter of shame and disgrace for the ruling juntas in backward nations yet they feel no remorse over such dire conditions in their countries.

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Cause for concern

THE Joe Biden administration is intent on restoring US leadership in the "Indo-Pacific" by reinvigorating the United States' network of alliances and partnerships in the region. The Biden administration is thus encouraging the US' allies and partners to comprehensively strengthen relations with the US and courting its allies outside the region to engage in "Indo-Pacific" affairs. By deeply intertwining security, political, economic and ideological issues, the US has been striving to create an all-round bloc and ecology to isolate and suppress China.

However, the situation in the Asia-Pacific region is completely different from what it was during the Cold War rivalry between the US and the Soviet Union. Differences in values between China and the US are not based on ideological confrontation between capitalism and socialism, but rather, are based on the two nations' vastly different development models and governance models. The so-called value-based alliance stressed by the Biden administration, which attempts to bundle economic and political exchanges between countries with ideology, is not warmly received by the US' allies. In sharp contrast to the US' narrow-minded egoism, China has always been upholding the principle of pursuing the greater good and shared interests in its foreign diplomacy, which receives wide acclaim from the vast majority of countries.

The US is attempting to create a politics-based bloc ecology in the "Indo-Pacific", by turning regional priorities from open, inclusive development and regional governance to security issues and ideology. In military and political areas, the US has been isolating and suppressing China and coercing other countries to take sides. In the economic field, the US is building anti-China club-style multilateral mechanisms under the pretext of "security concerns".

Regarding ideology, the US is seeking to build a so-called value alliance to contain China, trying to curb China's development. Second, different from the US-Soviet Union Cold War rivalry, the competition between China and the US is focused on economic and technological competition. China has deeply participated in the regional

division of labor amid economic globalization, and its economic growth to a great extent benefits from economic globalization. Despite a possible "decoupling" in certain sectors, a full-scale "decoupling" of the world's top two economies is unlikely. In a world where the Chinese and US economies are highly interdependent and economic globalization is deeply advanced, there can hardly be two parallel economic systems completely decoupled from each other in the Asia-Pacific region, like the one during the Cold War period. Last, the differences in ideologies and political systems between China and the US are in no way like the two ideological camps dominated respectively by the US and the Soviet Union. Differences in values between China and the US are not based on ideological confrontation between capitalism and socialism, but rather, are based on the two nations' vastly different development models and governance models.

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Gao Cheng

Under the US' "carrot and stick" strategy, its allies in the "Indo-Pacific" and major regional countries that have strategic competition with China are showing a tendency of taking sides. But most Asia-Pacific countries are striving to maintain strategic independence, which is the foundation for China to build a surrounding environment beneficial for its development and for the Asia-Pacific region to maintain a regional order based on peace and stability. To start with, most Asia-Pacific countries have chosen to stay nonaligned amid the China-US competition, rather than taking sides. Despite pressure from the US, most of the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations have chosen not to follow the US lead in containing China. Most ASEAN members are indifferent toward the US' "Indo-Pacific" strategy, fearing that the quadrilateral security dialogue among the US, Japan, India and Australia (the Quad) will evolve into an anti-China multilateral alliance that poses a big underlying security risk to the region. In the meantime, they think the US courting Japan, India and Australia will undermine ASEAN's international status. ASEAN's stance on this matter is a result of the sound neighborhood environment created by China's neighborhood diplomacy in recent years and provides ample room for further development of China's neighborhood policy. Second, the US has gradually lost the willingness and ability to be the economic growth engine and provider of public goods for the Asia-Pacific region, whereas China's contribution to and status in the regional economic order have been ascending amid the industrial chain and value chain restructuring. In the post-Pandemic era, all developed economies are seeking to bring back industries domestically or to their surrounding areas. China's neighboring countries pin high hopes on China's critical role in the restructuring of regional industry chains and value chains in the years to come.

Thus, regional economic

cooperation and China's influence on its neighboring countries will rise accordingly. China will gradually replace the US as the center of the Asia-Pacific economic order. Last, despite the US' relentless efforts to create an ideology-based bloc to counter China, most countries in the Asia-Pacific region and in the world are unwilling to join such a confrontational camp. Instead, they are more focused on how to establish a more fair and reasonable international order and how much major countries can contribute to equitable global governance. Although the Western society is concerned that China's rise will break the current international order, many people have good intentions toward and high hopes of China, wishing to have a more diverse and balanced world. Most of China's neighboring countries focus on China's role in the regional supply chains in the post-pandemic era, resulting in their great willingness to advance economic collaboration in the Asia-Pacific region. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, China has demonstrated its major-country responsibility in global health governance, whereas the US-led West has demonstrated weakness and fatigue amid humanity's common disaster due to their governance model based on self-centeredness and capitalism.

The demonstration effect of Western development models for non-Western countries has been declining. The US' lack of leadership in global governance and the EU's malfunctioning in the face of collective dilemmas have made more and more countries skeptical of Western countries' so-called universal values, development path and the international order dominated by them.

If China and these countries have more common ground in development models and China provides more public goods for regional and global governance, particularly for its neighborhood area, non-Western countries will have more confidence in prosperity and stability brought by Chinese solutions to global governance.

Franco-German rivalry risks destabilizing EU

Khaled Abou Zahr

TENSIONS between France and Germany, and clearly between President Emmanuel Macron and Chancellor Olaf Scholz, are starting to show a historical break from what was the pillar of the European construction: the Franco-German engine. We are now far from the closeness of President Charles de Gaulle and Chancellor Konrad Adenauer or President Francois Mitterrand and Chancellor Helmut Kohl. In dangerous geopolitical and military times, these strains are putting at risk the entire stability and security of Europe. In fact, the war in Ukraine is only the tip of the iceberg of conflicting views over the future of Europe.

When it comes to Ukraine, the disagreement over the supply of Taurus missiles and Macron's suggestion of sending Western troops to the front has strained Franco-German relations even more. This has led to accusations from France that Germany is not contributing enough to supporting Ukraine, while Germany is accusing Macron of taking unilateral decisions.

The recent leak of a recording of four senior German military officers indicates that, despite Scholz's declarations, the prospect of supplying Ukraine with long-range cruise missiles is being considered. The officers were heard saying that the weapons could be used to hit the Kerch Bridge, which links Russia to the peninsula of Crimea. Moreover, a recent French press report indicated that Germany's increased arms supply to Ukraine has positioned Berlin as the second-largest supplier of arms to Kyiv after the US and this contrasts with or even defies the French accusations. In reality, France lags far behind in 14th place in terms of supplies to Ukraine.

These open dissensions over Ukraine have been a long time coming and are all interlinked with a broader and deeper difference in vision, from the economy and energy to security and defense. Energy is a key element of this confrontation. Although Paris and Berlin finally reached an agreement on the method of setting the price paid per megawatt-hour of electricity at a summit in Hamburg last year, the two countries continue to advocate for two conflicting energy models.

While France has a proven track record of efficiently using nuclear energy as a dependable source, Germany has shut down its nuclear power plants and advocates for an exclusively renewable energy mix. However, it is clear that the German model is not currently working. Indeed, as a result of the war in Ukraine, Berlin has lost its access to cheap natural gas from Moscow. This has been an unprecedented shock for energy-intensive German industries, which have long been the manufacturing powerhouse of Europe. While it continues to try and boost its renewable energy mix, Germany is now focusing on liquefied natural gas, transported by ship, which produces more greenhouse gas emissions and shows how the

blind agenda on renewables has put Europe at risk.

With this energy clash, the German model of economic excellence has come undone. This has validated the decade-old comments by French economists that, since the launch of the euro, Germany's industry has been indirectly subsidized due to the strength of the Deutsche Mark, which allowed it to push its exports and grow its economy at the expense of other members.

Today, while France's economy is growing, Germany's is contracting. Yet, on the other hand, Germany has been much more careful when it comes to public debt and fiscal policy. France's public debt has skyrocketed to more than 3 trillion (\$3.28 trillion) - 112.5 percent of gross domestic product, compared with less than 100 percent in 2019. The annual budget deficit is about 5 percent of GDP, way above the 3 percent deficit ceiling set by Brussels.

In contrast, Germany's public debt, despite also increasing to 2.5 trillion, is only expected to be 63.5 percent of GDP by the end of 2024, far below France's level. Moreover, Germany's consolidated fiscal balance recorded a deficit equal to 2.1 percent of its nominal GDP in December, which is in line with Brussels' ceiling. And while Berlin is looking to force countries to abide by this ceiling, France opposes it. And so, if Germany is the sick man of Europe today, as many journalists are happy to coin it, then France is the bad student looking to benefit from the good student's ratings.

When it comes to defense, Berlin and Paris indirectly accuse each other of searching for extra gains from their industrial partnership. On that note, press reports indicate that Berlin was behind the Italian government's veto of a planned \$1.8 billion acquisition of Italy's Microtecnica by French group Safran. And, from a more strategic perspective, German officials accuse France of being hesitant toward NATO and not sufficiently committed to its strategic value. However, this statement is in complete contradiction with Germany's long-time energy policy, which relied on Russia at the same time as NATO was looking to counter Moscow's interference.

We could also add to the list of Franco-German differences international relations, which are now closely linked to their defense policies. In fact, all of this is more than a mere clash between the flamboyance of Macron and the discretion of Scholz. It goes beyond the accusations of Macron, who is seeking to seize the opportunity created by the end of Angela Merkel's historical leadership to become the uncontested European leader, while looking to exploit Central and Eastern European countries to counter Germany. At its core, the issue involves a lack of genuine European political decision-making and a clear EU positioning within the transatlantic alliance. In fact, more than Brexit, these growing tensions are putting at risk the future stability of the EU and hence need to be dealt with immediately.

Arab News

What's the Kremlin scared of? Pro-war ultranationalists

THE killing of Alexei Navalny four weeks before the Russian presidential election appears to portray an increasingly brazen and self-assured Kremlin. Yet its treatment of ultranationalist Igor Strelkov tells a different story, that the Kremlin is afraid of ultra-nationalism as a political force.

On Jan. 25, 2024, Ukraine and Russia became locked in a war of words following the downing of a Russian military aircraft carrying 74 people, 64 of whom were purportedly Ukrainian POWs, in Russia's Belgorod region the day before. Meanwhile, ultra-nationalist Igor Girkin (known to most by his pseudonym Strelkov) chuckled as his four-year sentence for inciting extremism was read out in a Moscow courtroom. Strelkov was arrested in July 2023, after he disparaged President Vladimir Putin on his Telegram channel, describing him as a "nonenti-

ty" and calling for him to "transfer power to someone truly capable and responsible".

Strelkov played an integral role in the annexation of Crimea and commanding pro-Russian separatist militia in the Donbas in 2014. Outside Russia, he is best known for his presumed culpability in the downing of passenger flight MH17 over the occupied Donetsk region, killing 298 civilians. But Strelkov's recent treatment demonstrates that even after the death of Yevgeny Prigozhin, the Kremlin still fears the sting of ultra-nationalists as posing a potential political challenge to the regime two years into its war in Ukraine. First, there is the relative lenience of Strelkov's sentence. The conveniently broad extremism law, which dates back to 2002 and in practice is used against almost all of Putin's political opponents, can engender a small fine or a hefty prison sentence. Putin's most vociferous critic, Alexei Navalny, was sentenced to 19 years under this legislation.

Members of marginalized groups - like marginalized LGBTQ+ people - that do not necessarily present a direct threat to the regime's survival, but the Kremlin still sees to be hostile, are not immune from extremism charges. Given that Strelkov is a fanatic who openly called for the demise of the head of state, four years is a remarkably soft response.

Strelkov still wields considerable clout among Russia's ultra-patriot war bloggers. These "Z-bloggers", who are usually embedded in Russian units in Ukraine, have established themselves as a prominent group since Russia's full-scale invasion, with many of the most recognizable figures among them invited to the Kremlin in June 2023. They are useful for the Kremlin in projecting pro-war messag-

Lucy Birge

ing and encouraging Russians to enlist. But many are also sympathetic to Strelkov's critical appraisal of the Kremlin's prosecution of its war in Ukraine, which is regarded as being carried out with too soft a touch. Second, Strelkov's sentencing was announced on the same day as that of Darya Trepova, found guilty of the assassination of bank robber turned prominent Z-blogger, Vladlen Tatarsky (whose real name Maxim Fomin) at a café in St Petersburg on 2 April 2023. But unlike Strelkov's, Trepova's sentence was not notable for its leniency. Trepova, who claims she was duped into handing the blogger a bomb disguised as a statue, was sentenced to 27 years in jail. While the case is mired in much uncertainty, the fact that she was handed such a harsh sentence and that it was announced on the same day as Strelkov's was clearly

designed to drown out the news of Strelkov's sentencing and appease the Z-bloggers by signaling that their security is of paramount importance to the regime.

On the day of Strelkov's sentencing, another prominent Z-blogger, Boris Rozhin criticized Strelkov's sentencing, arguing that it was wrong that someone who played such a critical role in the 2014 seizure of the Donbas was in prison "instead of being on the front lines." However, just a few days after Avdiivka fell to Russian forces on 17 Feb. 2024, well-established Z-blogger Andrey "Murz" Morozov was reported to have died by suicide. Morozov, a close associate of Strelkov, said that the Russian Armed Forces had lost 16,000 troops in its push for Avdiivka. The revelation was met with fierce criticism from Kremlin-aligned media actors such as Vladimir Solovoyov.

Not long after, Morozov, a

close associate of Strelkov, published a series of posts preannouncing his suicide, alongside claims he had been pressured to delete the offending post. Morozov's fate demonstrates the hazy parameters in which Z-bloggers operate. Though some contained criticism of the regime's execution of its war in Ukraine is clearly permitted, such blatant estimations of the price of the war are not. Nor as Strelkov's case signifies, is a direct critique of the Russian president.

The treatment of Strelkov seems to suggest that he and his supporters could serve an important function for a Kremlin at war, which may or may not prove useful at a later stage. But at least for now, the ideological threat posed by his particular form of ultra-nationalism poses too much of a risk. The regime fears nothing more than a challenge from zealots who are adept at mobilizing their broad base of followers.

