

Cop shot dead in Bajaur
F.P. Report
KHAR: A policeman deputed for anti-polio team security was shot dead by unknown assailants in Bajaur district on Tuesday. Police said the incident took place in Momond Kot area of Bajaur where armed motorcyclists fired at the constable, deputed on security of polio team. The cop was injured in the firing and rushed to hospital where he breathed his last.

Dolphin cop martyred
F.P. Report
RAWALPINDI: A Dolphin cop was martyred and another injured in firing of unidentified terrorists at Murree Road Rawalpindi on Monday night. According to details, the Dolphin squad attempted to stop a suspected car near Waris Khan Stop. The car riders started firing at the Dolphin squad resultantly one cop identified as Ismail was martyred and another was critically injured.

Pak-S Arabia bilateral ties getting stronger

PM satisfied as \$1.1b final IMF tranche to bring in economic stability

F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that the bilateral relations as well as the economic partnership between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were getting stronger.
The prime minister, in a statement issued at the conclusion of his visit to the Kingdom mainly to attend the Special Meeting of World Economic Forum, said a delegation of Saudi businessmen was about to visit Pakistan in the coming days.
The visit would help accelerate the pace of economic partnership between the two countries, he added. The prime minister reiterated the resolve to make all-out efforts to materialise the understanding reached between the two leaderships. With the Pak-Saudi economic partnership, a new era of bilateral ties had begun, he remarked. He recalled that a record exchange of high-level delegations took place between the two countries during the last couple of months. Highlighting the significance of his three-day visit to the Kingdom marking the very fruitful discussions, the prime minister also mentioned his interactions with the world leaders which led to positive developments in multifaceted cooperation in trade and investment.
Referring to his address at the World Economic Forum, Prime Minister Shehbaz said that he had categorically made it clear that there could be no peace in the world without establishing peace in Gaza. He thanked Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman for warm hospitality during the visit, and also for his directives to his ministers regarding Pakistan. He also expressed gratitude to the Saudi ministers for their efforts and full preparations to help reach understanding between the leaderships of two countries.
Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz

NAB clears Khaqan in LNG case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Tuesday gave a clean chit to former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, ex-finance minister Miftah Ismail and others in the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) reference.
The development comes after the NAB withdrew the graft reference against the former premier, who has since long been calling for abolishing the anti-corruption watchdog over political victimization. The Accountability Court judge Nasir Javed Rana heard the case as Abbasi appeared before the court along with his lawyers.
During the hearing, NAB Deputy Prosecutor Azhar Maqbool told court that the bureau was withdrawing the reference against the former prime minister and others. "The NAB is withdrawing the reference against Shahid Khaqan Abbasi," he said. Former prime minister Abbasi, Miftah Ismail, ex-PSO MD Imranul Haq and others were facing charges of corruption over awarding LNG import contract allegedly at exorbitant rates in 2015, which caused a big loss to the national exchequer. In 2019, NAB Rawalpindi filed a reference in the Liquefied Natural Gas import contract case against 10 accused, including Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, former finance minister Miftah Ismail and former Pakistan State Oil managing director Sheikh Imranul Haq. According to the reference, Abbasi, in 2013, had awarded a LNG import and distribution contract to the Elengy Terminal in violation of the PPRA rules and relevant laws.



RIYADH: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif departs for Pakistan after participating in a special meeting of World Economic Forum.

We won't interfere in high court affairs: CJP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa on Tuesday said they would not interfere in the matters related to the high court as the practice in the past didn't produce good consequences. "Can a chief justice phone a subordinate judge to order that the verdict should be passed in such a manner?" he asked during the hearing of a suo moto case related to a letter written by the six justices of Islamabad High Court (IHC).
The IHC judges' letter case is being heard by a six-member bench, headed by Chief Justice Isa and comprising Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel, Justice Athar Minallah, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan. After the culmination of Tuesday's proceedings, the six-member bench adjourned the hearing till May 7 and asked the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and others to submit their replies containing suggestions on the subject.
"We appoint a 'monitoring judge'. It is also interference," the chief justice remarked during the hearing - a reference to Justice Ijazul Ahsan who severed in the same capacity in the Panama Papers cases filed against then prime minister Nawaz Sharif. It seemed that [some] people wanted to promote their thinking instead of independence of judiciary, the chief justice observed as Attorney General Usman Mansoor Awan presented his arguments while representing the government being the country's chief law officer.
The chief justice also recalled that he was the first individual to name someone for interference by mentioning Lt-Gen (retd) Faiz Hameed in the Faizabad sit-in case. One the other hand, Justice Shah observed that one had to determine what action was to be taken against the one interfering in the court affairs. Calling for erecting a firewall to stop the practice, Justice Shah said they had to sit together for finding a solution. During the hearing, the attorney general was of the view that the IHC judges had all the powers required to check the alleged interference, including contempt of court.

Gas cylinder blast leaves two dead in Karachi


F.P. Report

KARACHI: Two people died and five others sustained burn injuries in a gas cylinder explosion at a generator shop on MA Jinnah Road, Karachi. Rescue sources said the explosion took place in a generator shop near MA Jinnah Road, near the Sindh Madrasa - tul-Islam. Resultantly, two persons lost their lives and five others suffered burn injuries.
The injured people have been shifted to the hospital. On being informed of the incident, the Rescue and police teams reached the spot for the rescue operation. In a separate incident, a car caught fire near Nursery Flyover on Shahrah-e-Faisal. The car riders remained safe as the nearby people along with the rescue team, managed to douse the fire.

Petrol price slashed by Rs.5.45 per litre

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The government on Tuesday slashed the fuel prices by up to Rs.8.42 per litre. The petrol price has been decreased by Rs.5.45 per litre, while diesel price cut by Rs.8.42 per litre. The new prices would be effective from May 1.
The Ogra had forwarded the oil price summary to the Ministry of Petroleum today, which was approved by the prime minister. Notably, global crude oil prices have been fluctuating over the past 15 days, with today's Brent oil market price at \$88.50 per barrel.



FIRST MAY

INTERNATIONAL LABOURS' DAY

THE SINDH GOVERNMENT SALUTES THE HARD WORK OF THE LABOURS!

On the occasion of 1st May, Government of Sindh pays tribute to all the workers by recognizing their tireless efforts and spirit of hard work.

Let us pledge together to ensure the protection of workers' rights and provide them with a better working environment.

PROSPEROUS WORKERS SHALL LEAD TO UNPRECEDENTED SINDH.

“Labours and workers are the backbone of our country. They are the source of strength and growth.”

Quaid e Awam Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's Message on Labour Day.
1st May, 1972



LABOUR AND MANPOWER DEPARTMENT,
GOVERNMENT OF SINDH

GOVERNMENT OF SINDH IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF SERVICE.

INF/KRY-1248/2024



Qaiser emphasizes making KFHA more active revenue-generating authority

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, has directed the Korangi Fisheries Harbor Authority (KFHA) to take measures to increase its income and make it a more active authority. The federal minister issued this directive during his visit to the Korangi Fisheries Harbor Authority. Secretary Maritime Affairs Aram Anjum Khan and other officials were also present.

Upon arriving at KFHA, the federal minister was warmly received by Managing Director of Korangi Fisheries Harbor Authority, Rear Admiral Shahid Ahmed, SI(M). MD KFHA, Rear Admiral Shahid Ahmed briefed the minister about the ongoing, proposed, and future projects of the authority. Rear Admiral Shahid Ahmed informed the minister that the proposal for establishing the Korangi Fisheries Harbor Authority Board has already been sent to the Prime Minister to make the authority more active. He said that floating piers would be imported to extend the jetty, which would increase the authori-

ty's income.

The minister was briefed that there is a need for a floating pier to facilitate the access of small boats to the jetty, while the auction hall will be built according to international standards. The federal minister was informed that KFHA plans to lease its 24-acre land for 30 years to establish "seafood factories," which would increase the authority's income. Rear Admiral Shahid Ahmed mentioned that a boundary wall would be constructed to make the authority more secure, and coordination with the provincial government will be made to establish Rangers/Police posts.

He stated that according to current laws, fishermen can go up to 12 nautical miles into the sea, and now a license will be issued allowing fishermen to go up to 200 nautical miles into the sea, and discussions with the Sindh government are ongoing for this purpose. The federal minister assured that the government would soon form a board for the Korangi Fisheries Harbor Authority. He instructed the authority's administration to take strict measures to generate more revenue and make the authority viable.

Remembering Khawaja Amin Lone

Saleem Tariq Lone

My late father, Khawaja Mohammad Amin Lone, had been my role model in my professional career.

He was a man of great character and professional excellence as a Lawyer Magistrate who joined the PCS in the year 1947 in the Punjab.

Late Chief Justice of Lahore High Court, and the Federal Ombudsman,

Honourable Justice Sardar Muhammad Iqbal expressed his deep sense of appreciation for my father's professional work, in the following words in the year

1964, in response to a letter written to him by my father inviting him to attend a dinner in Gujranwala Officers Club.

Extract from Honourable Justice Sardar Muhammad Iqbal's letter.

"I still remember the happy days when as an advocate I used to appear before you. And you never failed to exhibit a real judicious approach in all the matters that appeared before you for adjudication."

He left for his eternal abode in the year 1980. May Allah swt bless his soul in the highest level of Jannatul Firdous. Aameen summ Aameen

MCL removes encroachments

LAHORE (APP): The Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL) carried out an anti-encroachment operation and demolished illegal structures in the provincial capital. An MCL spokesperson told the media here on Tuesday that an anti-encroachment squad removed 344

encroachments and 11 solid structures from various locations of the city and shifted 18 truck-load of confiscated goods to the MCL yard.

A total 98 challans were issued besides issuing warning notices to 50 violators while a fine of Rs 37,700 was also imposed.

Punjab Housing warns people

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Housing and Town Planning Agency (PHATA) has warned people against illegal housing schemes in Rawalpindi saying any business deal in unapproved housing projects would be a risk.

In a statement issued here on Tuesday, the spokesman Punjab Housing and Town Planning Agency Rawalpindi said that the general public and business community should refrain from any sale or purchase of plots and constructed houses in unapproved housing schemes.

The spokesman said that PHATA wouldn't be responsible for any fraudulent event if occurred to anyone. He informed that RMRSCO Pvt Ltd (with Chief Executive Officer Rahimuddin) has submitted two contracts

(Rudin Enclave and Rudn Enclave-II) located in Moza Chauhan Tehsil and District Rawalpindi and Moza Badial Adiala Road respectively. NOCs of both applications are processed in the department under Punjab Affordable Private Housing Scheme Rules-2020 and have not yet been approved by the planning agency he said adding that the mentioned schemes were still under consideration and unapproved. He said any purchase or sale through the two mentioned schemes wouldn't be the responsibility of Punjab Housing and Town Planning Agency.

He further advised people to visit the official website to check if any scheme was approved / disapproved or under consideration through the link (https://ahs.punjab.gov.pak/).