The Moscow Times

US' Gaza floating port proposal highlights its failures

Mohamed Chebaro

No ceasefire, no humanitarian truce and not enough aid is trickling through to feed the starving Palestinians. The Israeli war on Gaza continues to show no signs of abating, even for a humanitarian pause on the occasion of the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

The UN and aid groups say only a fraction of the supplies needed for Gaza's 2.4 million people have been allowed in since Israel placed the narrow Mediterranean Strip under near-total siege following the Oct. 7 attacks by Hamas inside Israel that left more than 1,200 mainly civilian Israelis dead and saw more than 250 taken hostage. The reprisal war by Israel has killed more than 30,000 Palestinians, mainly women and children.

Weeks of talks involving the US, Qatar and Egypt failed to yield a ceasefire, truce or any hostage exchange ahead of the start of Ramadan. And while both sides continue their blame game for the failure to reach a deal, the civilians of Gaza are likely to continue to barely exist. If they survive the relentless Israeli bombardments, they might not survive the lack of food and medicine. The UN and many aid groups say that the supplies reaching Gaza by truck from Egypt or by airdrops make up hardly 20 percent of what Gazans need on a daily basis. One can only hope that the newly announced US humanitarian sea bridge will be able to deliver the vital supplies

needed to save lives in Gaza.

But I am skeptical. Sadly, I believe that President Joe Biden's plan for the US military to build a floating port to ferry badly needed aid to Gaza, even if it were to be up and running tomorrow, exposes the limits of American power and its failure to influence one of its closest allies. This is despite Israel having been reliant on the US' unwavering support for its survival for more than 75 years.

The plan to build a floating harbor is a grand project to prove wrong those who accuse the US administration of disregarding the unfolding human tragedy in Gaza and to show that Biden cares for the plight of Palestinian civilians, exactly like the millions around the world who are protesting and calling for an end to the war. Cynically speaking, however, one cannot also help but read between the lines and see the waning US foreign influence and its limits vis a vis one of its closest allies. In an election year, Biden is unlikely to water down America's backing for Israel, as many in the Arab and Muslim worlds would wish. This humanitarian sea bridge seems to be a tool to make the Israeli leadership understand that patience is wearing thin, even among its allies.

From the outside, the sea bridge, like the airdrops of humanitarian supplies over Gaza, points to the US army's long tradition of humanitarian relief operations, such as the one undertaken as early as 1949

known as the Berlin Airlift and the one in Somalia in the summer of 1992 to save Somalis from starvation. But the Gaza sea bridge is a costly choice, taken by a desperate power, especially as the Strip is not far from Israeli ports or Egyptian land access. However, the relentless Israeli military operations in and around Gaza, in addition to the Israeli checks on goods prior to allowing them in and the breakdown of any system to safely distribute the aid inside Gaza, are likely to undermine the efficiency of even the most ambitious plans. What the US needs is for its ally Israel to heed its calls that enough is enough. Despite the initial outpouring of support from Biden and other Western leaders in the aftermath of the Oct. 7 attacks, as the Israeli war on Gaza has unfolded, leaving thousands of women and children dead, Israel's allies have slowly started to express their disquiet, initially behind closed doors. And the sea bridge is maybe the clearest manifestation of the breakdown of relations due to Israeli intransigence.

There has never been any love that has bound Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Biden. And despite Biden continuously urging Netanyahu to apply restraint, it was never likely that the US president would back up his veiled threats to the Israeli leadership with action. The US administration's welcome for de facto Israeli deputy prime minister

Benny Gantz in Washington last week is likely to have irked Netanyahu. But he knows that America is unlikely to take any bolder steps, such as halting arms shipments or abstaining from using its veto in defense of Israel at the UN Security Council, even if Washington's "red line" warning against an invasion of Rafah in southern Gaza is flouted. This red line concerning Rafah, just like the one on Syria's use of chemical weapons in 2012-2013, is likely to be crossed. This is what has lost Washington many friends in the Middle East and across the globe and is likely to further its position as a superpower whose stature and reputation is being eroded, this time by an ally rather than a foe. Many in the region believe that Washington only has itself to blame for its failure to calibrate an unambiguous stance that reflects the positive role a superpower should play, even within the confines of the thinking that the US is "never going to leave Israel," as Biden said in an interview this week.

One last word though. Maybe the US is failing as a superpower in Gaza and before that in Syria and possibly elsewhere, but at least it is still a power that makes some efforts, even if they fail. The question is, what are the other ascending powers of this world doing for peace and stability, other than uttering empty rhetoric and enjoying the disruptor or critical observer's role? Maybe it is time for all of them to call and work for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza.

World must recommit to fight against Islamophobia

AMID the growing challenges of division and prejudice, International Day to Combat Islamophobia emerges as a vital catalyst for global unity and understanding. Designated by the UN in 2022, this day, observed worldwide annually on March 15, holds profound significance.

It commemorates the anniversary of the Christchurch mosque shootings, a tragic event that claimed the lives of 51 innocent individuals during Friday prayers. As we mark this solemn occasion, it is important to reflect on the devastating consequences of hate and intolerance and recommit ourselves to combating Islamophobia in all its forms.

This important day compels us to confront the harsh reality that Islamophobia is not merely a distant concern but a stark and present threat to individuals and communities around the world. By honoring the victims and survivors of the Christchurch massacre, we ought to acknowledge their suffering and affirm our collective responsibility to stand against bigotry and prejudice. Islamophobia, like all forms of discrimination, is rooted in ignorance and fear. It thrives on stereotypes, misinformation and dehumanization. In addition, it manifests itself in overt acts of violence, such as the Christchurch shootings, as well as in subtler forms of prejudice and discrimination that permeate our societies. From discriminatory policies and practices to everyday acts of microaggression, Islamophobia perpetuates a climate of hostility and exclusion that undermines the fundamental principles of equality and justice.

In order to combat Islamophobia effectively, we must first recognize it for what it is: a violation of human rights and a threat to social cohesion and peace. It is not only an attack on individuals and communities, it is also an assault on the values of pluralism, diversity and tolerance that lie at the heart of our shared humanity. As such, addressing Islamophobia requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach that encompasses legal, social and educational measures aimed at challenging stereotypes, promoting

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

understanding and fostering dialogue.

To begin with, education plays a crucial role in combating Islamophobia by dispelling myths and fostering empathy and respect for cultural and religious diversity. By integrating comprehensive education about Islam and Muslim communities into school curricula, we can equip future generations with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate an increasingly diverse world with openness and acceptance. In addition, initiatives that actively foster interfaith dialogue and cooperation play a pivotal role in fostering more inclusive and harmonious societies. By providing platforms for individuals of diverse faiths and beliefs to come together, engage in meaningful conversations and collaborate on shared goals, these initiatives not only bridge divides but also cultivate empathy, mutual understanding and respect.

Through facilitated discussions, joint projects and cultural exchanges, participants have the opportunity to challenge stereotypes, dispel misconceptions and build genuine connections based on shared values and aspirations. Moreover, interfaith initiatives often serve as catalysts for broader social change, inspiring communities to work together toward common objectives such as social justice, environmental sustainability and peace-building. By embracing the rich diversity of religious traditions and perspectives, these initiatives contribute to the creation of more cohesive and resilient societies, in which all individuals are valued and respected regardless of their faith or background.

Legislation and policy measures are also essential tools in the fight against Islamophobia. Governments must enact and enforce laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion and ensure equal rights and opportunities for all individuals. Authorities must also take swift and decisive action to investigate and prosecute hate crimes and acts of violence motivated by Islamophobia, sending a clear message that such behavior will not be tolerated in any civilized society. At the same time, combating Islamophobia requires

collective action at the grassroots level. Communities must come together to challenge stereotypes, confront prejudice and promote inclusivity and solidarity. Through local initiatives such as community outreach programs, cultural exchanges and interfaith dialogue, individuals can build bridges across divides and foster a sense of belonging and mutual respect among people of diverse backgrounds.

More fundamentally, combating Islamophobia also necessitates addressing the structural inequalities and systemic injustices that perpetuate discrimination and marginalization. Economic disparities, social exclusion and political marginalization exacerbate the vulnerability of Muslim communities to discrimination and violence. Therefore, efforts to combat Islamophobia must be accompanied by broader efforts to address the root causes of inequality and injustice and to create inclusive societies where all individuals can thrive. Finally, on this International Day to Combat Islamophobia, let us honor the memory of the victims of the Christchurch mosque shootings by renewing our commitment to combat hate and intolerance in all its forms. Also, let us stand in solidarity with Muslim communities around the world and reaffirm our shared humanity and commitment to justice and equality. Together, we can build a world where diversity is celebrated, differences are respected and all individuals can live free from fear and discrimination.

In conclusion, International Day to Combat Islamophobia serves as a powerful reminder of the urgent need to confront bigotry and prejudice and to build a world where all individuals are treated with dignity and respect.

By commemorating this day, we should recommit ourselves to the fight against Islamophobia in all its manifestations. Through education, legislation, grassroots action and solidarity, we can create a more just and inclusive world for future generations. Therefore, let us seize this opportunity to stand together in solidarity and build a future free from fear and discrimination.

Trump's praise of dictators tells us all we need to know

VLADIMIR Putin, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Viktor Orban, Adolf Hitler, Xi Jinping, Kim Jong-un, Saddam Hussein: What do they have in common? All of these authoritarians have reportedly drawn praise from former US president - and now GOP presidential nominee - Donald Trump, who has promised Americans that he, too, will be a dictator "on Day One" of his time in office.

This is not just bluster. As a new book by CNN anchor and national security correspondent Jim Sciutto reminds us, Trump allegedly believes that even the most murderous dictators, such as Hitler, did good things. According to one of Trump's former chiefs of staff, Trump had Hitler in mind as an example of leadership to emulate during his time in the White House, including telling the military what to do as commander in chief. Given the stakes for our democracy in the 2024 election, it's worth considering why Trump continually praises dictators and who he is trying to reach with this kind of talk. Some of it is no doubt Trump airing his fantasies of the kind of authority he could exert as president. He praises Hitler, Chinese leader Xi, Russian President Putin and others because of their absolute power, not in spite of it. He repeats these leaders' cult of personality propaganda in presenting them as so strong and feared that it is useless to resist them.

Thus Xi, in Trump's telling, is "strong like granite. He runs 1.4 billion people with an iron hand." And Putin is a "genius" for "taking over a country - really a vast, vast location, a great piece of land with a lot of people, and just walking in." Trump declared days after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as though the fierce Ukrainian resistance did not exist. Foreign autocrats are surely the targets of such compliments,

Ruth Ben-Ghiat

especially those whom Trump sees as useful to his political or personal fortunes. The most obvious case is Russia, given Kremlin interference in the 2016 and 2020 elections. And the stream of adulation directed at Xi is likely not unrelated to the benefits Trump received from "doing services," as he put it, for the Chinese government during his presidency. Trump-owned properties took in over \$5 million from Chinese government-allied entities, per House Democrats.

But Americans are the most important audience for the stream of praise he directs to autocrats. Trump's repeated elevation of dictators as models of leadership should be understood as part of a re-education strategy: conditioning Americans to see authoritarianism as a superior form of government to democracy. That is likely why he is explicitly making strongman rule his brand, telling Americans it is in their interest to allow him to save them from the supposed chaos and crime of democracy and give them an orderly authoritarian world under his control. Propaganda is not just about getting people to believe this or that lie - say, that he won the 2020 election - but changing the way people think and feel and the associations they make when they hear certain words. Think of how Hitler's relentless speeches and writings got Germans to associate "Jew" with disease and depravity to the point of making him popular for ostensibly saving Germany by persecuting Jews. This is what Trump is doing with authoritarians. Trump uses his rallies and other public occasions to sell strongman rule to his followers, so Americans begin to see autocrats as positive and glamorous figures ("There's nobody in Hollywood that could play the role of President Xi," he gushed at a

2023 town hall in Iowa) who are doing good for their people and the world. If Trump mentions these autocrats' repression at all, it is to justify it, as when he lauded former Iraqi dictator Hussein in 2016 for being "good" at killing terrorists, or praised Turkish president Erdogan, introducing him in 2017 as "a friend of mine" who is "getting very high marks" for governing "very, very strongly." At the time of this remark, Turkey was in a state of emergency, including the arrests of over 47,000 Turks, many of them civilians, as part of a government crackdown after the 2016 military coup against him.

Trump even presents leaders who are heads of failing rogue states, like North Korea's Kim, as inspirational. "We fell in love," said Trump of his relationship with Kim, whose state has reportedly earned 50% of its income from cybercrime in recent years. American voters should take Trump's enthusiasm for autocrats seriously. He is previewing the kind of leadership he will pursue if he returns to the White House and doing his best to re-educate Americans to tolerate - or worse, even desire - an approach to governance that, wherever it has unfolded, has created despair and division - and often placed nations on a path to destruction, as with Germany under Hitler's guide. Wherever they fall on the political spectrum, autocrats are united in their disregard for human rights and human dignity and their attempt to persuade people that it is in their interests to support governments that take their rights away. This seems to be Trump's project as well. The former president may be telling us that he will only be a dictator for one day, but no authoritarian has ever relinquished power once he gains it and the strongmen he exalts have all been in power for many years.

CNN

Britain's electoral system is going to crush the Reform party insurgency

Philip Johnstone

THERE is a touch of Howard Beale about Lee Anderson. Beale was the character played by Peter Finch in the film *Network* who encouraged his viewers to open their windows and shout into the street: "I'm as mad as hell and I'm not going to take this anymore." "We all know things are bad - worse than bad - they're crazy," rants Beale. "I don't know what to do about the depression and the inflation and the Russians and the crime in the street. All I know is that first, you've got to get mad."

Since the Ashfield MP, once a Labour member, then Tory and now Reform, has his own show on GB News, I'm only surprised we aren't hearing the pent-up anger of the nation reverberating through the land. "I want my country back," Mr Anderson declared in a Bealesque moment on Monday. Maybe we could all bellow it from our windows. Maybe we should all get mad. In fact, many of us already are.

The polls showing Labour miles ahead and the Conservatives facing an extinction level event later this year disguises one key factor - the huge number of don't knows and undecideds who are wondering whether they can bring themselves to vote at all. Never before have I heard so many friends and colleagues say they may sit on their hands come the election. Most are Conservatives who have had it with the party but would never back Labour and think voting Reform is a waste of time. They have good reason to be sceptical. Insurgent parties are doing well across Europe where similar anger with the establishment has taken hold. In Italy, Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy is

in government; in the Netherlands, Geert Wilders has led his Party for Freedom into a commanding position, even if it is yet to form an administration after two months of talks; in Germany, the AfD has emerged as the main party in the east and has national support of up to 20 per cent. The latest insurgent party to perform well is Chega in Portugal, which won 18 per cent of the vote and 48 seats in last weekend's elections. Here, Reform could secure 18 per cent of the vote this autumn and win no seats.

The fundamental difference, of course, is that proportional representation (PR) operates in all these other countries, while the British system remains first-past-the-post, at least for national elections. One reason why more people are unlikely to vote is that they think it is a waste of time because an election will not bring about the result and policies they wish to see. If they vote Reform and thereby deny the Conservatives dozens of seats, then Labour wins a landslide. What would be the point of that for people who want the Tories to move further to the Right and do more about immigration, cut taxes and curb spending? Using an election to deliver a punishment beating to a party that has failed to live up to its promises is ultimately self-defeating if an even worse government takes over as a result. Reform is talking about winning more votes than the Conservatives and transplanting them as the main party of the Right, but it is hard to imagine that happening.

It didn't happen with Ukip and the party did run the Tories close, boosted by the profile it gained from doing

so well in European elections - under PR. Moreover, when Douglas Carswell and Mark Reckless defected from the Conservatives in 2014, they resigned their seats and contested by-elections, which they won. Arguably, that ensured David Cameron put the promise to hold a referendum on EU membership into the Tory manifesto for the 2015 general election. Once the decision to leave was made (even if it did take years to fulfil) Ukip's raison d'être was essentially over; but it had demonstrated the potential for a new party of the Right with national reach, hence its re-emergence as Reform.

The big disappointment with the Anderson defection is that he did not resign and fight a by-election. This was even more surprising since he had previously been a champion of just such a requirement for anyone switching parties. A by-election in Ashfield would have tested the party's support, which has only been around 10 per cent in other contests recently. With a local candidate, it is not inconceivable that Reform might have won and given it the profile it still lacks, not least with Nigel Farage staying in the background. Mr Anderson said it was too close to a general election to foist a contest on his constituents, but that sounded like an admission of defeat. By-elections in election years can have a big impact - Labour's narrow win in Darlington in 1983 helped Michael Foot stay on as Opposition leader, which proved disastrous for the party at the national poll held just a few weeks later.

The by-elections fought by Roy

Jenkins and Shirley Williams in 1981 put the breakaway SDP on the map and triggered an exodus from the Labour Party, with some 30 defections. Not that it did them any good, mind you. At the 1983 general election, the SDP/Liberal Alliance secured 25 per cent of the vote and won 23 seats. Labour notched up just 27 per cent yet bagged 209 seats. If ever there was an argument for proportional representation along continental lines, there it was. Yet it has never been adopted. Tony Blair led Paddy Ashdown a merry dance before the 1997 election by hinting at his support for PR. When he won a majority of 170, his enthusiasm evaporated. The Tory failure to win outright in 2010 meant a Coalition deal with the Lib Dems, the price of which was a referendum on voting reform. But the Alternative Vote is not PR and the country could not get excited at the prospect, with 68 per cent opposed on a 42 per cent turn-out.

The Labour conference voted for PR in 2022, in what supporters called "a seismic shift towards a fair voting system", only for Sir Keir Starmer to shoot it down. It won't be in the party's election manifesto. The trouble with PR is that it can cause chaotic, as opposed to merely incompetent, government. Moreover, our major parties are themselves coalitions, with the Right sometimes dominating the Tories and the Left Labour, as during the Foot and Corbyn years. If disgruntled Tories tempted to support Reform really want a new movement, then they need to take control of the Conservative Party as Thatcher did and shift its political axis once more. Just shouting out of the window will get them nowhere.

The Telegraph

In alignment

Vladimir Norov

Ukraine, the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route has every chance of becoming the largest global transport route.

At the end of 2021, the European Union approved a new international initiative called the Global Gateway. According to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, it represents a new global "alternative" to Chinese investment. At the Investors Forum for EU-Central Asia Transport Connectivity launched on Jan 29 in Brussels, the European Investment Bank signed memorandums of understanding on co-financing projects with Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan and the Development Bank of Kazakhstan worth in total 1.47 billion euros (\$1.6 billion). However, it is worth noticing that within competition there are also areas of cooperation and interaction between parties to develop transport infrastructure and improve access to markets. The conjunction of the BRI with the Global Gateway would create the necessary conditions for economic growth and the sustainable development of the entire Eurasia, especially Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said at a news conference following the third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in October 2023 that the BRI and the Global Gateway strategy could be aligned to leverage their respective strengths and create synergies to help developing countries accelerate infrastructure development.

Despite the EU's declared interest in expanding transport corridors for the integration of Central Asia, there is an insufficient level of investment in infrastructure projects in the region. Within the

framework of the forum in Brussels, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development signed a memorandum of understanding with Kazakhstan to allocate 1.5 billion euros to projects already under preparation for the comprehensive development of transport communications in the Central Asian region. But, Minister of Transport of Kazakhstan Marat Karabayev emphasized that the implementation of large infrastructure projects will require at least 40 billion euros. The Global Gateway strategy was only launched in 2021 and it is planned to mobilize up to 300 billion euros by 2027. Yet of this amount, only 10 billion euros are allocated for Central Asian countries. Over the past 10 years, EU member states have invested more than \$121.3 billion in Central Asia, more than 40 percent of the total foreign direct investment in the region.

The bulk of EU countries' FDI went to Kazakhstan, and more than 50 percent of this FDI went to the mining industry, in particular oil and gas production. Transport and warehousing accounted for only 5 percent. The BRI has been implemented since 2013 and has stimulated \$1 trillion investment over 10 years. By 2019, China had implemented 261 projects in Central Asia with a total value of \$136 billion. Most of these investments were aimed at creating or improving infrastructure for transporting goods and cargo and developing natural resources. China remains the main investor in transport and logistics infrastructure in Central Asia. In order to make rational use of allocated financial resources for the development of the infrastructure of the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, it is necessary to ensure appropriate coordination and cooperation in

the implementation of projects within the BRI and Global Gateway in Central Asia. For example, there is already the first implemented joint project between the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank - the construction in 2016 of a highway connecting Dushanbe in Tajikistan with the Uzbek border. The two banks have committed \$27.5 million each. Central Asia and the South Caucasus see China and the EU as main trading partners, mainly supplying them with fossil fuels, and their exports are less diversified. To promote the diversification of the economies of Central Asia and the South Caucasus, China and the EU have enormous potential for mutually beneficial cooperation in implementing joint projects in these regions in such sectors as the digital economy, electric vehicles, energy and water saving technologies, construction, light and chemical industries, and the construction of smart cities and smart agriculture. They can also strengthen cooperation in the implementation of digital trade documents and simplification of freight transport procedures.

China and the EU, as world leaders in low-carbon and green development, can build an open and cooperative green technology cooperation chain along the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route to reduce the cost of renewable energy for developing countries, including those in Central Asia and South Caucasus. China and the EU need to hold in-depth discussions and strive for consensus on the conjunction of the BRI and the Global Gateway in order to achieve stability and sustainable development in Eurasia and in particular in Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

The China Daily



Weekly inflation up by 1.35 pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed an increase of 1.35 per cent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on March 14, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 327.21 points as compared to 322.86 points during the past week.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 32.89 per cent.

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

The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs. 17,732, increased by 0.91 per cent and went up to 320.06 points from last week's 317.18 points.

The SPI for consumption groups from Rs. 17,732-22,888, Rs. 22,889-29,517, Rs. 29,518-44,175 and above Rs. 44,175, increased by 0.86 percent, 1.25 percent, 1.41 and 1.55 percent respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 18 (35.29%) items increased, 10 (19.61%) items decreased and 23 (45.10%)

items remained stable.

The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week basis included cooking oil 5 litre (1.08%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (1.07%), wheat flour (0.95%), sugar (0.64%), gur (0.57%), rice basmati broken (0.50%), pulse masoor (0.17%) and pulse mash (0.15%).

The items that recorded an increase in their prices included tomatoes (21.96%), bananas (21.76%), eggs (7.15%), onions (5.57%), LPG (4.45%), garlic (3.62%), mutton (1.74%), beef (1.53%), chicken (1.40%), georgette (1.04%), shirting (1.01%) and long cloth (0.94%). On Year-on-Year

basis, the commodities that witnessed decrease included cooking oil 5 litre (21.33%), vegetable ghee 1 kg (19.12%), vegetable ghee 2.5 kg (17.89%), mustard oil (15.26%), bananas (3.94%), diesel (1.88%) and cigarettes (0.05%).

The commodities which recorded an increase in their average prices on year-on-year basis included gas charges for q1 (570%), tomatoes (185.68%), onions (90.27%), chillies powder (81.74%), garlic (60.13%), gents sponge chappal (58.05%), gents sandal (53.37%), wheat flour (51.91%), gur (41.32%), sugar (37.09%), salt powder (34.71%) and energy saver.

LIPTON's pioneering initiative: An agreement signed with Patients' Aid Foundation

F.P. Report

KARACHI: LIPTON Teas & Infusions Pakistan takes a monumental step toward enhancing women's healthcare in Pakistan by formalizing a partnership with the Patients' Aid Foundation-JPMC. This collaboration is propelled by a commitment to empower women's health during the holy month of Ramzan and beyond.

In a significant move, LIPTON signed Agreement with Patients' Aid pledging a donation of PKR 10 million. This contribution will be directed towards the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) Women's Wing, specifically providing free quality childbirth facilities for women in need.

Through this project, 10,000 women from Karachi, interior Sindh and rural Balochistan will receive free quality healthcare, focused on pre and post-natal care.

The project will also focus on enhancing service quality for marginalized



women across various crucial aspects of maternity and delivery.

This initiative underscores LIPTON's commitment to creating value towards the community we operate in. Farheen Salman, President of LIPTON BSPAN & GM Pakistan, expressed her enthusiasm about the collaboration, "We believe that every woman deserves access to quality healthcare, and our partnership with Patients'

Aid is a testament to that commitment. By contributing to the JPMC Women's Wing, we aim to make a lasting impact on the lives of thousands of women, ensuring they receive the care they deserve during one of the most crucial moments in their lives."

Commenting on this partnership, Mushtaq Chappra, Chairman of Patients' Aid Foundation said, "Patients' Aid is dedicated to enabling free quality

healthcare to twelve thousand patients that walk through the gates of JPMC every day, and our collaboration with LIPTON strengthens our resolve. This partnership will significantly enhance our efforts in delivering quality childbirth facilities to marginalized women coming to Jinnah Hospital (JPMC). Together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who need it the most."

Engro Fertilizers engages dealers for urea price enforcement

F.P. Report

KARACHI: In a bid to support the Government's efforts to ensure urea availability at official prices, Engro Fertilizers has urged its dealers to comply with company guidelines on pricing and strictly ensure product availability to the farmers.

To enforce guidelines of selling Urea at MRP, Engro Fertilizers hosted dealer conferences in Lahore, Multan and Hyderabad. Addressing the event participants, Engro Fertilizers VP Marketing Atif Muhammad Ali commented that "Engro Fertilizers has always adhered to highest standard of integrity and holds the same expectations

from its dealers. To support the prosperity of farmers, Engro dealers must ensure urea availability at official prices. Further, Engro Fertilizers has not increased the selling price of imported urea to facilitate the Government in providing support to farmers."

At the conference, the dealers were also updated on the recent gas price hike and the disparity of gas prices that exists among different fertilizer players. Feed stock gas prices for fertilizer manufacturers on SNGPL and SSGC network, which produce 60% of the total capacity, have increased from PKR 580/mmbtu to PKR 1,597/mmbtu. On the other

hand, the remaining fertilizer manufacturers on the Mari network, that produce 40% of total capacity, are still on the subsidized price of PKR 580/mmbtu.

As a result of this discriminatory gas tariff, price distortion has been created in the market with multiple urea prices existing in the market based on different gas input costs for the fertilizer manufacturers. This price distortion has provided the middleman an opportunity to earn excessive profits of PKR 80 - 100 billion.

All Pakistan Fertilizer Dealer Association Parton in Chief Mr. Ghulam Ahmed on behalf of fertilizer dealers shared that "It

is in the country's wider interest that a uniform gas price should be set for all fertilizer manufacturers. This will allow a single urea price to prevail, end market speculations and normalize the urea prices."

By equalizing gas price for all fertilizer manufacturers, the government can help stabilize urea prices for the farmers and earn PKR 80 - 100 billion in revenues that would otherwise be pocketed by the middlemen. This can further be used by the provincial government to issue direct subsidies on fertilizer to farmers or development of modern farming practices to uplift the overall agricultural productivity.

IMARAT Builders Mall welcomes ALCO Pakistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: IMARAT Builders Mall, the leading one-stop destination for all construction materials and services, announced a transformative partnership with ALCO Pakistan, the nation's largest manufacturer of architectural aluminum products with a 48-year legacy of innovation and quality. This collaboration aims to bring Alcoa's innovative and high-quality aluminum solutions to IMARAT Builders Mall, setting new benchmarks in architectural design and sustainability.

The historic agreement was signed at the IMARAT head office in Islamabad, with Chairman of IMARAT, Shafiq Akbar, and CEO of Alcoa Pakistan, Waheed Ahmed, leading the proceedings. Alcoa Pakistan's leadership team, including Directors Ammar Waheed and Malik Naeem Khan, were also present, underscoring the partnership's significance.



Shafiq Akbar, Chairman of the IMARAT Group, expressed his confidence in the partnership's potential: "We are proud to welcome ALCO Pakistan, a true pioneer in the aluminum industry, to the IMARAT Builders Mall family. Their commitment to quality, innovation, and a diverse product portfolio perfectly aligns with our vision of providing a comprehensive and future-proof construction experience. This partnership will undoubtedly unlock exciting possibilities for our customers seeking advanced and sustainable building solutions."