Sindh Newspapers Society delegation calls on Sharjeel

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The delegations of the Sindh Newspapers Society and the Larkana Press Club held separate meetings with Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Sharjeel Inam Memon, in Karachi. The delegation from the Larkana Press Club informed Senior Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon about the issues faced by journalists in Larkana.

The Larkana Press Club delegation comprised Murtaza Kalhor, Naveed Larik, Muneer Soomro, Abdul Qadir Jagirani, and Mashooq Odhano.

Senior Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon assured to address all the issues faced by

journalists from Larkana.

The journalists from Larkana also briefed the senior provincial minister about the issues affecting Larkana city.

A delegation from the Sindh Newspapers Society met Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon in Karachi and briefed him about the challenges encountered by media workers and institutions.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon assured the delegation of the Sindh Newspapers Society that the issues would be addressed. He emphasized that the Pakistan People's Party and the Sindh Government have always championed freedom of expression, under the vision of Shaheed Bibi, President Asif Ali Zardari, and Chairman Bilawal

Bhutto Zardari, the Sindh government has been safeguarding the rights of journalists. He stated that the Sindh government is giving particular emphasis to the issues faced by journalist organizations, media entities, and workers. Measures are underway to address the longstanding challenges of journalists in the province.

Sharjeel Inam Memon emphasized our commitment to addressing the challenges encountered by media workers in carrying out their duties. He highlighted that problems will be identified and resolved through collaboration with all relevant organizations. The delegation of Sindh Newspapers Society comprised Qazi Shafiq Ahmed, Rizwan Shah, Ayub Pirzada, Naseem Sheikh, and Shahid Ansari.



PM&DC takes swift action in response to tragic death of medical student

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PM&DC) has swiftly responded to the tragic death of a medical student, allegedly due to misconduct and mistreatment of the staff of Avicenna Medical College Lahore towards students, by launching a comprehensive investigation into the matter.

The PM&DC, as the apex regulatory body for medical and dental education in Pakistan, is deeply saddened by the loss of a promising medical student and extends its heartfelt condolences to the family and loved ones affected by this unfortunate incident.

The PM&DC has taken notice of the matter regarding the alleged misconduct and mistreatment of the aforementioned medical college towards students. In line with its commitment to upholding the highest standards of professionalism, ethics, and patient care, the PM&DC has initiated a thorough investigation to ascertain the facts surrounding the inci-

dent. PM&DC sought comments from the Avicenna Medical College about the unfortunate incident stating to reply on priority with comprehensive details.

President of PM&DC Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj, stated, "We are deeply concerned about the circumstances leading to the untimely demise of a medical student and are committed to ensuring that justice is served. The welfare and well-being of students are of paramount importance to us, and any form of misconduct or mistreatment will not be tolerated."

He also added that the family of the deceased is welcomed to reach us to file the complaint.

The investigation will focus on evaluating the institutional practices and policies concerning student welfare, ensuring compliance. Additionally, the PM&DC will collaborate with relevant authorities and stakeholders to implement measures aimed at preventing similar incidents in the future and fostering a supportive and conducive learning environment for medical students across the country.

Statement of Engro Corporation - LNG Case Decision

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Accountability Court has honourably exonerated and acquitted Chairman Hussain Dawood, Director Abdul Samad Dawood and former CEO Sheikh Imran ul Haq, in the award of the LNG contract to Engro Elengy Terminal Limited, as no evidence was found to prove any illegality, irregularity, or loss to the national exchequer.

Engro Corporation welcomes this much awaited decision of the

Accountability Court. Engro has always strived to act in a fair and transparent manner in all its business and commercial commitments. Over the last six decades, the Company has built its reputation through a strong focus on effective corporate governance, ethics and integrity, and compliance with the laws of the land. The LNG Terminal in question is an essential part of Pakistan's energy infrastructure; it supplies 15% of Pakistan's total gas requirement, which is a critical industrial and domestic input, to a growing country.

GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA COMMUNICATION & WORKS DEPARTMENT							
NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING (Single Stage Single Envelop E-Bidding System)							
C&W Department (Building Division, Bannu). Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa invites electronic Bids from eligible firms/contractor in accordance with KPPRA procurement rules 2014 on single stage single envelop procedure for the following works.							
S. No	Name of Work	Required category of PEC	Tender Entry Fee	Bid Security+ S/Duty	Period of completion	Last date of submission and time	Date of opening and time
1.	Estabtt: of 100 Primary School on need basis in KP. ADP No.397/20025, SH: Estabtt: of GGPS Kotka Ilyas Khan District Bannu. SW: Solar System.	C-6 EE-11	0.03%	Rs.31820/-	As per Work Order.	28/05/2024 At 12.00 H	28/05/2024 At 12.30 H
2	Constr: of Eidgah & Janazgahs in District Bannu, Karak, Swat, Kohat, Lower Dir, Hangu & Lakki Marwat, ADP Code 210-484, SH:-Constr: / Reh: of Janazgah at Village Kotka Baghban Sarya Khet District Bannu	C-6	-do-	Rs.100000/-	-do-	-do-	-do-
3	Impvt: & Reh: of Masjid, Darul Uloom & Deeni Madaris in KP (Phase-III) i.e Hafiz Jee Masjid Bannu City, ADP Code No. 180496. 1. Masjid Kotka Tilgar Patool Khet, Tehsil Domel Bannu. 2. Constr:Reh: & Re-Constr: of Masjid Paimda Khet, Tehsil & Dist: Bannu. 3. Impvt/Reh: & Constr: of Jamia Masjid Khalid bin Waleed Village Jalander Khet. 4. Impvt/Reh: & Constr: of Jamia Masjid Nazim ul Uloom.	-do-	-do-	Rs.80000/- Rs.60000/- Rs.100000/- Rs80000/-	-do-	-do-	-do-
4	Improvement/Constr/Re-Constr: & Reh: of Masjid & Madaris in KP. ADP No. 112/210481 (2022-23). SH: Impvt/ Constr: & Re-Constr: of Jamia Masjid Jonai Baka Khet.	-do-	-do-	Rs40000/-	-do-	-do-	-do-
Bid documents and instruction to bidders can be downloaded from C&W web site (www.cwd.gkp.pk) before the submission date/time.							
a. Bid security 2% in shape of call deposit (in Original) and 0.03% Tender Firm Entry Fee of the estimated cost in cash from (non-refundable) should be enclosed along with bidding documents.							
b. The contractors quoting their bids upto a limit of 10% below Engineer Estimate shall submit bid security to the extent of 2% of Engineer Estimate only.							
c. The contractor quoting their bids more than 10% below upto 20% below on Engineer Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional Security of Engineer Estimated Cost in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of Additional Security then it will be considered as non-responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favour of Govt. and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.							
d. Similarly, a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineer Estimated Cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineer Estimate along with detail rate analysis. In case of more than 20% below bids if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and / or required amount of additional security then the said bid shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted alongwith such non responsive bid shall be forfeited in favour of Govt and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.							
e. In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bids is, in view of the Procuring Entity, not convincing, the Head of the Procuring Entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without any forfeiture of bid securities and record reasons thereof.							
f. The procuring entity may offer the contract to next lowest bidder after due diligence in the context of financial difference between such two bids and the market analysis in order to discourage cartel making and to protect public interest at large.							
g. The bidder must be enlisted with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority as per KPPRA Rules.							
h. Pay Order is not acceptable as per Notification No. of KPPRA vide No KPPRA/M/E/Estt/1-12/2017-18, dated 05/04/2018.							
i. Bid security of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd lowest electronic bidder for the specific work will be retained by the Department till the approval of bids.							
j. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act XXVII of 2019 2nd Schedule under S.No 14, in case of projects funded under the Government's ADP Budget, Tax shall be charged at the rate of Two Percent (2%).							
k. Venue of bids opening is office of the Executive Engineer, Building Division Bannu.							
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER							
INF (P) 820/24							
BUILDING DIVISION BANNU							

ورکرز ویلفیئر فنڈ

محنت کشوں کے مالی مفادات کا محافظ

محکمہ ملی یوم مزدور
محنت کشوں کو سلام

کارکردگی

- 83,462 فیٹس اور مکانات کی تعمیر
- 1430 ڈاکٹرز، انجینئرز اور گریجویٹس بزرگوار کارپ
- 195,772 محنت کشوں کی بینکوں کو میرج گرانٹ کی ادائیگی
- 313,569 کارپس سے مستفید طلباء
- 27,765 ڈیٹھ گرانٹ
- جسکیم
- 57 محنت کشوں کیلئے سالانہ جسکیم

مزدوروں اور ان کی فیملی کیلئے مفت اعلان کی سہولت

انسٹی ٹیوٹ آف کڈنی ڈیزیز برن اینڈ ٹراما سنٹر پشاور

نیشنل انسٹی ٹیوٹ آف کڈنی ڈیزیز لاہور

نیشنل انسٹی ٹیوٹ آف کارڈیو اسکولر ڈیزیز (NICVD) سکھر سندھ

مختار سے شہج ہسپتال ملتان

ورکرز ویلفیئر فنڈ

وزارت سمندر پار پاکستانیز وترقی انسانی وسائل، حکومت پاکستان

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CORRIGENDUM / تصحیح ای۔ ٹینڈر نوٹس

Construction of TMA Complexes in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, ADP No.210559 INF(P)695/24 کا ٹینڈر کا اشتہار 30-04-2024 کو ہو رہا ہے، اس ٹینڈر کا اشتہار 10-04-2024 میں موجودہ 10-04-2024 کو شائع ہوا ہے۔ مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ ٹینڈر شرائط Required PEC Category میں C-3 کے بجائے C-5 لکھا اور پڑھا جائے۔ بانی تمار شرائط جوں کے توں رہیں گی۔ مزید معلومات کے لئے ای۔ ایم۔ اے، دروش کے دفتر سے دفتری اوقات کار میں فون نمبر 0943-480447 پر رابطہ کریں۔

INF(P)824/24

اشتہار
تعمیل میڈیکل آفیسر
ٹی۔ ایم۔ اے۔ دروش
Tehsil Municipal Officer TMA Drosh

اشتہار
تعمیل میڈیکل آفیسر
ٹی۔ ایم۔ اے۔ دروش
Tehsil Officer (I&S) TMA Drosh



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur addressing the inaugural ceremony of Inter-Madaris Games 2024.

KP to save Rs 04bln by books' reuse policy: Minister

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Advisor Muzamil Aslam on Tuesday said Rs 04 billion would be saved by the books reuse policy at schools.

Presiding over a meeting of the Elementary and Secondary Education and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Textbook Board here, he said the printing of 34 million books in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been completed for this year, while last year, 56.3 million books were printed.

He said a ban has been imposed on buying and selling of new and old textbooks. He said funds would

be released to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board for printing of textbooks on time.

From next year, school teachers, and students would be given gifts for keeping books in good condition, said Muzamil Aslam.

Additional Secretary

Abdullah Ikram and Chairman Textbook Board Syed Saqlain Gilani participated in the meeting. Advisor Finance Khyber Pakhtunkhwa congratulated Elementary and Secondary Education and Chairman Textbook Board on the reuse policy of books.