Echoing the enthusiasm,

Alco Pakistan's CEO, Waheed Ahmed, said, "We are thrilled to join forces with IMARAT, a respected leader in the real estate sector. This partnership aligns with our shared vision of innovation, enhancing Pakistan's architectural standards. By combining our strengths, we can significantly expand our reach and cater to a wider audience. This partnership opens doors for us to showcase our latest innovations, including skylights, pleated blinds windows, and structural glazed systems, to a broader customer base."

Founded in 1976, Alcoa Pakistan has established itself as a trailblazer in the

aluminum industry, offering a wide array of products from windows and doors to curtain walls and customized projects. With a relentless commitment to research and development, Alcoa has consistently led the market in introducing state-of-the-art solutions that cater to the evolving needs of modern construction.



RAWALPINDI: Customers busy in purchasing dates for Iftar during the holy month if Ramazan at Raja Bazaar market.

SBP to announce monetary policy on March 18

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) will announce monetary policy on Monday March 18, 2024.

According to a statement issued here on Friday, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of SBP will meet on March 18 to decide about the Monetary Policy. The MPC will review the overall economic and financial situation, major indicators, data of different sectors, and major developments taken place since the announcement of the previous monetary policy. Later on, SBP will issue the Monetary Policy Statement through a press release on the same day.

The MPC of the central bank, in its meeting held on January 29, 2024, decided to maintain the policy rate at 22 percent while emphasizing on continued tight monetary policy stance and fiscal consolidation. The MPC had anticipated continuity of the agriculture sector led to moderate economic recovery in fiscal year 2023-24 while momentum in the industrial sector was expected to pick up from the second half of FY24.

Zong 4G and JS Zindigi partner up to facilitate users

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Zong 4G, Pakistan's leading mobile network operator, and JS Zindigi, a leading digital financial services provider, announced a lucrative partnership to offer Banking-as-a-Service (BaaS) within the My Zong App (MZA). The signing ceremony took place on March 13th, 2024, at Zong 4G headquarters, signed by CFO Zong 4G Mr. Huang Zhidong and CEO JS Zindigi Mr. Numan Azhar.

JS Zindigi is a digital financial services provider in Pakistan, offering a comprehensive suite of mobile wallet solutions and digital banking services. Based on a dedicated team empowered by the latest technology, upholding the highest ethical standards seeking to create value for their stakeholders and a responsible contribution to society. This collaboration brings greater financial convenience to Zong 4G's broad user base. My Zong App users can now open JS Zindigi wallet accounts directly within the app, enabling them to avail a range of JS Zindigi's digital financial services. This integration will allow users to effortlessly top-up their mobile accounts, settle postpaid bills and to purchase Zong 4G data bundles.

"This partnership aligns perfectly with our vision of offering a comprehensive digital ecosystem to our users," remarked Mr. Ammar Ahmad, Head of Marketing at Zong 4G.

PSX loses 247 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Friday, losing 247.80 points, a negative change of 0.38 percent, closing at 64,816.47 points against 65,064.27 points the previous trading day.

A total of 259,373,019 shares valuing Rs 10,120 billion were traded during the day as compared to

315,247,601 shares valuing Rs 10,487 billion the last day. Some 322 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 113 of them recorded gains and 192 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 17 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Hasco Petrol with 56,955,500 shares at Rs.8.56 per share, Cnergyco PK with

19,638,675 shares with 4.94 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 16,548,457 shares at Rs1.34 per share. Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 100.00 per share price, closing at Rs 21,500.00, whereas the runner-up was Indus Motor Company Limited with a Rs.21.86 rise in its per share price to Rs1,556.48.

Advancing sustainable supply chains through finance



Ali Ashar Jaffri

Green banking can play a pivotal role in fostering sustainable practices within the supply chain by integrating environmental criteria into financial decisions.

This approach incentivizes eco-friendly initiatives and ensures that funds are directed towards businesses committed to reducing their carbon footprint. Offering preferential loans to companies can encourage adoption of green technologies or sustainable supply chain practices. Not only does it benefit the environment, but it also aligns with the growing consumer demand for eco-conscious products. Green banking facilitates a sustainable supply chain through assessing environmental impact, funding sustainable projects and monitoring compliance.

The interconnected steps are highlighted in a flow-chart, emphasizing transparency and accountability. Encouraging the uptake of sustainability through green loans, while also integrating

environmental risk assessments to mitigates threats, foster a more sustainable approach. Technology enhances traceability, continuous improvement aligns with evolving environmental standards and ultimately shaping a more responsible global supply chain.

Banking sector plays a vital role in channeling funds toward green projects. According to S&P Global Rating Report Sustainability Insights, sustainable bond issuance will approach \$1 trillion in 2024. This underscores the financial industry's commitment to sustainability. Banks like the European Investment Bank (EIB) have allocated significant funds to climate action projects, positively impacting various supply chains. When examining the supply chain market, it can be observed that, suppliers meeting sustainability demands are positioned to expand their enterprises.

However, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), constituting 90% of businesses globally, often lack the financial means and expertise to bolster their social and environmental practices. By extending support to these SMEs, financial institutions tap into a lucrative market niche while catalyzing positive environmental and social impact.

Mounting pressure from investors and regulators compels companies to enhance transparency and disclose their supply chain practices. This underscores the significance of sustainability

efforts, with initiatives like ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) investing gaining traction. Companies' alignment with these trends helps financial institutions reduce financial risks, enhance operational efficiency and bolster their reputation. In conclusion it is evident that green banking serves as a strategic pathway towards greener future, enabling banks to actively engage in fostering sustainable supply chain. As businesses increasingly recognize the importance of

Assessment
Green Financing
Options
Supplier
Engagement
Performance
Metrics
Risk
Management
Technology
Integration
Continuous
Improvement
sustainable practices, integrating green banking principles into the supply chain becomes imperative for fostering a resilient and environmentally conscious global economy.

(In the loving memory of my late father Justice (R) Syed Ali Aslam Jaffri, whose teaching and guidance made me who I am today. Even though he may no longer be among us, his prayers and best wishes will continue to shine upon me.)

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is Published Through This Notice That I Naveed Islam S/o Sajawal Khan R/o Dhoke Akbar Khan Siab Kohat is The owner of Plot no192 Sector C-2 Size 10 Marla Phase(I)KDA Kohat Has Appointed has Mr Sarfraz Ahmed S/o Muhammad Akbar R/o Dhoke Muhammad Amin Siab Kohat Through (Special) Deed no 87 Bahi no 04 Dated 21/02/2024 which is Registered in The office Kohat of Tehsildar/Sub Registrar The Attorney Holder now wants to Transfer The Above Said Plot If Any Bank/Institution/Firm/ Person Has Any objection About The Transfer He Should Contact The Housing officer UADA Within 15 Days in Writing with Proofs otherwise Plot will be Transfer and no objection will Be Accepted (Director Urban Area KDA Kohat)

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Farhan Iqbal with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Shamsud Begum citizen number 1110185385544 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.
1.Sadaf Iqbal (Daughter)2.Scobia Muhammad Iqbal (Daughter)3.Bushra Muhammad Iqbal (Daughter)4.Faiza Iqbal (Daughter)5.Aasma Iqbal (Daughter)6.Muhammad Sohail Iqbal (Son)7.Farhan Iqbal (Son)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA BANNU-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Muslim Dad with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Waki Dad citizen number 1420141809709 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.
1.Shad Bibi (Spouse)2.Misri Khan (Son)3.Muslim Dad (Son)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA KARAK-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Rehman Hakim Khan with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Hakim Khan citizen number 1350365241203 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.
1.Seema Hakim Khan (Daughter)2.Sadia Bibi (Daughter)3.Mehnaz Bibi (Daughter)4.Fatima (Daughter)5.Sidra Bibi (Daughter)6.Basra (Spouse)7.Rehan Hakim Khan (Son)8.Noor Khan (Son)9.Awaiz (Son)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MANSEHRA-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Umar Farooq with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Khuzh Bat Khan citizen number 9040201063133 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.
1.Shamina Begum (Daughter)2.Shahina Begum (Daughter)3.Naseem Begum (Daughter)4.Zainab Begum (Daughter)5.Laila Begum (Daughter)6.Zulekha (Daughter)7.Sherina Begum (Spouse)8.Hafiz Gabil Rehman (Son)9.Muhammad Ibrahim (Son)10.Mohammad Ismail (Son)11.Mohammad Usman (Son)12.Umar Farooq (Son)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA KOHAT-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Mr. Bilal Riaz with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Ms. Sheeraz Bibi citizen number 1330267167784 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.
1.Wajha Riaz (Daughter)2.Talal Riaz (Son)3.Bilal Riaz (Son)4.Waleed Riaz (Son)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA HARIPUR-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Ms. Shahida Parveen with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Riaz Khan citizen number 3830165003971 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.
1.Shahida Parveen (Spouse)2.Haseen Ullah Khan (Son)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA HARIPUR-SFU

PUBLIC NOTICE
Application for issuance of Letter of Administration / Succession Certificate by Ms. Samina Bibi with regards to moveable & immovable assets of deceased Mr. Muhammad Siddique citizen number 1350348540355 has been received. Following are declared as legal heirs.
1.Asia Khanam (Spouse)2.Samina Bibi (Sister)
On the above application the objections of public at large are invited. Any aggrieved person may approach in person the undersigned for submission of objection (if any) within fourteen (14) days after publication of this notice.
INCHARGE SFU, NADRA MANSEHRA-SFU
PID(I)5548/23



In brief

Tenpin bowling gaining popularity

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Pakistan Tenpin Bowling Federation (PTBF) Ijaz ur Rehman believes tenpin bowling is gaining popularity in the country, therefore players need to be provided with maximum resources and facilities. There is no shortage of bowling talent in the country but there is a need to provide resources and maximum facilities to the players, he told APP. He said the game of tenpin bowling is gaining popularity in the country and students of educational institutions play this game with great enthusiasm. The federation organizes seven to nine tournaments in the country annually in which players participate in nine different categories, he said. He said the government and private sponsors should encourage the players. Educational institutions in the country can also play an important role in the development of sports, he said.

Rockball C'ship from March 22

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Rockball Federation (PRF) would hold the 7th Abdul Razzaq Arain Rockball Championship at Mini Sports Complex, Nazimabad, Karachi, from March 22. According to Secretary General PRF Uma Laila Kulsoom all preparations were ongoing vigorously for the championship. "Teams from all over Sindh are participating in the championship. The managers' meeting of teams will be held on March 19, in which draw of the championship will be revealed. The rules of the championship will also be informed in the meeting," she said. She said the championship would continue till March 23 and prizes will be distributed among winning players at the end of the mega event.

'Stop-clock' to become permanent

DUBAI (Agencies): A 'stop-clock' to regulate time taken between overs will become permanent in all white-ball internationals from the 2024 Men's T20 World Cup in June. Fielding teams must be ready to start a new over within 60 seconds of the last one ending and failing to do so three times will mean a five-run penalty. It follows a trial of the rule in men's limited-overs matches since December. The International Cricket Council (ICC) said around 20 minutes per one-day international were saved in the trial. The ICC board has made the stop-clock a mandatory playing condition for all ODI and T20 matches between full member nations from 1 June, when the Men's T20 World Cup in the USA and West Indies begins. The third umpire will determine when to start the clock, with a countdown from 60 to 10 to be displayed electronically in the ground. A fielding side failing to be ready to start the next over within that minute can receive two warnings, but any subsequent breaches will lead to the batting side being awarded five runs per breach. The clock can be cancelled after it is started if a new batter is coming to the crease between overs following a dismissal, if an official drinks interval is called, the umpires have approved on-field treatment of a batter or fielder and if time is lost for any circumstance beyond the control of the fielding side. The ICC also confirmed that the semi-finals and final of the 2024 Men's T20 World Cup will have reserve days.



KARACHI: Alex Hales was out for 23, Islamabad United vs Quetta Gladiators, Eliminator, Pakistan Super League.

PSL-9 edition matches ends in jam-packed Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium

Shahid Afridi

PESHAWAR: The 9th edition of the Pakistan Super League T20 Cricket matches comes to an end with a lot of sweet memories because of jam-packed fences and a lot of cheering responses from the crazy-turned twincities and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa crowd which turned up in large numbers for every match.

After the first two matches were hit by heavy down-pour, the rest of the matches were organized in a superficial way for which all out efforts had been utilized for a smooth conduct. Above all the like every year, Peshawar Zalmi management arranged a special bus service with food and drink facilities from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which is considered their home ground city, the city of flowers Peshawar.

Apart from providing a class facilities to the cricketers fans by Peshawar Zalmi, the Zalmi management also set up a big screen in the vicinity of Hayatabad Cricket Stadium wherein hundreds and thousands of spectators enjoyed watching the live match on the big screen facilities. Haa Haa Zalmi Zindabad, were the words on every one mouth.

After ending of matches



in Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium, the Test flight of Karachiites have been started with the rest of the matches including the final of the grand event, which truly showcasing the softer images of the country.

Everyone was saying the truth that now HBL-PSL-9th edition is not a cricketing event, rather it has become a known factor to the country's image, which once faced a long absence of not a single team ready to come and play because of the attack over the Sri Lankan team in Lahore.

Nevertheless, the HBL-PSL is a known factor of image building wherein more prominent players are now part of the six franchise teams competing well against each other with every match is worth watching, compelling the fans to come up on their

toes, especially in the last moment of the matches.

The players were delivering their hundreds percent because of facing the home crowd and that is why some good performances registered in the matches while there was Neil-biting finishing of the contests.

The extraordinary interest of spectators in Pindi Ground and especially the arrival of Peshawar Zalmi fans from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, turning the matches into a superficial contest with great responses from the sitting spectators.

A large number of fans used to go to Pindi Cricket Stadium to watch cricket matches and were very excited to see their favorite players in action, while at the same time, fans also demanded the

cricket government to hold matches in Peshawar.

Every time, there was a clear demand in the words and shouting that when they would be able to see cricketers players in

Arbab Niaz Cricket Stadium, a project, which has to be ready every in 2020 but till no date, 95 percent work completed and the rest of 5 percent should need to be completed for the fulfilment of the wishes of the Peshawarites to see their players at their home ground in action rather coming to twincities in a small number through Peshawar Zalmi Bus-Services.

"We are watching with great interest and if we will see international players live in action in Peshawar again, it will be even better and more joyful," the fans sitting in the buses said while shouting and criticizing the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for a delay in completion of work.

The interest and acceptance of foreign players in HBL-PSL is increasing day by day. It should be done because not only does HBL-PSL provide new talent, but it is a great way to show the positive face of Pakistan to the world in terms of the domestic economy.

'World-class' Salah ready to wreak havoc on Man Utd, says Klopp

LIVERPOOL (AFP): Jurgen Klopp believes Mohamed Salah is ready to wreak more damage on Manchester United in Sunday's FA Cup quarter-final as the Egyptian gets back up to speed after a lengthy hamstring injury.

Salah scored in his first start at club level since January 1 as the Reds thrashed Sparta Prague 6-1 on Thursday to reach the quarter-finals of the Europa League. With that goal, Salah became the first Liverpool player to score 20 or more goals in seven consecutive seasons.

The 31-year-old has scored more goals against United than any other club, netting 12 times in 13 meetings, and his return is a huge boost to Liverpool's quest for a potential quadruple. In Klopp's final season in charge, they have already lifted the League Cup and are also tied on

points with Arsenal at the top of the Premier League.

And the German is hoping his talisman can prove decisive in the closing months of the season. "Mo is pure quality and ask him what he likes the most about Manchester United," Klopp told his pre-match press conference on Friday.

"Just an exceptional guy, a world-class player and how we dealt with him is unbelievable. But it is better to have him around and on the pitch than just in the changing room."

"We could build him now with minutes and he is ready for Sunday."

By contrast, United are enduring a miserable second season under Erik ten Hag, with the FA Cup representing their final shot at a trophy.

But they are the only side to have stopped Liverpool scoring this season

in a 0-0 draw when the sides met at Anfield in December.

And despite Liverpool enjoying far greater success than their historic rivals during Klopp's time in charge, he has only won on two of his nine visits to Old Trafford.

"It's always a tough place to go for us," said Klopp. "It means everything to both fan groups, we know that. We try to show that on the pitch as well with the work rate but you never know, there are no guarantees."

Liverpool's injury crisis is slowly beginning to clear, with Ibrahima Konate and Ryan Gravenberch in contention to make their return on Sunday. But Alisson Becker, Trent Alexander-Arnold, Curtis Jones and Diogo Jota remain sidelined until at least after the upcoming international break.

World No. 2 on line in Alcaraz-Sinner semi-final showdown

INDIAN WELLS (AFP): Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz will have to find a way past "the best tennis player in the world right now" when takes on Jannik Sinner in the semi-finals of the Indian Wells Masters on Saturday.

The 20-year-old Spaniard, already a two-time Grand Slam champion, is chasing his first title since he vanquished Novak Djokovic at Wimbledon last July. Sinner, meanwhile, is on the ascendancy. The 22-year-old Italian is riding a 19-match winning streak that stretches back through last year's Davis Cup finals.

His perfect 16-0 record in 2024 includes a maiden Grand Slam title at the Australian Open and the title at Rotterdam last month. Not only can he end Alcaraz's hopes of a title defense, with a victory on Saturday Sinner would be assured of claiming the



world number 2 ranking for the first time come Monday. "Honestly, I don't know how I'm going to approach the match," said Alcaraz after his beating Alexander Zverev 6-3, 6-1 in the quarter-finals. "He's the best tennis player in the world right now, without a doubt. He's playing unbelievably. No losses this year."

"So, it's going to be a really difficult match. It's going to be a big challenge for me to see what my level is facing him," Alcaraz, who retired from his open-

ing match in Rio de Janeiro in February with a sprained ankle, has gone from strength to strength in Indian Wells, reaching the semis with the loss of just one set. Against Zverev -- in a quarter-final disrupted by a swarm of bees -- Alcaraz didn't face a break point.

Sinner, who fell to Alcaraz in last year's Indian Wells semis before beating him at the same stage in Miami, has been just as impressive in reaching the last four without dropping a set. "Carlos, it's always fun to

play with him," said Sinner, who has won their last two encounters to leads their career head-to-head 4-3.

"We are good friends off the court. On the court, we just try to give 100 percent. Especially when he's serving really well, it's tough to play against him. I'm looking forward to every challenge." The winner of the contest will take on either fourth-seeded Russian Daniil Medvedev or American Tommy Paul in Sunday's title match.

Medvedev was runner-up to Alcaraz last year at Indian Wells after years of struggling at the event. The 28-year-old saw of seventh-seeded Holger Rune 7-5, 6-4 in the quarter-finals and said he was feeling stronger than he did last year -- when he fought his way to the final despite twisting his ankle in the fourth round.

"Last year was crazy with the ankle," Medvedev said.

Imad inspires United to step up as Gladiators crash out of HBL PSL 9

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Islamabad United will join Peshawar Zalmi in the second eliminator after they beat Quetta Gladiators by 39 runs at National Bank Stadium, Karachi on Friday night. Islamabad scored 174-9 in the first innings, which they comfortably defended as Quetta was dismissed for just 135.

After opting to bat first, Martin Gupthill and Alex Hales put up a 51-run opening partnership, giving Islamabad a strong start. After seeing off Mohammad Amir's first over for just two runs, Gupthill hit three consecutive fours against Mohammad Wasim Jnr in the second over to get things going for the side.

Hales (23, 20b, 1x4, 2x6s) hit two maximums against Abrar Ahmed in the fifth over but was caught by Jason Roy off Akeal Hosein in the following over as Islamabad ended the powerplay at 51-1.

After the seventh and eighth overs passed quietly, Salman Ali Agha took charge against Wasim in the ninth over, hitting a four and six. By halfway mark, Islamabad stood at 93-1.

Saud Shakeel's introduction to the attack in the 12th over proved fruitful as he broke the 51-run partnership by dismissing Salman (31, 21b, 2x4s, 1x6). Shadab Khan walked in next and hit a quickfire 23 off 13, including one four and two sixes, before he fell to Abrar, with the scorecard reading 131-3 after 15 overs.

Gupthill got his 56th T20 half-century with a four on the fifth delivery of the 16th over. In the next over, Azam Khan (18, 6b, 1x4, 2x6s) hit two sixes and a four before Hosein avenged himself on the last ball.

Islamabad lost four wickets in the 18th and 19th overs; Faheem Ashraf was caught behind off Amir while Haider Ali was run out on the next delivery. Then, Imad Wasim was run out courtesy of an excellent aim at the striker's end by Wasim. Subsequently, Gupthill (56, 47b, 5x4s, 1x6) sent one straight to Roy fielding at long-on.

Amir, bowling the final over, castled Hunain Shah on the second delivery. Naseem Shah hit a six on the last ball of the innings to help Islamabad finish with a comfortable total of 174-9 after 20 overs.

Amir and Hosein had two wickets each while Saud, Wasim and Abrar picked up one each. In return, Quetta Gladiators had a horror start to the chase as they lost half their wickets inside of the powerplay, whilst in pursuit of 175-run target on the tricky Karachi pitch.

Imad, who opened the bowling for Islamabad, drew first blood with opening batter Saud caught behind for a five-ball duck on the final ball of the first over. On the second ball of the second over, Roy edged one to Faheem fielding at first slip and had to join his fellow opener back in the pavilion for just a run off

three deliveries.

Rilee Rossouw announced himself on the crease with a boundary on his first ball, facing Naseem. However, he could not maintain his stay at the crease and was caught by Haider at deep square in the third over, awarding Imad his second wicket of the day. Continuing his disappointing tally of scores at HBL PSL 9, the Quetta captain returned for a run-a-ball five.

Then, Imad returned to bowl his third over and continued his lethal attack on the Quetta batting lineup. Nafay (5, 10b, 1x4), the fifth batter in, fell on the second delivery as the substitute fielder Qasim Akram grabbed a brilliant catch at short mid-off.

On the subsequent ball, Evans was run out for a duck as trouble deepened for Quetta who found themselves 21-5 after five overs.

Omar Bin Yousuf, who had witnessed his team's batting collapse from the other end, was then joined in the middle by Hosein. The two batted together to add 52 runs off 34 balls, providing Quetta's innings with a sense of stability as the side managed to get to 67-5 at the halfway mark.

The sixth-wicket stand was cut short in the 11th over when Hosein (31, 18b, 2x4s, 3x6s) was run out after confusion in the middle. Subsequently, a languid 17-run seventh-wicket stand between Omar and Wasim (6, 10b) followed until the latter fell to Faheem in the 14th over.

Ramazan intra academy girls and boys hockey league begins

KARACHI (APP): Olympian Islahuddin and Dr. Muhammad Ali Shah Hockey Academy has started the IMHA Ramazan intra academy girls and boys Five A side hockey League.

Asma Ali Shah, Quratul Ain and Naem Haider inaugurated the league.

Team Mentor Olympian Syed Sameer Hussain, Olympian Kashif Jawad, Rashid Yaqoob, Syed Alay Hasan, Wasif Raza and Talha Ghori, Syed Sagheer Hussain and others were also present. On the occasion, the parents of the captains of the teams participating in the event were given guests of honor.

In the first girls match played on the opening day, IMHA Lions beat IMHA Eagles by four goals to

three. On behalf of the winning team, Muqaddas Rafiq scored two goals while Humaira and Jawaria scored one. Umaira scored all three goals on behalf of the loser team.

In the second match, IMHA Wolves Beat IMHA Bulls by 3-1 goals, Sundus Siddiqui of the winning team scored a hat-trick while Masawwara scored the only goal of the rival team. In the third match, IMHA Hawks and IMHA Tigers tied 3-3, Mubashira and Amna Fatima scored hat-tricks.

In the first match of boys, the tournament between IMHA Lions and Eagles was tied with 2-2 goals. Ali Abbas and Yasin scored goals on behalf of Lions, while Rohan scored

both goals for Eagles.

In the second match, IMHA Bulls win over IMHA Wolves by 5-1 goals. Syed Ahmed and Wajid scored two goals and Salman scored one goal for the winning team. Siddiq Khan scored the only goal of the loser team.

In the third match, IMHA Tigers defeated IMHA Hawks by six goals to two. Esa Khan of the winning team scored five goals including a hat-trick, while Uzair Ahmed scored one goal. Shozab Raza scored both goals for the rival team. In these matches, Nadeem Saeed, Umair Ahmed, Waqas Ahmed umpired while Asad Zaheer, Wahid, Aamir Farooqui performed the duties of technical officials.

Pak to host NZ, SA for tri-series in January 2025

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan will host New Zealand and South Africa Men's cricket teams for ODI tri-series in January-February 2025, prior to the ICC Champions Trophy, scheduled to be held in Pakistan in February next year.

According to PCB spokesperson Raza Kitchlew, an understanding was reached among Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi, Chairperson Cricket South Africa (CSA) Lawson Naidoo and Director New Zealand Cricket (NZC) Roger Tose during a meeting

on the sidelines of the International Cricket Council (ICC) meet-up in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Friday.

Pakistan will host the 9th edition of the ICC Men's ODI Champions Trophy in February 2025 which will be participated by top eight cricket playing nations in the ICC ODI rankings.

The tri-series will be the first to be played on Pakistan soil in almost two decades and will provide the finest prologue to the marquee ICC extravaganza. It will also be the first ICC event in over three decades in the country.

New Zealand and South Africa Men's cricket teams will reach Pakistan by the end of January 2025 for the tri-series.

The Chairman PCB Naqvi invited the cricket chiefs of NZC Roger Tose and CSA Lawson Naidoo to visit Pakistan. However, the PCB also succeeded in inclusion of ICC Champions Trophy 2025 on the agenda-list of the current ICC Meeting in Dubai.

Hamid Khan Swati gears up for World Championship with intensive training in UK

ABBOTTABAD (APP): In a remarkable development, Hamid Khan Swati, a renowned professional boxer hailing from

Mansehra on Friday is currently undergoing rigorous training in the United Kingdom and will participate in the World Super Lightweight Championship, scheduled to be held in the UK later this year.

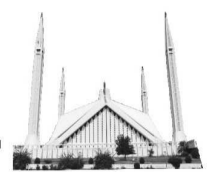
According to details, Hamid Khan Swati is the son of the Transport Officer at Hazara University and a student at Government Post Graduate College

Mansehra. His journey to the UK aims to prepare him for the upcoming International Boxing Championship.

Having secured numerous victories across various weight categories in boxing within the Hazara Division, Hamid Khan Swati has earned significant recognition at the national level. His dedication and skill in the sport have not gone unnoticed. It is pertinent to mention that Haneef Gohar, a well-known businessman also recognized for his philanthropy, has extended com-

plete financial support to Hamid Khan Swati for his training endeavors in Britain. Under Gohar's supervision and guidance, Hamid Khan Swati is currently based in the UK, focusing intensively on improving his boxing skills in preparation for the championship.

The collaboration between Haneef Gohar and Hamid Khan Swati underscores the importance of support and mentorship in nurturing talent and achieving sporting excellence on the international stage.



In brief

11 outlaws netted; drugs recovered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Police have apprehended 11 outlaws including two professional beggars from different areas of federal capital during the last 24 hours beside recovering drugs and weapons from their possession. In response to the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the police had intensified crack-down against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crimes, a police public relations officer on Friday said. The Kohsar police arrested an accused namely Usman Ali and recovered 635 gram heroin from his possession. The Karachi company police team arrested two accused namely Shahzad and Ghani Ur Rehman and recovered one dagger and 20 liters liquor from their possession, he added. Likewise, the Sumbal police arrested an accused namely Hameed Khan and recovered 140 gram heroin from his possession. The Tarnol police arrested two accused namely Muhammad Qadeer and Muhammad Waqar and recovered 1200 gram heroin and one 30 bore pistol from their possession.