PHC issues transfer, posting orders F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court issued transfer and posting orders of 10 District and Sessions Judges (D&SJs) across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Tuesday.

According to a notification issued by PHC's Registrar stated that D&SJ Babar Ali transferred to Malakand, Director General Judicial Academy Furkh Jamshed posted as Sessions Judge Dera Ismail Khan, Muhammad Adil Khan as Special Judge Anti-Corruption (Central) Peshawar and Sofia Waqar Khattak posted at Kohat courts.

Moreover, Jehanzeb Shinwari posted as Director General Judicial Academy Peshawar, Fazal Sattar has transferred to Peshawar High Court, Mureez Khan Khalil posted as Additional Registrar Administration and Altaf ur Rehman transferred to PHC. D&SJ Muhammad Shoab transferred to Abbottabad and Ghulam Abbas posted Director NJPIC.

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) ordered Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), authorities to decide a petition filed by the widow of a deceased employee seeking provision of pension within one month. The court directed the Chairman of FBR, Islamabad, to decide on the

pension case of the petitioner in accordance with the law and the Supreme Court's verdict.

The counsel Malik Shahbaz Khan advocate argued that petitioner's brother, Nadeem Khan Afridi, was an Assistant Director at the Regional Tax Office, Peshawar, who passed away on September 13, 2021. Although he was

not married, his sister (the petitioner) is his legal heir and is entitled to his pension.

However, despite being cleared by an inquiry, her pension was stopped due to a complaint filed with NAB, which was later found to be in violation of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2017.

PHC observed that initi-

ating an inquiry based on a complaint from an unknown individual is not justified, as legal requirements must be fulfilled before starting an inquiry.

PHC ordered Chairman of FBR to decide the plea within one month, in accordance with the law and the Supreme Court's verdict while dispose of the petition.

Prize distribution ceremony for Afghan refugee students held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A prize distribution ceremony arranged for Afghan Refugee students at Buner Afghan in which special guest Assistant Commissioner Mandarn Maryam Bukhtawar distributed awards and prizes among the position holders' students.

The ceremony was attended by Helvetas Pakistan Haris Ahmed, Manager Samira Qazi, Field Officers Muhammad Alam and Shahin, Afghan Shura President Pir Zada Zdran, Haji Ghany Nasiri, parents, and children.

During the ceremony,

children presented speeches, recited poems, and sang songs, highlighting the importance of education. The participants praised the efforts of Helvetas Pakistan in providing education to Afghan refugee children.

Maryam Bukhtawar emphasized the significance of education, stating that it is our basic need. She commended Helvetas Pakistan for their efforts in educating Afghan refugee children and expressed hope that this initiative will continue to grow.

Helvetas Pakistan's Field Officers Muhammad Alam and Shahin stated that the organization is currently providing education to

3,720 children in 68 centers across six districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including 600 children from the Koga camp. They mentioned that these children were previously collecting garbage and were deprived of education due to poverty.

Helvetas Pakistan also provides free books, uniforms, shoes, and sports equipment to these children.

The organizers expressed their commitment to starting middle school education with the help of their donors. They have already enrolled 400 children who passed the fifth grade into other mid-

dle schools in the area, with 60% of them being girls.

Afghan Shura leaders Pir Zada Zdran, Haji Ghany Nasiri and Nazak Mir thanked Helvetas Pakistan for their efforts. They requested Helvetas Pakistan and its donors to expand their services to include middle school education, enabling these children to become useful citizens of society.

The ceremony concluded with the distribution of shields to outstanding students, teachers, and guests, and Pir Zada Zdran presented a cash award of PKR 5,000 to the Helvetas Pakistan team for their excellent performance.

Awareness session organized

PESHAWA (APP): In line with the directions of Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman) Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat, Regional Office Peshawar arranged a briefing session for the students of Law and Shariah Department, Islamia College University here Tuesday.

Badshah Gul Wazir, Advisor Incharge and Bakhtiar Gul, Deputy Advisor made a detailed presentation to the students and faculty of Law and Shariah Department, Islamia College University, Peshawar on the working and grievance resolution mechanism of the institution of Wafaqi Mohtasib (Ombudsman).

Around 300-400 students and faculty participated in the briefing.

The Adviser highlighted the role and functions of the Wafaqi Mohtasib regarding dispensation of cost-free relief to people.

The complaints could be filed either through simple application or online services.

Badshah Gul Wazir said complaints were decided in sixty days period.

ICS for girls classes to start from 2nd May F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Islamia Collegiate School (ICS) for Girls will commence formal classes from 2nd May while Joint Action Committee paid thanks to Vice Chancellor Islamia College University for redressal of the demand, on Tuesday.

Vice Chancellor said that The Islamic College has always played a key role in national progress while a notification issued from Registrar Officer for approval of the Islamia Collegiate School for Girls.

Joint Action Committee presidents including Dr. Fazal Wahid, ICS Staff Association president Kafeel Ahmed Khalil, Shah Faisal Khan, Israr Khan, Zainullah Khan, and Chand Masih, thanked the Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Ali Muhammad and the Registrar, Dawood Zahid, for fulfilling a long-standing demand of the association.

Inter-Madrasas, Special Person Games begins Special atheltes to get sports scholarship: CM

PESHAWAR (APP): The colorful opening ceremony of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Inter-Madrasa and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Games for Persons with Different Abilities got underway here at Hayatabad Sports Complex on Tuesday.

Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur formally inaugurated the Games wherein 800 male and female athletes – 400 of the Persons with Different Abilities and 400 Madrasa Students are taking part.

The Madrasa Athletes are taking part in the three different Games including Football, Volleyball and Cricket while the 400 male and female Persons with Different Abilities are taking part in 34 different Games being organized by Director General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Chief Minister in his address said that the players of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be known all over the world. He also announced the inclusion of Special Athletes in the Sports Scholarship and assured them that they would be supported for international events and international coaching as well as normal players.

Madrasah students will now come forward in every arena, Ali Amin Gandapur said, adding, "People of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are going to support the world for peace."

There is no shortage of talent and resources in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would be provided to the youth so that they could be able to excel at national and international levels, Ali Amin Gandapur said. Sports keeps the youth away from drugs, Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said. "If there will be more sports activities, the use of drugs will end," Ali Amin Gandapur said. As a government, we are with the people, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said.

At the end, the Chief Minister formally inaugurated the Games, followed by a firework, and pigeon and balloons were also released in a colourful opening ceremony. The Sufi Dance Performers from Lahore enthralled the sitting spectators.

Adviser to the Chief Minister on Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhr Jahan, Secretary Sports Mutiullah Khan, Commissioner Peshawar Riaz Mehsud, Minister of Higher Education Meena Khan Afridi, DG Sports Abdul

Nasir Khan, Additional Director General Sports Rashida Ghaznavi, Director Sports Jamshed Baloch, Director Sports Operations Azizullah Khan, Deputy Director Sports Operation Jamshed Baloch, other administrative committees, Amjad Iqbal, Shah Faisal, Syed Jafar Shah, Administrator Hayatabad Sports Complex Abid Nazim, players, officials and large number of spectators were also present.

Before the formal inauguration of the Games, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur inaugurated the international four Glass-wall Squash Court and Swimming Pool in the premises of the Hayatabad Sports Complex.

The ceremony was started with recitation from the Holy Quran special person Salman Khan of Mardan, followed by the March Past of Seven Regional Teams of Madrasa from Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Kohat, Hazara, Mardan, Swat and host Peshawar while 400 Persons with different abilities.

All the players participated in the National Anthem, followed by Martial Arts Display with a break that attracted a large number of spectators.

He said a total prize money of Rs. 1 million has been fixed for the winners, runners and third position holders while Rs. 5 million more was announced by the Chief Minister in his address. He also thanked the chief minister for the release of timely funds.

He said the games would continue for four days and all the position holders would be awarded handsome cash prizes.

In his addressing Adviser to the Chief Minister on Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhr Jahan said they have planned Inter-Regional Games, National Cricket League, and Inter-District Games this year besides holding other provincial and national events in order to provide ample opportunities to the players of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to come and excel. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Super League will be held at the end of this year, Syed Fakhr Jahan said, adding, Pakistan Super League matches will be held in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa soon.

He said there is no sports board after Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, but we will support all the players with your help, Syed Fakhr Jahan.



PESHAWAR: Lady Health Worker administering polio drops to a child during anti polio campaign at Dalazak Road.

Transparency in SSC exams to be ensured: Tarakai

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Minister for Elementary and Secondary Education Faisal Khan Tarakai has said that in the ongoing matriculation exam transparency will be ensured in every step.

He further added that complaints have been received on social media regarding paper leakage in the matriculation examinations, which has been identified by timely action and ND twelve persons have been suspended found involved in paper leakage. However, those examination halls where paper leakage reported should be banned completely.

And those who found involved will be treated as

He expressed these views while addressing a press conference in Illa cell of Information department here in Peshawar regarding the ongoing matric exams. The Minister added that our exams have more than 90 percent transparency and the exams in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are satisfactory than the rest of the provinces.

While the viral papers that go viral on social media are mostly fake. Similarly, in Mardan, Malakand and Dera Ismail Khan Boards the inquiries have been initiated on complaints.

involved will be treated as

per E&D rules. Faisal Khan Turkey added that 98 percent out of the 24 thousands supervisory staff is performing excellent duty and their performance is outstanding, while the steps taken by the department of Education regarding the ongoing exams are commendable. And we are taking SLO based exams; I myself and my team are monitoring the examination process across the province.

The Minister of Education further added that we have prepared an advance plan for the upcoming FA/FSC exams and merit and transparency will be ensured in the Department of Education.

Labours teremd vital part of national economy

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Labours are an important part of the national economy. Celebrating International Workers' Day is a recognition of the services of the labour class in the country's development and prosperity.

This was expressed by Speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Babar Salim Swati, in a statement issued here on the occasion of International Labour Day.

Babar Salim Swati said that God has declared the worker as His friend and has instructed that the wages of a worker should be paid before his sweat dries.

This is a clear definition of the status and economic rights of workers in Islam.

He added that workers and laborers, whether educated, uneducated, skilled, or unskilled, play a key role in the development of any country and society.

Babar Salim Swati said that in the previous terms of PTI in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, productive measures were taken for the welfare and well-being of the labor class, and this will continue in the current government as well.

The Speaker of the Assembly stated that the protection of workers' rights and providing maximum relief to the labor class in the current difficult situation are among their priorities.



PESHAWAR: A tourist taking picture of a Budha statue her visit to Peshawar Museum.