CTO directs CTP officers

RAWALPINDI (APP): City Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Taimoor Khan has directed the officers and traffic wardens to make all-out efforts to regulate traffic on city roads. According to a CTP spokesman, to facilitate the commuters and regulate traffic, City Traffic Police (CTP) had launched a grand operation against encroachments. He said that the crackdown against the encroachers was launched in Rawalpindi on the directives of Chief Minister Punjab to improve traffic flow in markets where encroachments had been a long-standing issue for road users and the public during Ramadan. A grand operation against encroachments was conducted across the district, including in the areas of Raja Bazaar, Bara Market, Iqbal Road, Trunk Bazaar, Commercial Market, Sadiqabad, Transformer Chowk, and Civil Lines, he said adding, during the campaign, the stalls, clothes, and vendors were removed from the roads and cleared for the traffic. The spokesman informed that the CTO Taimoor Khan held a meeting with the in-charges of circles and reviewed the progress on the anti-encroachment campaign.

WASA operation against defaulters

RAWALPINDI (APP): Managing Director (MD) Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) here on Friday directed the authorities concerned to accelerate the ongoing operation against the defaulters. According to a WASA spokesman, a special campaign had been launched for revenue recovery and disconnect illegal connections. The spokesman said that MD WASA, Muhammad Salim Ashraf today visited different areas and inspected the field work of the teams in connection with revenue recovery. The MD made a surprise visit to the revenue recovery teams to inspect them in the field and lead the ongoing operations against the defaulters along with the staff working in different areas, he informed. More than Rs 250,000 was recovered from the defaulters during the raids, he added. On this occasion, the MD said that the operation would continue without any discrimination against all the defaulters.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of people offering Congregation Prayer (Friday Prayer) at Faisal Masjid in the holy fasting month of Ramzan.

CDWP approved 2 development projects worth Rs 7.87 billion

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) meeting presided over by Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan on Friday approved 2 development projects with a cost of Rs 7.87 billion after the detail discussion. Additional Secretary Planning, Members Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives (MoPD&SI), senior officials from Federal Ministries and Divisions participated in the meeting. Ther representatives of Provincial P&D Departments and Special Areas also attended the meeting through video link, said a press release issued here.

Projects related to Energy, Physical Planning & Housing sectors were considered in the meeting. A project related to Energy sector namely "Construction of 220kV Transmission Line (28km) along with 2nd Circuit Stringing of 132kV Transmission Line from

Jiwani to Gwadar (94km) Revised" worth Rs 4540.010 million approved by the forum. : The project is proposed to be financed through PSDP.

Main objective of the power sector is to provide uninterrupted power supply to the consumers of all categories and to improve the commercial viability of the power sector as a whole.

QESCO vision is to provide and maintain fault free high voltage system with minimum possible losses and expenditure. The proposed project involves the Construction of the Grid Stations. The proposed scope of associated work is 132kV (AIS) grid station Jiwani. 1 x 132 kV Line Bay facing Jiwani – Gwadar Circuit. 132kV (AIS) grid station Gwadar (old) 1 x 132 kV Line Bay facing Gwadar (old) – Jiwani Circuit. Transmission Line: 1. 220/132kV Transmission Line from GABD to Jiwani (zero Point) (30 KM) (NTDC Portion) Construction of 2nd Circuit Stringing of existing 132 kV SGT Jiwani – Gwadar

(old) Transmission Line (94KM) (QESCO Portion) A project related to Physical Planning and Housing sector presented namely "Gravity Based Safe Drinking Water Supply System in Havelian Abbottabad Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" worth Rs. 3336.20 million approved by the CDWP after detail discussion. The sponsoring agency of the project is Government of KP.

The financing Mode of the project is KP share of PKR 1296.20 Million where the KOICA share (Grant in Aid): USD 12.00 Million. The scope of the project includes: Land Acquisition, construction of approach roads, utilities such as water supply, electricity etc. Also assign of water supply system, Construction of water supply system, Provision of equipment for operation of water treatment plant, Capacity building for the personnel of water supply system, strengthening of research and policy making capacity on water supply system.

IGP GB visits Safe City Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Gilgit Baltistan Afzal Mehmood Butt on Friday visited Safe City Islamabad. The Capital Police Officer (CPO) Safe City/Traffic gave an overview of the Safe City Islamabad operational duties to the IGP Gilgit Baltistan. At this occasion SSP Safe City was also present, a public relations officer said on Friday.

The IGP Gilgit Baltistan visited the command and control center, data hub unit, modern technology-equipped cameras, and the police operations center hall. He was briefed about the procedures and their effectiveness.

Furthermore, the IGP Gilgit Baltistan was also briefed that Safe City Islamabad is playing a significant role in various sectors through modern techniques, including the Police Operations Center, Emergency Control Center, Data Hub, Dispatch Control Center, E-Challan System, and the "Pukar-15" helpline.

Religious scholars, leaders denounce Islamophobia as a threat to global peace

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) observed the 'International Day to Combat Against Islamophobia' across the nation, with religious scholars and leaders delivering poignant messages during Friday prayers. They unequivocally denounced Islamophobia as a manifestation of fear, prejudice, and hatred against Muslims, stressing the urgent need for its swift and complete eradication.

The escalating tide of Islamophobia in the Western world, they warned, not only precipitates a clash between civilizations but also poses a grave threat to global peace. Emphasizing Islam's core message of security and peace for all humanity, they lamented that Islamophobia fosters interfaith animosity and erodes understanding between civilizations.

Furthermore, they underscored Islam's teachings of promoting interfaith harmony, categorically stating that Islam is neither an extremist religion nor does it endorse terrorism. PUC Chairman, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, along with esteemed scholars including Allama Abdul Haq Mujahid, Maulana Muhammad Rafiq Jami, Maulana Nauman Hashir, Maulana Asad Zakaria Qasmi, Maulana Muhammad Shafi Qasmi, Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Allama Zubair Abid, Maulana Muhammad Ashfaq Pittafi, Maulana Abu Bakr Hameed Sabri, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awan, Maulana Aziz Akbar Qasmi, Maulana Haq Nawaz Khalid, Maulana Obaidullah

Gormani, Allama Tahir-ul-Hasan, Maulana Hanif Osmani, Maulana Muhammad Asghar Khosa, Maulana Anwar-ul-Haq Mujahid, Maulana Abdul Malik Asif, Maulana Aslam Siddiqui, Maulana Abdul Hakeem Athar, Maulana Abdullah Haqqani, Maulana Abdul Waheed Farooqui, Maulana Abu Bakr Hamza, Maulana Habib Rehman Abid, Maulana Aminul Haque Ashrafi, Maulana Izharul Haque Khalid, Sahibzada Hamza Tahirul Hasan, Maulana Saadullah Ludhianwi, Maulana Anisur Rahman Baloch, Maulana Abdul Rasheed, Mufti Muhammad Umar Farooq, Maulana Abdul Ghaffar Shah Hijazi, Maulana Muhammad Ahmad Makki, Maulana Azizur Rahman Muawiyah, Mufti Imran Muawiyah, Maulana Saadullah Shafiq, Maulana Yasir Alvi, Qari Abdul Rauf, Maulana Matloob Mahar, Maulana Zubair Khatana, Maulana Aqeel Zubiri, Qari Azizur Rahman, Maulana Shabbir Khatana, Maulana Zubair Khatana, Qari Abdul Majid Lahori, Maulana Farooq Khanpuri, Maulana Qasim Sangi, Maulana Ashraf Malik, Maulana Ijaz Malik, Qari Abdul Wahab Muawiyah, Maulana Muhammad Bilal Saqib, Qari Ibrahim, Qari Riaz, Maulana Ameer Muawiyah, Maher Abdul Khaliq Murali, Maulana Muneeb Rehman Haidari, Qari Mohabbat Ali Qasmi, Qari Zul Qarnain, Maulana Tayyab Qureshi, Qari Mahmood Al Hasan, Qari Abdul Majid Malik, and Maulana Waqas Iqbal among many others, delivered impassioned sermons.

Pakistan Railways breaks record with longest freight train run

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has shattered records with its latest freight train journey, marking a significant milestone in the nation's transportation sector.

The historic freight train, spanning an impressive length of over 2,500 feet and comprising a whopping fifty coaches, embarked on its journey propelled by the formidable GE U40 locomotive engine, said Railway spokesperson on Friday.

He said that this monumental train journey commenced from Karachi, the bustling metropolis of Pakistan, carrying a staggering load of over 3,000 tons of cargo destined for Kotri.

This monumental initiative not only signifies a breakthrough for Pakistan Railways but also promises substantial benefits for the nation, he added.

By transferring such massive quantities of cargo via rail, the spokesperson said the

endeavor was poised to alleviate the burden on road traffic significantly, easing congestion and enhancing transportation efficiency across the country.

Moreover, he said the shift towards rail transport for freight purposes aligns with global efforts towards environmental preservation, as it effectively reduces pollution and carbon emissions associated with traditional road transport methods.

Remarkably, despite its colossal size, he said the freight train achieved remarkable speeds, attaining a top speed of 60 km/h and maintaining an impressive average speed of 38 km/h throughout its journey.

Similarly, he noted that the sheer scale of the freight vehicle's capacity is awe-inspiring, capable of accommodating goods equivalent to that of more than 94 22-wheeler trucks.

Ghana's 67th National Day

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of Ghana's 67th National Day, a grand reception was hosted by Ghana's Honorary Consul General Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt and Vice Consul Omar Shahid Butt at their residence.

The ceremony was attended by large number of Diplomats, Parliamentarians, senators, High ranking Military and civil officials. Important personalities from other walks of life also attended the event in large numbers. The High Commissioner of Ghana posted in Iran, Eric Owusu Boateng, specially attended the reception. It was a unique diplomatic event in which Foreign Secretary Cyrus Kazi and Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Africa Shahr Yar Akbar also specially participated.

Among those who participated in the ceremony were the Dean of Diplomatic Corps, Ambassador of Turkmenistan Ata Jan, the Dean of Africa, Ambassador of Morocco, Mohammad Karmoun, Ambassadors of Nepal, Jordan, Finland, Azerbaijan, Deputy head of missions of United Kingdom, Japan, Hungary, France and the Czech Republic. Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria and the European Union, High Commissioner of Kenya, in addition to senior diplomats of the United States, Sudan, Egypt, Somalia, Cyprus, Defense attaché of France also participated.

Among other important personalities that participated were Secretary



General People's Party Nayyer Hussain Bukhari, famous banker Farooq Hasan, former president of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Bashir Dawood, Chief Executive of Quaid-e-Azam International Hospital Dr. Shaukat Bangash, former ambassador Khalid Mehmood, former minister Ijaz Durrani. Former High Court judge Mudassar Khalid Abbas, Heshmat Ali Kazmi, well-known businessman Luqman Afzal, Muhammad Arsalan Khan Asad Ansari, Jameel Abbasi and Khurshed Qureshi were also present. On this occasion, the anthems of both countries were played, and the cake was also cut. Speaking at the ceremony, Eric Owusu said that Ghana is a gateway for Africa, Pakistani investors are investing in Ghana in

large numbers.

We aim to increase bilateral cooperation between the two countries. There is a lot of scope in many fields to enhance bilateral cooperation. Pakistan and Ghana have excellent political and diplomatic relations, there is a need to transform these friendly relations into a sustainable economic and trade partnership.

He especially appreciated the efforts of Dr. Shahid Rashid Butt and Umar Shahid Butt for strengthening and increasing commercial and public relations between the two countries. He Praised Dr shahid butt and Omar butt saying that because of their robust and dynamic diplomatic strategy, the relations between the two countries will reach new heights in the future.

KSA launches Iftar program in Faisal Masjid

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Saudi Embassy has launched the "Programme of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud for Iftar" in Pakistan for the holy month of Ramadan at Faisal Masjid.

The program was launched at the King Faisal Mosque in Islamabad and was attended by Saudi embassy officials and directors of Saudi offices, the President of International Islamic University, Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi, other university Officials, and thousands of faithful of twin cities. After this first Iftar in Islamabad, the embassy will continue this program on a daily basis across the country. The initiative by the

Ministry of Islamic Affairs of KSA sees similar events organized by its attachés in various nations during Ramadan. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dawah and Guidance, represented by the religious attaché through the Kingdom's Embassy arranges an iftar program every year and it has become a tradition laid by the brethren country.

The citizens of the twin cities lauded the exquisite arrangements of iftar at Faisal Masjid and thanked the Saudi government for showing love, care, and brotherhood for the people of Pakistan.

Later, officials of the Saudi Embassy and the guests offered maghrib prayer at the Faisal Masjid.

ANF recovers 98 kg drugs in 13 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 13 operations across the country managed to recover 98 kg drugs and arrested 16 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday.

He informed that 9 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of two passengers going to Sharjah at Peshawar Airport.

2.9 kg Ice was recovered from a passenger going to Qatar at Islamabad Airport.

In fourth operation, 1 kg Ice was recovered from a passenger going to Qatar at Sialkot Airport.

400 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel booked for Italy at the Lahore Courier Office.

The spokesman informed that in two operations at Islamabad Airport, 116 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from two passengers going to Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

19 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from a passenger going to Malaysia at Lahore Airport.

In 9th operation, 164 grams weed was recovered from two parcels sent to Thailand from a courier office in Rawalpindi.

40.8 kg hashish was

recovered from three suspects near Motorway Chowk Peshawar.

The spokesman said that in 11th operation, 21.3 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects arrested near G.T Road Sohawa. 14 kg hashish was recovered from two women netted near M-1 Motorway Islamabad. 1.2 kg opium, 2 kg heroin and 3.3 kg hashish were recovered from two suspects arrested on Jaranwala Road, Faisalabad. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

'Punjab's culture rooted in history'

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Council of the Arts(PAC) organized a Punjab Mehfil-e-mushaira in connection with Punjab Culture Day here on Friday.

The mushaira was presided over by prominent poet Anjum Salimi, while Nasir Ali Nasir performed the duties of host.

Director Arts Council Muhammad Shakur participated in the program as a special guest.

Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Shakur said that the roots of Punjab's culture were embedded in history, adding the living style of Punjabis has a unique identity across the world.

He said that the province of Punjab was a mirror of the best culture and highlighting cultural values was actually a practical demonstration of love for one's culture.

By organizing the Punjab Lok Mela, the cultural heritage of Punjab would be promoted and the audience would see the colors of Punjabi culture.

The participants appreciated the decision taken by the Punjab government on the cultural day and urged to take more steps for the promotion of Punjabi language. A large number of people belonging to the literary circles participated in the mushaira.



ISLAMABAD: The CDWP meeting presides over by Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan, approves 2 development projects with a cost of Rs.7.87 million after the detail discussion.