In brief

Opening of crossing sought F.P. Report

WANA: A grand Jirga of nine tribes of Ahmadzai Wazir held while nominated a representative delegation to meet with the government officials today to discuss issues the opening of the Angoor Adda gate, ending the sit-in, and issuing visa to Wazir tribesmen. The Ahmadzai Wazir tribes have demanded that the government should relax the passport issuance conditions for them, as they have properties on both sides of the border. It would be very difficult for them to dissuade from century old interests and properties on both sides. All nine tribes have also demanded that they should be exempted from passport and visa requirements, considering their role in promotion trade activities in the region. The grand jirga unanimously decided that the 9 tribes of Ahmadzai Wazir would work together to increase trade activities at the Angoor Adda gate, which will help reduce unemployment and poverty in the region, leading to lasting peace in lower Waziristan. All nine tribes in the Jirga, also agreed to support the government in its efforts to maintain peace and stability in the region. Now, it is expected that the govt would relax the passport condition for the Wazir tribes living on both sides of the border; and this move of the govt is expected to boost trade in the area, reduce unemployment and poverty, and lead to durable peace in lower Waziristan.

Ayub defends PhD Thesis F.P. Report

MARDAN: Muhammad Ayub Anwar, a scholar from the Department of Islamic Studies at Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan has successfully defended his PhD thesis. According to details, Ayub defended his thesis titled "A Scientific Review of the Contemporary Significance of Ahkam al-Fitnah in the Light of Musnad Hudaifa bin al-Yaman" and has been declared eligible for the PhD degree. During the defense, two external examiners, Dr. Sanaullah Hussain from Allama Iqbal Open University and Dr. Rab Nawaz from Hazara University asked questions and provided suggestions to the scholar. The event was attended by Chairman Dr. Salehuddin, Dean Dr. Muhammad Tahir, Professor Abu Zafar Khan, and several other professors, students, and friends. The scholar dedicated his achievement to his parents, their prayers, and the good wishes of his brothers and friends. This achievement is a significant milestone in his academic journey and a testament to his hard work and dedication to his research.

PSSO to continue efforts F.P. Report

LARKANA: An important meeting of social organization Pak Civil Soldier Organization (PSSO) in Larkana held under the chairmanship of Provincial Additional Secretary Sikander Ali Abaro, decided to start membership in all the taluks and union council level including the five districts of Larkana division and the organization will be made fully active and financial support will be given to the poor, inaccessible and needy people. During the meeting Divisional President Ashiq Hussain Sangi and District Senior Vice President Saleemullah Chaki. In which the district vice president Jamil Ahmed, Qamber Shahdaddot district Qader Salman Ali Abro, Jacobabad district president Shafi Muhammad Jakarani, Shikarpur district president Ghulam Hussain Malana and other civil society representatives participated in large numbers.

Wheat quota made double at provincial level: Minister

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru has said that the wheat quota has been made double at the Provincial level, Inshallah, the people will not have any problem of wheat at the district level adding that the Food Department has prepared an integrated strategy in this regard.

This he said while talking to the mediaman during his visit to Karak on Tuesday. Khurshid Khattak

MPA, Deputy Commissioner Karak Mujibur Rahman, DFC Karak Abu Bakar, other district officers and district leaders of the party were also present on the occasion.

Zahir Shah Toru said, the PTI government is trying its level best to provide maximum relief to the people in line with the vision of Imran Khan. He added the provincial government will not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the rights of the people.

In response to a ques-

tion, the Food Minister said that the rates of roti for Nanbais have been fixed and the food department has been directed to start checking of Bazaars on daily basis adding that he himself is also making surprise visits to the markets. He asked the officers of Food Department to serve the people with devotion. Earlier, the Food Minister was briefed in detail about the food storage, demand and supply in Karak district in detail.

Secretary Home directs maintenance of law & order

Saqib Mushtaq

MULTAN: Secretary Home Punjab Noor ul Ameen Mengal held a detailed briefing on the law and order situation in the Commissioner Office Multan and added that cooperation between the divisional administration and police is indispensable to maintaining law and order in the city. He ordered strict enforcement against the display of weapons to ensure the establishment of peace and emphasized cracking down hard against the mafia involved in drug and ice nefarious activities.

On this occasion, Commissioner Multan Division Mariam Khan remarked that the law and order situation in the city, including the division, is satisfactory. Complete cooperation has been obtained from the religious scholars regarding matters such as Muharram, Ramadan, Rabi-ul-Awwal, and other religious affairs. Steps are being taken for the rehabilitation of drug addicts on the directives of the Punjab government. Vocational training is being provided to residents of the Drug Rehabilitation Center, keeping their interests in mind. After completion of the course, certificates will also be issued to these individuals along with job security.

RPO Multan Sohail



Chaudhry, stated that strict action is being taken against electricity thieves, with 7,303 cases registered so far and 6,555 electricity thieves arrested. The situation of law and order in the division is better with 10,504 police personnel, 82 police stations, and 4 protection centres established in the division, providing relief to 2,598 citizens.

A modern system has been implemented in the police stations, a culture of negotiation is being enforced and immediate action is taken on complaints. The purpose of upgrading police stations is to change the attitude and culture of the police for the protection of citizens. It is imperative for citizens to feel safe by visiting police stations themselves.

RPO Sohail Chaudhry mentioned that special focus is being given to action against drug dealers

in educational institutions. CPO Multan, Sadiq Dogar, stated that during the rehabilitation process, patients are kept under tight security in the Drug Rehabilitation Center. Elimination of drugs from society and social rehabilitation is a collective responsibility.

DC Multan Rizwan Qadir provided a detailed briefing about Price Control Magistrates. Additional Commissioner Abdul Jabbar and officers from relevant departments were also present. Later, Secretary Home Punjab Noor ul Ameen Mengal visited the Central Jail and Women's Jail along with Commissioner Mariam Khan. They inspected facilities, met with prisoners, visited the hospital in the jail, inquired about medical facilities, inspected the kitchen, and checked food quality.



HYDERABAD: Labourer busy in work on the eve of International Labour Day.

BHU Shalbandi operationalized in Buner

F.P. Report

BUNER: Basic Health Unit (BHU) Shalbandi has been functionalized after eight years of closure to provide health facilities to the 20000 residents of the area, on Tuesday. Moreover, appointment of doctors. LHV midwife Medical and EPI Technician, Class IV and watchman immediately.

It should be noted that this BHU was approved by the late Member Provincial Assembly Haji Habibur Rahman Khan in the year 2013 and in the year 2016/17, doctors and staff with required facilities were provided for it, but it could not made practically functional and everything was non-operational and closed for quite long time.

The people also demanded provision of nonstop electricity, clean drinking water, appointment of doctors and medicines. DC directed administrative officers ensure the supply of furniture and other necessary equipment to make BHU Shalbandi. Finally, it has been opened for treatment where the staff under the supervision of Dr. Imran will

provide basic health facilities to 20000 inhabitants of UC Shalbandi.

TMA launches cleanliness drive: Tehsil Municipal Administration launched cleaning drive Pacha Bazaar and Durbar Hazrat Pir Baba Sahib. The main bazaar of Salarzai will be kept clean and for this purpose a unit office of TMA will be opened in Jowar Bazaar where sanitation staff will be available and the Chairman and TMO will sit there for two days in a week.

Giving details to the media, Chairman Sher Alam Khan has said that the he is saddened by the two-and-a-half-year delay in public service, but now that a new government has been formed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, there are many public welfare projects in their priorities.

In which cleaning of busy markets and the area of Pir Baba's shrine and setting up lawners to dump garbage at appropriate places, conducting awareness campaign for cleanliness and beautification of markets is the first priority so that the business community and customers visiting these markets will be

provided clean and healthy environment.

They added the pilgrims of Pir Baba Sahib and tourists to Kalil Valley, Qadar Nagar scenic spot the Gokand Valley and the famous and historical hill Elam Ghar will have a good environment. Keeping in view the rush in the Pacha bazaar, he has expressed his determination to reserve a place for fruit and vegetable hand-carrying and vendors and to allocate a stand for rickshaw-jeep-taxi as well. They claimed facilities like flush system and waiting room for women at general bus stand and waiting shed and facilities at tehsil Gadezai will be ensured.

Chairman Sher Alam Khan and TMO Anwar Shamim Khan also expressed sorrow that after the establishment of Gadezai Tehsil, nothing was found among the assets of Daggar Tehsil apart from a scrap vehicle and expressed their resolve that after completing the paperwork, they will also contact the provincial government for the necessary logistics to clean up and make the environment healthy.



KARAK: KP Minister for Food, Zahir Shah Toru talking to media persons.

Protection of coal mine workers sought Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Elders of Torawadi area of Central Karam have appealed to the government to take measures to protect coal mine workers. Elders of Hasan Khel tribe say that there are more than two dozen coal mines in Dhand Khawaidad Khel area and dozens of workers are working in them.

There are no safety arrangements and facilities for the workers. Two years ago a mobile phone tower has been installed but it is still closed due to which there are serious difficulties in communicating with the rescue and police in emergency. They appeal to restore mobile phone tower as soon as possible.

RTA removes illegal bus stand: Secretary Regional Authority (RTA) Kohat, Muhammad Shoaib visited various areas of the city and closed illegal bus stands.

He sealed Karak Bus Stand illegally constructed on Bannu Road and directed owners to shift the stand on appropriate location. He said that prompt action would be taken against illegally constructed bus stands to ensure smooth flow of traffic and to facilitate public. Meanwhile, people have appreciated action of transport authority and also suggested future raids to discourage construction of illegal bus stands in the city.

2 new Nadra Centers to be established

F.P. Report

SUKKUR: Federal Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi has said two new Nadra Centers will be established in Sukkur City and Rohri in three Months This was stated by him while speaking during a surprise visit to Passport Office and NADRA Regional Centre Sukkur here on Tuesday.

Mohsin Naqvi directed to complete the construction of the Passport office building within Six Months. He interacted with the people at passport office and inquired about issues faced by them during the visit. The Interior Minister said steps were being taken to ensure access to Documents for the citizens at NADRA Centers.

He also vowed to make passport offices as efficient as Nadra Centres as he reviewed the arrangements made to facilitate the Public. Later, talking to Media, Naqvi said that it was time to work for progress of the country. He said that they have to work for the development of the country. Mohsin Naqvi said that they will further improve law and order situation in Sindh including Karachi.

Responding to a question, he said that the Army can be called in for assistance in Katcha operation against dacoits of the Sindh. The interior minister said that they will take all possible steps in order to establish peace in Kashmir, Ghotki and Shikarpur districts of Sindh. He further said that there will be a meeting with the Sindh Chief Minister in this regard adding that "I have come here to see the situation regarding unrest in Sindh."

Growing population is a major challenge: Liaquat

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The special assistant to chief minister on welfare and development MPA Malik Liaquat Ali Khan has said that the rapidly increasing population is becoming the most important and serious problem of our country. Talking to local journalists during his visit to the office of district population officer here the other day, the CM aide said that all segments of society should play their active role to overcome this problem.

The Special Assistant to the Chief Minister held a detailed meeting with the employees of the Population Welfare department. District officer population welfare department Shahid Khan was also in attendance.

Shahid briefed the law-maker about the performance and objectives of various units of his department. MPA Malik Liaquat Ali Khan clarified that corruption in the department would never be tolerated

and merit would be ensured at any cost. He said that the people had mandated them for their welfare and development and the PTI government would never disappoint them. He said that merit and justice would be ensured and there would be no injustice with anyone.