3 people killed, injured in Herat fire

KABUL (Pajhwok): Two people have been killed and one injured as a result of a fire in a petrol shop in western Herat province, a statement said on Friday. The incident happened on Thursday night in the Iraq Darwaza area of Herat City, the provincial capital, the Department of Information and Cultural Affairs wrote on its Twitter handle. Two people were killed and one injured in the incident, the victims were a father and sons.

Zaranj-Delaram highway

NIMROZ (TOLOnews): The construction work of the Zaranj-Delaram highway in Nimroz, which connects Afghanistan to the Chabahar port in Iran, has progressed by fifty percent. According to officials, the project is expected to be completed and operational in less than a month. The Zaranj-Delaram highway is considered one of the most important transit routes in the country, holding significant importance for the transportation of commercial goods as well.

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

American Senators call for 20,000 additional visas for Afghan citizens by fiscal year-end



KABUL (Khaama Press): Twelve Republican and Democratic senators from senior positions in the US Congress have requested an increase in the number of special immigrant visas for Afghans who worked with the US government. The senators said an additional 20,000 visas would be needed for them by the end of the fiscal year. According to the Associated Press, which

obtained the letter, the senators told Congress that "this program has saved the lives of thousands of Afghans who served courageously and honorably alongside US soldiers and diplomats in Afghanistan." This request comes as Reuters reported that the issuance process for Special Immigrant Visas (SIV) for resettling Afghan allies of America

may come to a halt later this year. The Biden administration has also urged Congress to act more quickly. John Kirby, spokesman for the National Security Council, told reporters on Thursday, "While our war in Afghanistan is over, our commitment to Afghans and our commitment to those who helped us in that war is not over."

Special Immigrant Visas, or SIVs, allow eligible Afghans to apply for residency in the United States with their families. Eligible Afghans include former employees and translators in the US military and embassy. Although this program has existed since 2009, the number of Afghan applicants has seen a significant increase since the Taliban took over Afghanistan. Chris Coons, a Democratic senator, told the Associated Press, "Every day that passes without action by Congress, we endanger the lives of our Afghan colleagues, who deserve our appreciation." The US State Department announced recently that since the start of this program in 2021, thousands of eligible Afghans have been issued visas, and more than 30% of all applications have been reviewed. A State Department spokesperson revealed that 8,000 SIVs remain unallocated, urging Congress to raise the visa cap. Critics decry slow processing, leaving applicants in limbo and danger.

It is wrong to differentiate between men and women in education: Hekmatyar



KABUL (Ariana News): Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the leader of Hizb-e-Islami, has said that it is wrong to differentiate between men and women in the area of education. In a virtual conference with his party members living abroad, Hekmatyar stated that Afghans revived a forgotten duty, which is Jihad, but they now need to progress in all areas of life by acquiring

knowledge. "Islam has not made a distinction between religious and worldly sciences. All sciences are sacred and the acquiring of all sciences is obligatory for Muslims, both for men and women," Hekmatyar said. "Anyone who differentiates between them is wrong. This is his personal opinion, we cannot find evidence for it in religion, nor can it be rationally

justified." According to him, Afghan citizens should be allowed participate in making decisions about major national issues, such as the type of political system, territorial integrity, domestic and foreign policy. "It is the inalienable right of the Afghan people to choose their political system. God and religion have given them this

right... no one can take this right away from them. Islam has not given anyone the right to take away the rights that God has given to people," Hekmatyar said. He claimed that no reforms have been made in the country's economic system, as bank interest and taxes still exist. Hekmatyar added that the government can collect zakat, but not tax.

European Parliament adopts resolution on Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The European Parliament approved a resolution on respecting human rights in Afghanistan. By passing the resolution, the European Parliament called on the Taliban administration of Afghanistan to respect the rights of women and girls. This resolution was passed with 513 votes in favour, 9 against, and 24 abstentions. The European Parliament emphasized that any engagement between

the European Union and the Taliban could only continue under strict conditions set by the Council and by the recommendations of the United Nations Special Rapporteur. Members of the European Parliament have expressed concern about the humanitarian crisis and human rights in Afghanistan, stating that the Taliban has dismantled the judicial system. The European Parliament continues to

urge the Taliban government to urgently revive full and equal participation of women and girls in public life, especially in terms of access to education and employment. The women's rights crisis in Afghanistan has reached alarming levels following the Taliban's return to power. Restrictions on women's education, employment, and participation in public life have intensified, reversing many of the gains made in recent

years. Women and girls face systemic discrimination and violence, with their basic rights being violated daily. The humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan has deepened as conflict and instability persist. Millions of Afghans are in dire need of humanitarian assistance, including food, shelter, and medical care. Access to basic services is severely limited, exacerbating the suffering of vulnerable populations, particularly women, children, and internally displaced persons. The return of refugees to Afghanistan has become increasingly challenging amidst the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation. Many refugees are reluctant to return to a country plagued by violence and uncertainty. Those who do return often face obstacles in rebuilding their lives, including a lack of access to essential services and livelihood opportunities. The international community must address the root causes of displacement and provide support for both returning refugees and host communities to ensure a sustainable solution to the refugee crisis in Afghanistan.

Efforts underway to create agricultural complexes in country: Ministry

KABUL (Ariana News): The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) says it plans to build agricultural complexes with international standards for developing agricultural systems in four zones of the country. The ministry officials said that with the construction of these complexes, the country's agricultural sector will move from its

traditional form to mechanization, and in addition, billions of afghanis will be invested in this sector. They stated that initial preparations have been made for the construction of these complexes in Balkh, Herat, Nangarhar and Kandahar provinces. The construction of new complexes in the agriculture sector and also the expansion of investment in this field can bring pro-

found changes in the agriculture sector, officials said. "Fortunately, agricultural complexes will be built in four zones for the private sector. In these complexes, there are both processing, packaging, and standard cold stores," said Mirwais Hajizada, deputy head of the Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock. "In Afghanistan, more ease should be created for

farmers so that they take advantage of good opportunities to grow our production, and so that traders can process and package from those complexes; and to export to far and near countries," he added. Meanwhile, the agriculture ministry stated that it has increased its efforts to encourage domestic and foreign investors to invest in the agriculture and livestock sector.



Over 2,500 deaf, blind individuals engaged in education: Officials

KABUL (TOLOnews): The authorities of the Technical Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVET) said that more than 2,500 deaf and blind individuals are currently engaged in educational and vocational training at the country's educational centers. Najibullah Amin, the spokesperson for the Technical Vocational Education and Training Authority, added that next year, more than four centers for the deaf and blind are planned to be established in the provinces of Faryab, Takhar, Jawzjan, and Helmand. The spokesperson said: "In four other provinces, we plan to establish centers, including the provinces of Takhar, Helmand, Faryab, and Jawzjan." According to him, there are currently more than 16 educational and vocational centers in 14 provinces of the country for the blind and deaf. Ali Zia, a 21-year-old blind youth who has been studying at the center for the blind for eleven years, now hopes to serve as a teacher for his peers.

Ali Zia told TOLOnews about his learnings from the center for the blind: "Here, we study like in other schools; we receive training in the arts, vocational fields, and computer education." Mustafa, 24, who is unable to hear, seeks opportunities for employment. Mustafa, the deaf, said: "God knows the fate; maybe I could find a job or not, whether it involves graphics, design, or different sections, I would like to join and teach." At the same time, a number

of blind and deaf individuals are calling on the Islamic Emirate to pay attention to the disabled community and provide them with job opportunities. Mohammad Hossaini, a blind individual, said: "Our request from the Islamic Emirate is to provide job opportunities for the disabled and pay special attention to them." The director of the center for the blind said that next year the recruitment process will be expanded,

and plans are in place. "We teach them regularly, have transportation, which we want to improve next year, align our administration standards with international standards, and expand the courses," said Noor Mohammad Faizi, the director of the Institute for the Blind. Earlier, a number of blind individuals in the country also complained about the lack of attention to their challenges by the government and institutions.



Women in Afghanistan sell handicrafts abroad via online stores

KABUL (Khaama Press): A company in Kabul helps women sell their handmade crafts internationally through online stores. Many female artisans can now reach customers outside Afghanistan with their products. The authentic company, operating in the sectors of introducing Afghan handicrafts and domestic production abroad, says it has created online stores for dozens of talented women artisans to sell their products. Samira Gohari, the media manager of this company, says they have created a special section to introduce and support Afghan handicrafts, with a majority of women actively participating in that section. She further stated, "We have online stores to showcase handicrafts where female artisans sell their products such as traditional Afghan clothing, jewellery, engraving, and paintings." Meanwhile, Laura Fashion, a women-led clothing brand in Kabul, says they are active in designing and sewing Afghan clothes, with most of their customers being Afghan citizens living

abroad. Husna Yusufi, workshop manager, told the Khaama press, "Previously, women in Afghanistan had opportunities for work and purchasing power, but currently, many women are unemployed, and we export our products abroad because purchasing power domestically is severely limited." Tahira Omari, another female entrepreneur in Kabul, who sells her products through an authentic company, has been

involved in tailoring and embroidery for about a decade, with approximately 40 women now working in her workshop. It is worth noting that in the past two years, more women have turned to handicrafts, with some contributing to their family's income through these means. Tahmina, a seamstress, says she has been working in tailoring and embroidery for two years

now, supporting her family through these means. She appeals to the Taliban administration: "We expect help and support to expand our products and export them abroad." Afghan handicrafts, including traditional Afghan clothing, have recently gained attention internationally, with this product primarily prepared and sent abroad by Afghan women.





LARKANA: President Asif Ali Zardari showering flowers on the grave of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh.

PHC orders ECP for reply on JUI-F lawmaker plea

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Shakeel Ahmad and Justice Arshad Ali ordered Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for submission reply in plea regarding provision of reserved to JUI-F women candidates, on Friday.

The counsel Jalal Ahmad advocate argued that Jammatt Ulema Islam Fazal (JUI-F) nominated Sadaf Ihsan for reserved seat National Assembly but Hina Bibi had approached ECP for nomination on women seat. ECP has issued notification for nomination of Sadaf Ihsan on reserved seat and now the Election Commission had stopped oath on Hina Bibi plea, the counsel added. He added that once reserved seat is allotted can't be revoked.

The counsel argued to order oath of Sadaf Ihsan as MNA by vacating

ECP orders in this regard. PHC ordered ECP for submission of reply on next hearing to be fix by office. It is worthy to mention that Hina Bibi is placed on 3rd number in priority list for reserved seats. However, ECP had stopped oath of Sadaf Ihsan on JUI-F Emir plea stated that the petitioner isn't nominated by the party for reserve seats.

Moreover, ECP had fixed hearing on 26th March regarding provision of reserved seat to Sadaf Ihsan or Hina Bibi to decide the fate of the case. PHC Justice Ijaz Anwar has turned down bail plea of Frontier Corps (FC) personnel named Khan held under charges of murder.

The counsel for complainant Farhad Ullah Afridi advocate argued that FC personnel Khan Wazir had shot killed Tila Akbar in Kokokhel area of Tirah valley. First Information Report was registered at Tirah police station while Khan Wazir was

expelled from FC after the commencement of crime as well as trial courts had already rejected bail pleas in this regard, the counsel argued.

PHC's Justice Ijaz Anwar had turned down bail plea of FC personnel Khan Wazir in murder case and ordered keeping him behind the bars after conclusion of arguments.

Meanwhile, Special Anti-Terrorism Court Peshawar Judge Muhammad Iqbal turned down bail pleas of five alleged culprits involved terrorism and other heinous crimes in two different FIRs.

According to prosecution, Musa Khalil, Yasin Khan and Hassan Gul had attacked Counter Terrorism Department personnel while booked in FIR at CTP police station Peshawar. Moreover, Shah Rukh and Salman arrested from premises of Jamrud police station while recovered arms, hand grenade and other ammunition from their possession.

FBR signs deal with Karandaaz Pakistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In line with the vision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan to transform Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) into a Digital Tax Administration, FBR has entered into an agreement with Karandaaz Pakistan for the Digitalization of Tax System. FBR has put considerable focus towards automation of its processes and digitalizing of the economy. These initiatives reduce the cost of compliance of taxpayers, document the economy, expand the tax base and lead FBR on a sustainable path to revenue growth.

FBR will be collaborating with Karandaaz for developing a comprehensive digital strategy for realizing the digital transformation of FBR, its digitalization initiatives and their implementation. Under this agreement, Karandaaz Pakistan, an impact investment platform that drives sustainable economic growth and strengthens financial and social protection systems for inclusion will assist FBR in assessment of the business needs, existing IT infrastructure and systems, and business processes to establish the context and scope for digitalizing the tax system of Pakistan using service oriented and tax payer centric use cases.

At the signing ceremony, Mr. Malik Amjed Zubair Tiwana, Chairman FBR,



stated that FBR has put considerable focus towards automation of its processes and digitalizing the economy including the supply chain digitalization. Multiple endeavours have been undertaken to address the challenge of the undocumented economy and expanding the tax base. FBR will now be collaborating with Karandaaz for realizing the digital transformation of FBR, its digitalization initiatives and their implementation.

Muhammad Aurangzeb, the Minister for Finance and Revenue who chaired a meeting with FBR and Karandaaz earlier in the day on the subject emphasized the importance of facilitation of business and people-centric approach in the design of these digital solutions. He stated that the initiative holds a lot of potential which can only be realized through the use of best human capital leading the assessment and design. Experienced international

consultants that have implemented tax digitalization solutions in similar contexts should be engaged for this activity."

Waqas ul Hasan, CEO Karandaaz Pakistan stated that the initiative is in line with Karandaaz Pakistan's sponsor Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Digital Public Infrastructure workstream and will help in building a robust ecosystem for Pakistan Digital Stack. The transformation when complete will put the taxpayer's natural systems at the centre and the tax administration more resilient and agile. The whole nation will benefit from the dividends of this digital transformation."

The agreement was signed on March 15th, 2024. On behalf of FBR, Mr. Ardsheer Salim Tariq, Member (Reforms and Modernization) and on behalf of Karandaaz Pakistan, the agreement was signed by Sharjeel Murtaza, Director Digital Services.