"The people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have given the mandate to our party for the third time and we will serve them in such a way that they will remember for a long time. Expressing his satisfaction over the overall performance of the population welfare department, the lawmaker said that the main objective of government departments and its officials was to serve the public and provide them with maximum facilities. He said that failure to control the problems of overpopulation was a major challenge and all stakeholders should play their active role to overcome it.

One dead, 10 injured in road accident: A 55-year Muhammad Haroon was killed while ten others

including women and children were injured when two passengers' vans collided at Bandagai in the jurisdiction of Talash police station, Rescue 1122 officials said.

The Rescue team reached the spot and shifted the injured to the Category D hospital Talash while critically injured were taken to the district headquarters hospital Timergara. The injured were identified as Haji Rehman, wife of Muhammad Rehman, daughter of Ahmad Zeb, Iqra, Somia and Immad. Police registered a case and started further investigations.

Meanwhile a child was killed and another was injured when roof of a house owned by Abdul Akbar caved in due to torrential rains at Barikab village in the jurisdiction of Munda police station. Several cattle and household items were buried under the debris. Local residents have demanded compensation for the poor family.

KKKUK holds seminar on cybersecurity

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak has organized one-day seminar focused on the crucial topic of "Legal Insights of Pakistan Cybersecurity."

The seminar, held on Tuesday was organised by the Religious and Character Building Society of university. It aimed to raise awareness about the legal framework surrounding cybersecurity in Pakistan.

Dr. Muhammad Zubair, Director of the Office of Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) at Khushal Khan Khattak

University, Karak an authority in the field, delivered lecture on the significance of understanding the legal aspects of cybersecurity in today's world especially Pakistan.

In his address, Dr. Zubair emphasized the importance of cybersecurity in the contemporary global landscape. He termed cybersecurity as important as the traditional security measures of a country. He stressed the need for robust cybersecurity practices, drawing examples from countries known for their stringent

cybersecurity measures.

Dr. Zubair explained the legal framework governing cybersecurity in Pakistan, shedding light on the existing regulations and their implications. He elucidated on the importance of compliance with these regulations to ensure the safety and security of digital assets. The seminar was attended by faculty, Deputy Provost, Administration, and students, reflecting their interest in cybersecurity issues. They remained engaged in insightful discussions and opinion exchanges.

BISE Mardan denied leaking of matric papers

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Mardan has categorically denied the rumors circulating on social media and some newspapers about the alleged leakage of matriculation papers. In a statement issued here, the board termed the rumors as baseless and misleading.

According to the statement, the matriculation examinations under the auspices of BISE Mardan are being conducted smoothly, and no such complaint has been received so far. The statement further said that some elements are trying to tarnish the image of the board administration, the provincial government and the Minister of Education by spreading false rumors and viral mobile pictures on social media.

The board administration has made it clear that it will not be blackmailed by anyone and will continue to implement its merit-based policy. The statement said that a paper is considered leaked only when it is available somewhere before its official commencement, which is not the case here.

The educational boards are working on a strategy to identify and bring to justice

individuals involved in such nefarious activities. The board administration has clarified that some elements are trying to blackmail the board by spreading rumors of paper leakage, but they will not succeed in their malicious intentions.

The statement urged the students and parents not to pay heed to such baseless rumors and propaganda, and to focus on their studies and preparations for the examinations. The board administration has assured that it will take all necessary measures to ensure the transparency and fairness of the examinations.

Commissioner directed measures for Hepatitis control: Commissioner Mardan Shaukat Ali Yousafzai, expressing concern over the increasing spread of Hepatitis C in Mardan and Swabi, has directed women assistant commissioners to monitor beauty parlors and male magistrates to monitor barber shops to prevent it.

That the cooperation of the health department should also be obtained in this regard so that the spread of this dangerous disease can be stopped. He also directed to make the campaign against polythene bags and illegal encroachment more effective. He was addressing the

monthly revenue and performance meeting in his office.

Additional Commissioner Naeem Akhtar, Secretary to Commissioner Sara Tahab, Additional Deputy Commissioners of Mardan and Swabi, all AACs, Tehsilidars and TMES attended the meeting. In the meeting, collection of government revenue and performance of schools and hospitals at different places were reviewed.

Secretary to Commissioner Sara Tahab briefed the meeting regarding the spread of hepatitis. Commissioner Mardan directed the administrative officers to intensify the campaign against illegal encroachments and to open footpaths in markets for pedestrians. He said that the construction of the parking lot on the empty plot on Bank Road in Mardan will be completed soon, which will reduce the rush on Bank Road to a great extent.

Commissioner Mardan Shaukat Ali Yousafzai said that the administrative officers should implement the rates fixed by the Price Review Committee and keep a close watch on the development activities so that the construction works can be completed as per the prescribed standards.



UK won't take back asylum seekers from Ireland

LONDON (BBC): The UK government will not take back asylum seekers who have crossed into Ireland until EU-wide asylum rules are changed, Downing Street has said. Last week, the Irish government announced emergency laws to return a rising number of asylum seekers crossing from Northern Ireland. But the PM's official spokesperson said it was up to the UK "to decide who we do and do not accept into the country".

Irish and UK ministers met to discuss the asylum system. The prime minister's official spokesman said: "Clearly, we are not going to start accepting returns from the EU just as the EU does not accept asylum returns from the UK to France. "Even if Ireland was to pass legislation, it is up to the UK government to decide who we do and do not accept into the country. The Irish government says it is seeing an influx of asylum seekers coming from Northern Ireland because they are "fearful" of being sent to Rwanda. And it says it will not allow Ireland to provide a "loophole" for anybody else's "migration challenges". Ireland's deputy leader Micheál Martin denied the row is developing, but a scheduled meeting between Home Secretary James Cleverly and Irish Justice Minister Helen McEntee was postponed at short notice. But the asylum system took centre stage at a pre-arranged meeting taking place between Mr Martin and Northern Ireland Secretary Chris Heaton-Harris. The meeting of the Intergovernmental Conference, which was established under the Good Friday Agreement and has met regularly since. Following the meeting Mr Heaton-Harris said "in no way [do] we want to upset our relationship with Ireland" on asylum claims. But he added that since Brexit, the UK has been directed to "deal with the EU as a whole entity" - and that is the government's current approach. The UK government was still committed to "protecting" the Common Travel Area (CTA) agreement, which allows free travel between the UK and Ireland, "from abuse" by asylum seekers.

Mr Martin said the emergency laws were not an attempt to alter the current agreement with the UK. Instead they were to "legislate for the decision" taken by the Irish High Court, which found that Ireland could not designate the UK a "safe third country" and return asylum seekers because of the threat they would be sent to Rwanda. Ireland has said 80% of recent asylum seekers arrived from Northern Ireland - but did not specify how this number was determined. Ms McEntee said that so far this year a significant majority of people seeking asylum in Ireland had applied at an international pro-

tection office and not at a port or airport, which pointed to people coming from the UK via the land border. BBC Verify could not find any published figures about the 6,000 migrants the Irish government say crossed into Ireland this way and asked the Irish government. It did not provide figures but said its "firm assessment, based on the experience of staff and others working in the field, and based on the material gathered interviews, is that in most cases those applying for the first time in the IPO have entered over the land border". Northern Ireland First Minister Michelle O'Neill said officials from the Northern Ireland executive have been asked to engage with counterparts in both Dublin and London. Speaking in the Northern Ireland Assembly, Ms O'Neill said: "We have a unique circumstance on our island because of partition and that must be respected." The Sinn Féin vice president added: "Ireland cannot become a casualty because of the horrific Rwanda legislation that the Tories have decided to railroad through. It is a disgraceful policy." Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has argued that any increased flow of people into Ireland shows that the Rwanda asylum policy, which became law last week, is already working as a deterrent. Taoiseach (Irish prime minister) Simon Harris said he would not "allow anybody else's migration policy to affect the integrity of our own one". He said he had asked Ms McEntee to bring legislation to cabinet on Tuesday that would enable asylum seekers to be sent back to the UK. The UK government is paying £500m to fund more border patrols to prevent small boat crossings to the UK, and a new detention centre in France, following a new deal between the two countries in 2022.

However, there no specific agreement allowing the UK to return asylum seekers to France once they have crossed the channel. Ireland's planned legislation follows an Irish High Court ruling that Ireland could not designate the UK a "safe third country" and return asylum seekers because of the threat they would be sent to Rwanda. Nick Henderson, chief executive of the Irish Refugee Council, said he believes there may be a connection between UK policy changes and an increase in people seeking asylum in Ireland in the last two years.

In an interview with BBC Radio 4's Today programme, Mr Henderson said it is "unclear" whether the new law "would be sufficient to get around the problems identified by the judge". Many of those entering the UK illegally in recent years have arrived via crossings in small boats from France.

MP says he was deported from Africa

BEIJING (BBC): A Conservative MP says he was deported during a trip to Djibouti because of the east African country's close ties to China. Tim Loughton, the MP for East Worthing and Shoreham, said he was detained for more than seven hours and barred from entry to Djibouti earlier this month. Mr Loughton, who was subjected to sanctions by China in 2021, described the experience as "very lonely and frightening".

China's foreign office said the accusations were baseless. Mr Loughton was in Djibouti for a 24-hour visit, which included a meeting with the British ambassador. He said when he arrived, his passport was scanned and he was asked what he did. "I told them I was a member of parliament and then it went all very frosty," he told BBC Radio 4's Today programme. "Djibouti is effectively a vassel state of China - what China wants, Djibouti kowtows to and having a troublesome MP who has been sanctioned by

China turning up on their doorstep was clearly something they didn't want to entertain." He said he was put on the next available flight out of the country. "This was another example of how the tentacles of the Chinese Communist Government extend far and wide, and their malign influence in sensitive parts of Africa is particularly worrying," he told BBC online separately. "Yet the intimidation of countless others who have dared to speak out against China's industrial scale human rights abuses and who do not have the platform of an MP raises serious concerns." The prime minister's official spokesperson said the foreign office "provided consular support to Mr Loughton at the time and they have also raised this case with the Djiboutians". The spokesperson said that whilst the authorities in Djibouti had the right to refuse entry at their own discretion, the UK Government was seeking further information about this specific case.

In 2021, China imposed sanctions on five MPs, including Mr Loughton, for spreading what it called "lies and disinformation" about the country. It came in retaliation for measures taken by the UK Government over human rights abuses against the Uighur Muslim minority group. Mr Loughton is co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet, which has highlighted China's record on human rights abuses. In 2019, he introduced the Reciprocal Access Bill in the House of Commons which requires the UK Government to take measures against Chinese officials denying access to Tibet. He is also a leading member of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China, an international cross-party group working towards reform on how democratic countries approach China. The former minister and member of the home affairs select committee has said he will not stand at the next general election after more than 27 years in parliament.