Hasan, Hussain case hearing adjourned

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Accountability Court Friday ordered the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to submit the records on the plea of acquittal of Hasan and Hussain Nawaz in the references till March 19.

Accountability Court judge Nasir Javid Rana heard the Avenfield, Al-Azizia and Flagship references on Friday and approved the request of Hassan Nawaz, Hussain Nawaz for their exemption from attendance today. On the other hand, the NAB officials sought a time to submit the records that was approved by the court and adjourned the hearing on the plea of acquittal of Hasan and Hussain Nawaz in the references till March 19.

On the previous hearing, the court accepted their bails and issued notices on the pleas of acquittal. Hassan and Hussain Nawaz are accused in the Avenfield, Al-Azizia and Flagship references.

Worthy to mention here that Hassan Nawaz and Hussain Nawaz on Thursday surrendered themselves before an Accountability Court judge in Panama leaks references. A few days ago, judge Nasir Javed Rana had suspended the perpetual arrest warrants for Hassan and Hussain up till today. Hasan and Hussain Nawaz were declared absconders in the Panama reference 7 years ago.

Lawyer for Hassan and Husain, Qazi Misbah-ul-Hasan, told the court that since it had suspended the permanent arrest warrants for the accused in the case; now when they both had surrendered, the court was now requested to declare their warrants cancelled. These are the accused in all three references, Judge Accountability Court remarked. They are co-accused in all three references, lawyer Qazi Misbah-ul-Hasan took the plea. He argued that other accused in Al-Azizia and the Avenfield references had been acquitted while they were acquitted by the trial court in the flagship reference. However, after hearing the arguments of the lawyer, the court canceled the arrest warrants of Hasan and Hussain Nawaz.

Russian attack on Odesa kills 20

KYIV: The death toll in a Russian missile strike that hit civilian infrastructure in Ukraine's Black Sea port city of Odesa on Friday has risen to at least 20 and at least 75 people were wounded, the regional governor has told national TV. Russia has stepped up its strikes on Odesa in recent weeks, launching drones or missiles almost every day.

Oleh Kiper, the regional governor, said earlier on Friday that local residents, a medic and a rescuer were among the dead. The medic and rescuer were killed by a second missile after rushing to the scene to treat people hurt in Friday's initial strike, Kiper added. Ten houses, a low-pressure gas pipeline and rescue vehicles were damaged, emergency services said. Rescuers battled to put out fires on the pipeline and in a house over a total area of about 120sq metres (144sq yards). Twelve people, including five children, were killed in a drone strike on a residential building in Odesa on March 2. — Aljazeera

Hamas proposes new six-week Gaza truce

GAZA STRIP (AFP): Hamas has proposed a new six-week truce in Gaza and an exchange of several dozen Israeli hostages for Palestinian prisoners, an official from the militant group said on Friday.

"The agreement is for a six-week ceasefire and a prisoner exchange," the official said after weeks of so far fruitless mediation efforts, adding that the group would want this to lead to "a complete (Israeli) withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and a permanent ceasefire." During the proposed truce, Gaza militants would release about 42 hostages seized during the October 7 attack that triggered the war in Gaza, the official said, requesting anonymity because of the sensitivity of the talks.

The official said that between 20 and 50 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails would be released per hostage — up from a previous proposal of a roughly 10-to-one ratio, according to a Hamas source in late February. Under the new proposal, the initial exchange could include

women, children, elderly and ill hostages, the official said.

During the October 7 attack, militants seized about 250 Israeli and foreign hostages, dozens of whom were released during a week-long truce in November. Israel believes about 130 captives remain in Gaza including 32 presumed dead. The latest proposal appears to be a shift for Hamas, whose armed wing said earlier this month there would be "no compromise" on its demand that Israel withdraw from Gaza before any more hostages are freed.

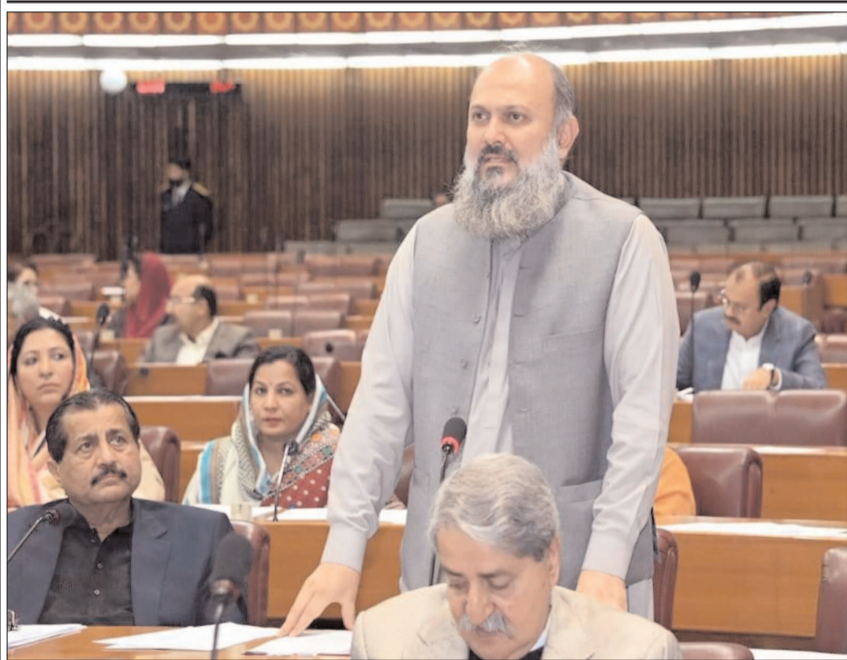
Now the militants are saying that, during a six-week truce, Israeli forces would need to withdraw from "all cities and populated areas in the Gaza Strip" and allow for the return of displaced Gazans "without restrictions," the official said. The Hamas proposal also calls to ramp up the flow of humanitarian aid, the official added.

The terms of an eventual ceasefire would see Israel's "complete military withdrawal from the Gaza Strip" and a comprehen-

sive hostage-for-prisoner exchange involving the release of all hostages for "an agreed-upon number of Palestinian prisoners," according to the official. "Egypt and Qatar, along with the United States, are responsible for following up and ensuring the implementation of the agreement," the official said.

Hamas's October 7 attack killed about 1,160 people in Israel, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of official figures. Israel's retaliatory military campaign to destroy Hamas has killed at least 31,490 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory. Israel has so far refused to withdraw from Gaza, saying such a move would amount to victory for Hamas.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said late Thursday that Hamas "is continuing to hold unrealistic demands" but that an update on truce talks would be submitted to Israel's war cabinet on Friday.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan addressing during National Assembly session.

Bilawal, Maryam call for effective steps to eradicate Islamophobia

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD / LAHORE: As International Day to Combat Islamophobia is being observed globally, top leaders of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) — Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and Maryam Nawaz — demanded concrete measures against discriminatory actions and unfair treatment with Muslims around the world.

"Islamophobia undermines the very essence of our shared humanity and the principles of tolerance, compassion, and pluralism," the PPP chief said in his message on the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. Bilawal, in a statement, emphasised the significance of the International Day to Combat Islamophobia as a poignant reminder of the urgent need to raise awareness, foster mutual respect and understanding, and implement concrete strategies to eradicate this contemporary scourge from our communities. "It is imperative that we confront Islamophobia head-on and work tirelessly to dismantle the stereotypes and misconceptions that perpetuate it," he added.

Islam, the former foreign minister said, as a religion of moderation and peace, advocates embracing diversity

and treating all individuals with dignity and respect, regardless of their faith or background. He pointed out that since 9/11, there has been a marked escalation in animosity and institutional suspicion directed towards Muslims and Islam worldwide, adding that, despite assertions to the contrary, Islam and Muslims are consistently and unfairly associated with terrorism.

The politico called upon governments, civil society organisations, religious leaders, and individuals around the world to join hands in this noble endeavor, saying, "We must strive to create inclusive societies where people of all faiths can coexist harmoniously, free from fear and prejudice."

"Together, let us work towards a world where Islamophobia is eradicated, and where every individual can live with dignity, security, and freedom," Bilawal urged. In her message on the day, PML-N Senior Vice President and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said Muslims were being treated unfairly, and faced discriminative behaviour across the globe due to Islamophobia, which is the same reason for oppression of people in Palestine, and Kashmir. The first-ever woman chief minister of Pakistan's largest province also called for effective

measures to eradicate the Islamophobic actions.

In March 2022, the United Nations (UN) finally recognised the grave Islamophobia challenge confronting the world and designated March 15 as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, after its General Assembly adopted a resolution sponsored by 60 Member-States of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Many governments have taken steps to combat Islamophobia by establishing anti-hate-crime legislation and measures to prevent and prosecute hate crimes and by conducting public awareness campaigns about Muslims and Islam designed to dispel negative myths and misconceptions, the UN said. The document stresses that terrorism and violent extremism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization, or ethnic group. It calls for a global dialogue on the promotion of a culture of tolerance and peace, based on respect for human rights and for the diversity of religions and belief, according to the UN. In connection with the day, the UNGA will hold the 62nd plenary in which Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Munir Akram will deliver a statement on the occasion.

Arif posted as Chief Economist P&D KP



Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In a significant development for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the province has recently appointed Arif Ullah Awan, a seasoned officer of the Pakistan Administrative Services, as its new Chief Economist. This appointment comes as a testament to the government's commitment to strengthening the economic landscape of the region.

Arif Ullah Awan brings with him a wealth of experience garnered from various notable positions throughout his career. Having served as Deputy Commissioner in Mohmand, Haripur, and DI Khan, he has demonstrated exceptional competence and dedication in executing his duties. His tenure in these regions has been marked by proactive initiatives and effective governance, earning him respect and admiration from colleagues and constituents alike.

Furthermore, Arif Ullah Awan's professional journey includes serving as a staff officer to the Prime Minister and holding the position of Assistant Commissioner in Murree. These diverse roles have equipped him with a comprehensive understanding of administrative intricacies and policymaking processes.

Known for his exemplary leadership qualities, Arif Ullah Awan is widely regarded as a passionate and hardworking officer. His commitment to public service and his track record of delivering results make him an ideal fit for the role of Chief Economist. His appointment is not only a testament to his individual capabilities but also reflects positively on the province's commitment to fostering a conducive environment for economic growth and development.

With Arif Ullah Awan at the helm as Chief Economist, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa can look forward to innovative strategies and prudent economic management. His vision and expertise are poised to steer the province towards greater prosperity, ensuring that it remains at the forefront of sustainable development initiatives. As Khyber Pakhtunkhwa embraces this new chapter under the leadership of Arif Ullah Awan, optimism abounds for a future marked by economic resilience and progress.

Federal cabinet allotted vehicles

ISLAMABAD (INP): The 19-member federal cabinet of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was allotted official vehicles on Friday.

Each member of the cabinet has been provided with an 1,800cc vehicle, consistent with their entitlements, in a move aimed at facilitating the operations of the federal cabinet. The allocation of official vehicles was coordinated by the Cabinet Division, which oversaw the distribution of vehicles to the respective ministries of all ministers.

Country grapples with colonial system: Siraj

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Sirajul Haq has said that the country still grapples with a colonial system despite 76 years of independence.

Talking to media persons at Mansoorah on Friday, he attributed this persistent state of affairs to dynastic politics and the influence of international powers. He emphasized that meaningful change hinges on the electorate's choice of honest and dedicated leadership.

Sirajul Haq criticized government formed through manipulated elections, stating that such administrations cannot effectively address the nation's challenges. He highlighted the deepening

polarization following rigged polls and underscored the government's responsibility to tackle this issue by ensuring the rights of all citizens are safeguarded.

"Contentious and tainted elections have only exacerbated polarization; resolution lies in guaranteeing people's rights," he stressed. He lamented the theft of JI's mandate in the election and pledged to pursue legal avenues, including approaching the Supreme Court, to reclaim their rights.

The JI urged ruling parties to fulfill their manifesto promises, particularly advocating for the provision of free electricity for consumers using up to 300 units. He cautioned against imposing further burdens

on the populace, anticipating harsher conditions from international financial bodies like the IMF, which could worsen inflation and taxation woes. He proposed combating corruption and curtailing non-development expenditures to strengthen the economy, while urging an end to the culture of excessive protocol.

Sirajul Haq called for an immediate end to the conflict in Gaza, urging leaders in the Islamic world to intervene. He highlighted Jamaat-e-Islami's charitable efforts through the al-Khidmat Foundation in providing aid to Palestinians, noting the silence of the world despite the loss of over 32,000 innocent lives during the Gaza war at the hands of Israeli forces.

IHC appoints amici curiae in Dr Aafia case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) has appointed two amici curiae in the case of Dr Aafia Siddiqui to assist the court besides coordinating with the ministry of foreign affairs.

A single bench of Islamabad High Court IHC comprising Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaque Khan here Friday heard the constitutional petition of Dr Fowzia Siddiqui. The court had asked the MoFA to provide the list of leading Pakistani lawyers living in the USA so as to seek help from them in this case. However, Additional Secretary (America) MoFA told the court that they have no such credible record about the leading Pakistani lawyers living in the USA. He said some people after getting the US nationality renounce

the Pakistani nationality and hence they don't have a credible record about the Pakistanis living in the USA.

However, the court appointed two amici curiae, Ms. Zainab Janjua & Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, to assist the ministry of foreign affairs in legal communicating about this case with the US administration and the American lawyer of Aafia Siddiqui Clive Stafford Smith.

The court order said that MOFA's responses are always undated & unnumbered despite clear orders in the last hearing. MOFA does not have any visibility on the diaspora of Pakistani lawyers in US law firms.

However, talking to media outside the court premises, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) leader former Senator Mushtaq Ahmed Khan said that we

hope that the court would dole out justice in this case. He said due to struggle in courts; parliament, media and mass circles Dr Aafia Siddiqui would be hopefully backed home soon. He said in the session of the Senate on March 7 he had raised this issued strongly and the foreign minister Ishaque Dar had asked him to tell the ways and means to further the case. He said that he has handed this letter to Dar and also handed him another letter for Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in which mentioning four political options about the case of Dr Aafia.

He said he has urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to take steps that Aafia Siddiqui be shifted from notorious FMC Carswell prison to some normal jail where her basic human rights could be respected.