Indonesia's Mount Ruang erupts again, spewing ash

MANADO (AP): Indonesia's Mount Ruang volcano erupted Tuesday for a second time in two weeks, spewing ash almost 2 kilometers (more than a mile) into the sky, closing an airport and peppering nearby villages with debris. The alert level of the volcano on Sulawesi Island was again raised to the highest level by the Indonesian geological service, after sensors picked up increasing volcanic activity. The agency urged residents and climbers to stay at least 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) from the volcano's crater.

The 725-meter (2,378-foot) volcano in North Sulawesi province is about 95 kilometers (59 miles) northeast of Sam Ratulangi International Airport in Manado, the provincial capital. The airport was closed Tuesday morning due to reduced visibility and the dangers posed to aircraft engines by ash, said

Ambar Suryoko, head of the regional airport authority.

Ash, grit and rock fell from the sky in towns and cities across the region, including Manado, a city with more than 430,000 people where motorists had to switch on their headlights during daytime. "It was dark with rocks raining at the post from the eruption," said Yulius Ramopolii, the head of Mount Ruang monitoring post. "The vibrations were intense and knocked out power, and volcanic earthquakes shook the glass windows and everything around us." He said the eruption blocked out the sun and peppered several villages with falling debris. No casualties have been reported, Ramopolii said. More than 11,000 people had evacuated after the April 17 eruption when authorities warned that a major eruption might col-

lapse part of the volcano into the sea and cause a tsunami that could endanger nearby villages. Less than 3,000 remained at temporary shelters after the government lowered its alert level to the second highest from four levels and reopened the airport after four days. Indonesia's geological agency on Tuesday warned people on Tagulandang Island, especially those who live near the coast, of the potential of hot volcanic clouds and a tsunami due to eruptions of material entering the sea or collapse of volcanic dome into the sea. Ruang is among about 130 active volcanoes in Indonesia. The archipelagic nation is prone to volcanic eruptions and earthquakes because of its location on the Pacific "Ring of Fire" - a series of fault lines stretching from the western coasts of the Americas through Japan and Southeast Asia.

Bomb attack in Kenya kills 5 people near border

NAIROBI (AP): Five people have been killed in a bomb attack in northern Kenya, the interior ministry said. The bomb, which exploded in El Wak town in Mandera County, near the border with Somalia, wounded five other people. There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but Somalia-based al-Shabab militants affiliated with al-Qaida have carried out other attacks in the area.

The bomb had been placed on a donkey cart to avoid detection, the interior ministry said. Earlier this month, gunmen suspected to be al-Shabab entered the El Wak hospital and injured guards while asking about the whereabouts of doctors. No arrests were made. Al-Shabab often carries out cross-border attacks, especially in the remote Kenyan counties of Mandera and Garissa. The extremist group has threatened Kenyan forces over their yearslong deployment to Somalia as part of multinational efforts to stabilize the Horn of Africa nation following more than three decades of conflict. The African Union Transition Mission in Somalia is set to end in December, leaving Somali forces largely responsible for security.

30 died trying to leave Ukraine

KYIV (Reuters): About 30 Ukrainian men have died trying to illegally cross Ukraine's borders and avoid fighting in the war against Russia which started in 2022, the spokesman for Ukraine's border service told Ukrinform news agency. "Some lost their lives while attempting to cross a mountain river or traverse mountains," said Andriy Demchenko, according to a Ukrinform report.

"Overall, since the full-scale invasion began, about 30 people have died attempting to illegally cross the border." With some exceptions, Ukrainian men between the ages of 18 and 60 are not allowed to leave the country as they may be mobilised to fight, according to Ukraine's martial law.

The State Border Guard Service said in a statement on social media that 24 men alone have died while trying to cross the Tisa river on Ukraine's border with Romania. Demchenko said that since the start of the war border guards have uncovered about 450 criminal groups that have attempted to smuggle people across the border. "Attempts to illegally cross the border occur every day," Demchenko said. "Most of these attempts are outside of border checkpoints on the border with Moldova and Romania."

The largest number with forged documents is recorded on the border with Poland." Earlier in April, Demchenko told Ukraine's state broadcaster that on average about 10 men are stopped each day trying to illegally leave Ukraine. Last week, Ukraine suspended consular services for military-age male citizens until May 18, criticising Ukrainians abroad who it said expected to receive help from the state without helping it battle for survival in the war against Russia.

Copter crashed, 9 soldiers killed

BOGOTA (AP): An army helicopter carrying supplies to troops crashed in a rural area in northern Colombia, killing nine soldiers on board, the country's armed forces said. In a statement, the Colombian military said the helicopter was taking the supplies to the municipality of Santa Rosa del Sur, an area that has recently experienced fighting between the National Liberation Army guerrilla group and the drug trafficking group known as the Gulf Clan.

The military statement described the helicopter crash as an accident. "I regret the death of the nine passengers on board the army's helicopter" Colombian president Gustavo Petro wrote on X. "It was supplying troops...that were conducting operations against the Gulf Clan."

Kenya floods: What a deluge reveals about Nairobi's vulnerability

NAIROBI (BBC): Everything feels sodden in Kenya's capital, Nairobi, and beyond. It seems as if the rain has been falling without respite for six weeks, and the impact has been devastating. So far more than 120 people have lost their lives, including at least 50 after a dam burst a short distance from Nairobi. This is the wet season, but the city has been experiencing far more rainfall than what is normally expected, which has been put down to the El Niño weather phenomenon.

Rivers and sewers have overflowed, roads have become waterways and homes have been destroyed. Flooding in the city is not unusual but the sheer scale of this year's deluge has exposed longer term problems with the way Nairobi has developed. "You can't contain nature. It doesn't work like that," Prof Alfred Omenya, an urban planning and environment expert, told the BBC. He says that much of the city sits on top the Nairobi River's floodplain, which cuts through the capital.

A number of other rivers and streams also flow through Nairobi. A properly developed drainage system may have been able to cope, but as the city has grown over the last century from 100,000 residents to today's 4.5 million the infrastructure has not kept up. Compounding the problem is that less than half of the residents are connected to a sewage system. In slum areas, open sewers are common, which overflow when it floods.

Drains have also become blocked as people dispose of their household rubbish. Open spaces have disappeared as more and more buildings have gone up - both in slums and planned areas. As more concrete covers the earth there are fewer places to absorb the water, and it runs off - overwhelming the drains and rivers. As a result the roads have become part of the drainage system, Prof Omenya said. He blames "clueless leadership that started from the colonial times". Unplanned settlements have been allowed to develop around the rivers, sometimes disrupting their natural flow.

Many of the slum areas in the city, such as Mukuru and Mathare, have been built on marginal land along river valleys. Last Wednesday, the authorities retrieved a dozen bodies of people who had drowned in the Mathare river following heavy rains the previous evening.

In the aftermath of the downpour, most of the houses in the area were flooded, with some residents trapped on the roofs of their houses. Upmarket estates were also hit, including some that have not been prone to flooding in the past. The man who runs the city, Nairobi Governor Johnson



Sakaja, said the rainfall levels have been very high, and blamed the encroachment on the land surrounding the rivers for the flooding crisis.

The governor has now suspended approvals for building developments and excavations. But the bigger task might be clearing or improving the slum areas. The government does have a plan to build affordable and decent housing, but past upgrading projects have not met the burgeoning demand. In the meantime, residents have been asked to move to higher ground for their own safety. President William Ruto has said that people living in dangerous areas around the country will be moved to land provided by the National Youth Service, while the government plans a long-term solution.

He said the military and the national government had been mobilised to work with counties to support those in distress. Neighbouring Kiambu county, parts of which are on a river basin and have been affected by the floods, has also announced it will take measures to mitigate the situation, including building inspections. In the past, buildings in and around the city have been demolished as a way to address irregular developments - but often with little effect. Some of developments in the city and its environs have been criticised for impeding the flow of water, which then finds its way to other areas. Construction of buildings on wetlands has also been a big problem. In 2018, the multimillion-dollar South End Mall in Langata and the Ukay Mall in Westlands were demolished as part of a campaign to reclaim wetlands.

"Now we have many homes built next to rivers so flooded. Walls have collapsed all over... Don't go against nature. It will fight back," Robert Alai, a Nairobi county assembly legislator wrote on X, formerly Twitter. Before the most recent floods, Mr Sakaja had defended the development of high-rise buildings in some residential areas, saying the only way

Nairobi would develop was to build up. His stance had come amid criticism that the developments were straining an already overwhelmed infrastructure. He has now issued a directive stopping all building development approvals "until we can review all those that have been issued and are continuing in the city". A number of MPs also criticised the governor over city management, citing the sewage and flooding crisis. Mr Sakaja has defended himself, saying the criticism was politically motivated. Outspoken Senator Samson Cherargei from the ruling coalition said the governor was not to blame as "the problem we are having begun in 1963, you cannot resolve it now". Some of the problems can be traced back to the origins of Nairobi - meaning a "place of cool waters" in the Maasai language - and the fact that it was not considered a suitable place for large numbers of people to live in. It started as a railway depot under the British colonial authorities in the late 1890s. The engineers who worked on the site called the area a "swamp", with soggy land and "unsanitary conditions".

Years later, colonial official Sir Charles Eliot said Nairobi sat in "a depression with a very thin layer of soil or rock. The soil was waterlogged during the greater part of the year". Nevertheless, the city developed into an attractive city with good weather, a lot of greenery and a national park. But its drainage problem has persisted. An initial masterplan by the colonial authorities took into consideration the lay of the land and designed measures to prevent disasters. There have been at least two other blueprints post-independence to date - but they have mostly not been implemented. This season's floods show that as rainfall could get more intense as a result of climate change a new plan is urgently needed, Prof Omenya said. But the ordinary city-dweller is left mopping up, hoping that the rains subside.

Ecuador files complaint against Mexico at top UN court

QUITO, Ecuador (AP): Ecuador filed a complaint at the top UN court over what it called Mexico's illegal move to grant political asylum to a former Ecuadorian vice president, which led to Ecuador's highly criticized raid on a Mexican embassy earlier this month.

The Ecuadorian complaint at the International Court of Justice in the Netherlands intensifies a high-profile diplomatic quarrel with Mexico, which has filed its own complaint with the panel alleging that Ecuador's highly unusual April 5 raid to arrest Jorge Glas was illegal. Ecuador's counterclaim is that Glas was a fugitive wanted on corruption convictions and not for political reasons, and that therefore he was not eligible for Mexico's diplomatic protection. Ecuadorian authorities forcibly entered the Mexican embassy in Quito

to arrest the former Ecuadorian vice president hours after Mexico granted him asylum.

Mexico failed to comply with "its obligations not to grant asylum to people who are being prosecuted or on trial for common crimes or have been convicted by competent ordinary courts," Ecuador's Foreign Ministry said in a statement. Glas, who was convicted in two corruption cases, had been living at the diplomatic compound in Ecuador's capital, Quito, since December. He is now being held at a maximum security prison at the port city of Guayaquil. The court said in a statement that Ecuador "accuses Mexico of unlawfully granting Mr Glas political asylum and of interfering in its internal affairs." Security camera video released by Mexico's government shows that Ecuadorian police scaled the embassy walls and

broke into the building. Roberto Canseco, Mexico's head of consular affairs in Ecuador, tried to keep them from entering, even pushing a large cabinet in front of a door. But police restrained him and pushed him to the floor as they carried Glas out.

Authorities are currently investigating Glas over alleged irregularities during his management of reconstruction efforts following a powerful earthquake in 2016 that killed hundreds of people. He previously was convicted on two separate bribery and corruption cases. Diplomatic premises are considered foreign soil and "inviolable" under the Vienna treaties and host country law enforcement agencies are not allowed to enter without permission from the ambassador. Legal experts, Latin American presidents and diplomats swiftly condemned Ecuador's extremely rare

show of force. Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro even ordered the closure of his country's embassy and consulates in Ecuador in solidarity with Mexico. Immediately after the raid, Mexico broke diplomatic relations with Ecuador, recalled its diplomatic staff and closed its embassy and consulates. Days later, it filed a complaint with the court. In its case filed April 11, Mexico asked the World Court to order Ecuador to take "appropriate and immediate steps to provide full protection and security of diplomatic premises" and prevent any further intrusions. It also wants Ecuador to let Mexico clear its diplomatic premises and the homes of its diplomats in the country. Mexico also asked the court to award reparation and suspend Ecuador from the United Nations. Hearings on Mexico's case are set to begin Tuesday.

50 migrants reported missing and 9 rescued after their boat overturns

MADRID (AP): About 50 migrants were missing after their boat overturned some 100 kilometers (60 miles) south of Spain's Canary Island of El Hierro in the Atlantic Ocean, Spanish media reported. The national marine rescue service said one of its helicopters rescued nine people who were found clinging to the boat following a warning call from a merchant vessel in the area.

State news agency Efe said that once transferred to El Hierro airport, the rescued migrants reported that 60 of them had set sail nine days ago and that the open-topped wooden boat ran into problems. The rescue service was unable to say how many people may have been on the boat and no one was available to comment

at Civil Guard police offices in the Canary Island capital of Santa Cruz de Tenerife. Efe said the migrants were of sub-Saharan origin.

There were no details on which country they had sailed from. Tens of thousands of migrants from sub-Saharan countries fleeing poverty, conflict and instability in West Africa try to reach Spain each year by boat. Most go in large open vessels to the Canary Islands in the Atlantic, while others from Morocco, Algeria and Middle Eastern countries try to cross the Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean to mainland Spain. Several thousand die making the hazardous journey. The Interior Ministry says 16,621 migrants

arrived in Spain by boat same period last year. The between Jan. 1 and April vast majority arrived on the 15, up by 11,681 in the Canary Island route.

Colombian army helicopter crashed, 9 soldiers killed

BOGOTA (AP): An army helicopter carrying supplies to troops crashed in a rural area in northern Colombia, killing nine soldiers on board, the country's armed forces said. In a statement, the Colombian military said the helicopter was taking the supplies to the municipality of Santa Rosa del Sur, an area that has recently experienced fighting between the National Liberation Army guerrilla group and the drug trafficking group known as the Gulf Clan.

The military statement described the helicopter crash as an accident. "I regret the death of the nine passengers on board the army's helicopter" Colombian president Gustavo Petro wrote on X. "It was supplying troops...that were conducting operations against the Gulf Clan." The military said the helicopter crashed around 1:50 pm local time. It was an MI-17 Russian-built chopper that is often used to carry troops and supplies.

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American economy fired by well-off retirees

It is a strange phenomenon. Federal Reserve's higher interest rates is helping men and women who have retired to increase their consumer spending, which is partly firing the American economy. The richest economy in the world has been going through a rough patch caught between high interest rates and the prospect of recession.

In reality however, the economy has been showing string signs in the midst of sticky inflation. According to experts, the baby-boomer generation - many of whom were born in the post-World War Two period - have become affluent after years of hard work, paying off mortgages. But with high interest rates, their stock yields are giving them the extra return to spend on exotic foreign trips.

The just-retired 60+ generation is having the best of times, while the younger generation faces job uncertainties, higher mortgage rates and also unaffordable home prices. According to an Associated Press report, it is the affluent class of older citizens who are spending more on travel, entertainment and cosmetics, and it is this factor that is keeping the inflation level above three per cent, much higher than the mandated two per cent inflation rate. A good example of the phenomenon is Joan Harris, 64, who has retired after working as an engineer for 29 years. She is planning to fly to Scotland in business class because she feels she has that extra money to do so, and that savings is not an attractive proposition.

In contrast, Harris' 25-year-old daughter, Ruby, is finding it difficult to buy a home in a place she loves like Boston, because the prices are much too high. She has a well-paying job as a materials engineer, and she considers herself fortunate to have the job, but she says that it will be difficult for her to live in the area. Says Ruby, "In the long term, it probably won't be affordable to stay here. Whereas the Midwest is more affordable but won't have the neighbourhoods that I like."

Experts are puzzled by the phenomenon, where the older folks - though only a small section - are enjoying themselves even as the younger generation struggles wracked by a sense of anxiety about the future. "The baby boomers are the richest retiring generation we've ever had," according to Edward Yardeni, president of Yardeni Research. He says, "Not everybody is well-off, but we've never had a retiring generation with this much wealth. That's one of the major reasons why the economy is strong." America is an affluent society because Americans earn and spend, and it is the higher consumption pattern that keeps the economy going. In contrast, many European and successful Asian economies earn on the strength of their exports and their savings rate is high as well. Americans are relatively low savers.

It is estimated that Americans over the age of 55 hold three-fourths of household wealth. The figure was 68 per cent in 2010. The wealth disparity remains very high in America. One-tenth of the population owns two-thirds of all household wealth in the country. But median wealth - the midpoint between the very rich and the very poor - rose 37 per cent between 2019 and 2022, which spans a year before the COVID pandemic and year after. Torsten Slok, chief economist at Apollo Group, an asset manager, explains, "People have had significant wealth gains in stocks, significant wealth gains in fixed income, significant wealth gains in home prices, significant wealth gains even in crypto. All that adds up to still a very significant tailwind."

The situation may not hold for a long period, but it is clear that it is the moment of wealth and comfort for the many middle class Americans who had spent a lifetime building their assets in the hope of modest comforts in their old age. But it has turned out to be much better.

Overcapacity claims US's latest offensive

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen's claims about China's "overcapacity" in her interview on the US economy with the media on Thursday should be seen as the US side's latest stance on Beijing's rebuttal of the unfounded allegations Yellen made in this regard during her visit to China early this month.

Yellen intentionally turned a deaf ear to Beijing's reasonable and objective countering of her "overcapacity" blame game. Instead, she hyped up her baseless charge that China is dumping its electric vehicles, solar power panels and other clean energy goods in overseas markets.

The claim that China has an unfair competitive edge does not stand up to even cursory scrutiny. The allegations of "heavy state subsidies" fueling the growth of the sector have no basis in fact. The financial support provided to the EV sector in China is markedly lower than the subsidies provided in the United States and Europe. China's electric vehicle output was 9.59 million units last year, of which the domestic market accounted for about 90 percent. Due to Chinese EVs' high performance in relation to the cost, Chinese-made EVs are highly valued in the world market. China actually lacks the capacity to produce enough EVs to meet the overseas demands.

Also, about 80 percent to 90 percent of China's wind turbine production capacity goes to meet the needs of the domestic market. A similar situation is observed in other clean energy product sectors. As it has ramped up its efforts to realize its ambitious dual carbon goals - peaking emissions by 2030 and achieving emissions neutrality by 2060 - China has had to increase its green product and energy supplies over the past few years to meet the domestic demand in the foreseeable future.

China does have some industrial "overcapacity" issues in the upstream and downstream industries of the real estate sector, which are mainly caused by the downturn of its housing industry. It is a shame that Yellen told the media that Chinese officials acknowledge a problem with industrial "overcapacity" during her visit without explaining that what the Chinese side acknowledged and what she tries to hype up refer to totally different sectors. Yellen is in a better place than many others to know that it is the US that has tried to use subsidies and protectionist practices to boost domestic manufacturing. But those efforts have been offset by the country's high production costs and lack of skilled workers, while a strong dollar has dampened US products' competitiveness in the world market.

It would be remiss not to point out that it is a presidential election year and China is habitually a punching bag for the two US parties ahead of voting. It would also be remiss not to point out that by "securitizing" the economy and trade with scaremongering false narratives about China, ranging from "decoupling" and "de-risking" to "overcapacity", the Biden administration is trying to distort the world's view on China and make it a pariah. By endorsing that kind of politicized misinformation campaign, the technocrats in the Biden administration, such as Yellen, are sacrificing their professionalism and expertise to downgrade themselves to being political puppets. The administration's puppetry is removing the scabs that have recently been forming over some wounds in Sino-US ties that had just been Band-Aided.

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Moment of truth approaches for ICC and Israel

Osama Al-Sharif

NOTHING is going Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's way these days. His genocidal onslaught on Gaza, now in its seventh month, has failed to deliver the decisive victory he promised Israelis after the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas. The US and other Western allies are warning him against carrying out the much-touted Rafah ground invasion. And daily rallies by the families of the captives, who want him to accept a prisoner exchange deal with Hamas, are tearing at an already worn-out Israeli society.

The pro-Palestine protests in American colleges and universities are putting additional pressure on the Biden White House regarding the US' backing of the war on Gaza, while bruising Israel's once stellar image in the country. Israel is facing charges of genocide at the International Court of Justice and, to make things worse, pressure is mounting on the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court to issue arrest warrants against Netanyahu, his defense minister and the Israeli army chief.

Interestingly, the Israeli media revealed last week that the ICC's prosecutor, British-born Karim Khan, could issue these warrants in the coming days. The Hebrew press reported that Netanyahu and his war Cabinet held several meetings to discuss the looming crisis. The prime minister is said to be hoping that the US will do something to make this nightmare go away.

Last Friday, Netanyahu said: "We will never stop defending ourselves. Whereas decisions of the court in The Hague will not affect Israel's actions, they would set a dangerous precedent threatening the soldiers and officials of any democracy fighting criminal terrorism and aggression."

Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz lashed out at the possibility of the ICC issuing arrest warrants against Netanyahu and other top officials, warning of an anti-semitic backlash while slamming the court. He described the possible release of the warrants as "absolute hypocrisy."

Israel is not a member of the ICC but Palestine was admitted in 2015, granting the court jurisdiction over crimes committed on

Palestinian territory. This move was highly controversial, as it raised questions about the legal status of Palestine as a state and the extent of the ICC's authority in the region.

In 2021, the ICC's Pre-Trial Chamber ruled that the court has jurisdiction over the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967. This opened the door for the prosecutor to investigate alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in these areas. However, while Palestine in 2015 asked the ICC to investigate crimes committed on its territory since June 2014, the court has been slow to take action

mounting evidence that Israel is committing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza has been deafening. Finally, in February, Khan tweeted that he was deeply concerned about reports of bombardment and a potential ground incursion by Israeli forces in the southern Gazan city of Rafah. He said that the ICC was "actively investigating any crimes allegedly committed" in Gaza and that "those who are in breach of the law will be held accountable." He later told Reuters that "this situation is one that I give the utmost priority to. It's an issue that we're moving forward on."

Israel is not a member of the ICC but Palestine was admitted in 2015, granting the court jurisdiction over crimes committed on Palestinian territory. This move was highly controversial, as it raised questions about the legal status of Palestine as a state and the extent of the ICC's authority in the region. In 2021, the ICC's Pre-Trial Chamber ruled that the court has jurisdiction over the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967. This opened the door for the prosecutor to investigate alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in these areas.

due to political pressure from Israel.

But after nearly seven months of Israel's punishing bombardment of Gaza and the horrific death toll, chiefly among civilians — in addition to mounting evidence that famine is being used as a weapon — Khan is being forced to take action. According to British media reports, he has moved to accelerate the ICC's investigation into alleged war crimes in the Occupied Territories. He has appointed Andrew Cayley, a British lawyer and former military prosecutor, to oversee the court's investigation.

Khan visited Israel last year and toured the southern settlements that were attacked by Hamas. He also met with the families of Israeli captives. He reached the Rafah crossing but claimed that Israel would not allow him to enter the Gaza Strip.

But his silence over the

Now, with conflicting reports on whether Khan is about to issue arrest warrants, Netanyahu hopes President Joe Biden will come to his aid. But the US is also not a member of the ICC and it would be detrimental to the court's credibility if Khan was seen to be backing down simply because Washington does not like what he is about to do.

Believing that Khan's decisions are not politically motivated would be naive. In March 2023, the ICC issued an arrest warrant against Russian President Vladimir Putin for his alleged responsibility for the war crime of unlawful deportation and transfer of children during the Russo-Ukrainian War. And in March this year, the ICC issued arrest warrants for two high-ranking Russian military officers on charges linked to attacks on civilian infrastructure in Ukraine.

These alleged crimes pale in comparison to the atrocities Israel has committed in Gaza and the West Bank since last October. The speed with which the ICC has moved against Russian officials raises severe questions, as Khan is yet to take concrete action against Israel, even though it has not heeded the International Court of Justice's January interim ruling that ordered it to stop any genocidal acts and take measures to guarantee that humanitarian assistance is provided to civilians in Gaza.

For decades, Israel has managed to carry out with impunity an endless list of war crimes and violations of UN resolutions and international conventions. It has long relied on the backing of the US and other Western allies. Today, however, we are facing a moment of truth. The horrors coming out of Gaza are too much for even Tel Aviv's closest defenders to swallow or cover up. More than 14,000 children killed in Gaza is a toxic legacy that can never be justified or brushed under the carpet.

Delivering justice to the Palestinians has become an elusive goal as Israel, with US backing, has kept raising the ante, seeking to kill the two-state solution and cancel their existence. Now, after 34,000 Palestinian deaths, a crossroads is about to be reached: either let Israel off the hook or correct a historical aberration and deliver long-delayed justice to the Palestinians.

If Khan does go ahead and issue arrest warrants against Netanyahu and his top aides, it would result in a political earthquake, not only in Israel but across the globe.

How the US and other Western countries would react to such an event will decide the future of the rules-based international order Washington has been supporting and claiming to enforce.

But if Khan does not do so, which remains a possibility, then the ICC and all relevant international codes and conventions would become meaningless.

The question facing Israel's allies today is how long will they look the other way as Netanyahu pushes on with his criminal war? Or will there be a moment of reckoning, in which he is told that he is putting Israel's future in jeopardy and that he must pay the price?

US students rising for Gaza is a case of humanity at its finest

Dr. Ramzy Baroud

THE mass protests at dozens of US universities cannot be reduced to a stifling and misleading conversation about antisemitism.

Thousands of American students across the country are not protesting, risking their own futures and even their safety, because of some pathological hate for the Jewish people. They are doing so in complete rejection of, and justifiable outrage over, the mass killing being carried out by the state of Israel against defenseless Palestinians in Gaza. They are angry because the blood-bath in the Gaza Strip, starting on Oct. 7, is fully funded and backed by the US government.

These mass protests began at the University of Columbia on April 17, before spreading all round the US, from New York to Texas and from North Carolina to California.

The protests are being compared, in terms of their nature and intensity, to the antiwar demonstrations in the US against the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 1970s. While this comparison is apt, it is critical to note the ethnic diversity and social inclusiveness in the current protests. On many campuses, Arab, Muslim, Jewish, Black, Native American and white students are standing shoulder to shoulder with their Palestinian peers in a unified stance against the war.

None of them are motivated by the fear that they could be drafted to fight in Gaza, as was the case for many American students during the Vietnam War era. Instead, they are united around a clear set of priorities: ending the war, ending US support of Israel, ending their universities' direct investment in Israel, and the recognition of their right to protest. This is not idealism but humanity at its finest.

Despite mass arrests, starting in Columbia, and the direct violence against peaceful protesters everywhere, the movement has only grown stronger.

On the other side, US politicians, starting with President Joe Biden, have accused the protesters of antisemitism without engaging with any of their reasonable, globally supported demands. Once again, the Democratic and Republican establishments have stood together in blind support for Israel. Biden condemned the "antisemitic protests," describing them as "reprehensible and dangerous." Meanwhile, US House of Representatives Speaker Mike Johnson visited Columbia University under tight security, using language that is hardly suitable for a country that claims to embrace democracy and respect the freedoms of expression and right of assembly.

"We just can't allow this kind of hatred and antisemitism to flourish on our campuses," he said, adding: "I am here today joining my colleagues and calling on President (Minouche) Shafik to resign if she cannot immediately bring order to this chaos." Shafik, however, was already on board, as she was the one who had called for the New York Police Department to crack down on the protesters, falsely accusing them of antisemitism.

The US mainstream media has contributed to the confusion and misinformation regarding the reasons behind the protests. The Wall

Street Journal has allowed writers such as Steven Salinsky to smear young justice activists for daring to criticize Israel's horrendous genocide in Gaza. "Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis and others are grooming activists in the US and across the West," he alleged, once more taking a critical conversation about American support of genocide in bizarre and unsubstantiated directions.

US establishment writers may wish to continue to fool themselves and their readers, but the truth is that neither Hezbollah nor Hamas has "recruiters" active in Ivy League universities, where young people are often groomed to become leaders in government and large corporations.

All such distractions are meant to avoid the undeniable shift in American society; one that promises a long-term paradigm shift in popular views of Israel and Palestine. For years prior to the current war, Americans have been changing their opinions on Israel and their country's so-called special relationship with Tel Aviv. Young Democrats have led the trend.

A statement asserting that "sympathies in the Middle East now lie more with the Palestinians than the Israelis" would have been unthinkable in the past. But it is the new normal and the latest opinion polls regarding the subject, along with Biden's dwindling approval ratings, continue to attest to this fact.

The older generation of American politicians, who have built and sustained careers based on their unconditional support for Israel, are overwhelmed by the new reality. Their language is confused and riddled with falsehoods. Yet, they are willing to go as far as defaming a whole generation of their own people — the future leaders of America — to satisfy the demands of the Israeli government.

In a televised statement, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last week described the protesters as "antisemitic mobs" that "have taken over leading universities," alleging that the peaceful protesters are calling "for the annihilation of Israel." His words should have outraged all Americans, regardless of their politics and ideology. Instead, many US politicians began parroting Netanyahu's words.

But political opportunism will generate a blowback effect, not just in the distant future but in the coming weeks and months, especially in the run-up to the November elections. Millions of Americans are clearly fed up: with war and with their government's allegiance to a foreign country, to militarism, to police violence, to unprecedented restrictions on freedom of speech and more.

Young Americans, who are not beholden to the self-interests or historical and spiritual illusions of previous generations, are declaring that enough is enough. They are doing more than chanting, they are rising in unison, demanding answers, moral and legal accountability and an immediate end to the war.

Now that the US government has taken no action — and in fact continues to feed the Israeli war machine in its onslaught against millions of Palestinians — these brave students are acting themselves. This is certainly an awe-inspiring, watershed moment in the history of the US.

Good Sino-French past offers great future

Christine Bierre

OVER the years, France-China relations have been steadily improving. The announcement that the Chinese leader will pay a state visit to France in early May amid one of the worst strategic crises since the end of World War II is a sign of trust that France and China can, as in other crises in the past, work together to promote global peace.

Despite the United States' hostility toward China in recent years, France has upheld its freedom to cooperate with China and called for "European strategic autonomy", which would allow the European Union to avoid being drawn into a US war over the Taiwan question.

Negotiations to end the Russia-Ukraine conflict will be high on the agenda of the French and Chinese leaders following the talks held by Li Hui, China's special envoy on Eurasian affairs. No doubt, following German Chancellor Olaf Scholz' successful visit to China, Beijing will try to boost ties with those EU countries that want to boost trade with China.

The France-China relationship goes back centuries, especially the scientific and cultural collaboration between Louis XIV of France and Emperor Kangxi of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) in the 17th century, via Jean-Baptiste Colbert, controller-general of finances during Louis XIV's reign, and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, German polymath and logician, and has steadily grown since.

What reinforced that cooperation is the consensus between former French prime minister Pierre Mendes France and former Chinese premier Zhou Enlai in 1954 to bring the "Indochina war" to an end.

However, it was former

French leader Charles De Gaulle's decision in 1964 to establish diplomatic relations with China that opened the way to high-level collaboration between both countries. De Gaulle justified his decision, by saying: "China is gigantic ... To live as if it didn't exist, would be to be blind, especially since it exists more and more."

Moreover, De Gaulle, made this decision knowing full well where it could lead: "It is not excluded, he said, that China could become during the next century, what it was throughout past centuries, the greatest power of the universe."

What a difference from the Joe Bidens and the Antony Blinkens of today! And how right De Gaulle was!

In the 60 years since then, China has become a great power, and the largest

economy in the world, if GDP is calculated in terms of purchasing power parity.

As for the changes that have occurred in the past 60 years, bilateral trade increased from \$100 million in 1964 to \$78.9 billion in 2023, France has become the third-largest trade partner of China in the EU, and China the largest trade partner of France in Asia. And while cooperation has been fruitful in the nuclear field, China has developed its own reactor, Hualong, advanced research into the main types of 4th generation nuclear reactors and promoted cooperation with France on fusion.

Sino-French cooperation in aerospace has also been fruitful — Airbus now accounts for 54 percent of the market in China and has established an assembly line in Tianjin to manufacture aircraft for Chinese airlines.

French-Chinese collaboration in space, too, has been mutually beneficial, with a French-Chinese satellite being assembled in Shanghai which will enable us to study gamma-ray bursts, the most powerful explosions of stars in our universe.

The fact that 7,000 French companies are operating in China shows that Sino-French trade and economic ties have not been affected by external factors. Besides, cooperation between the two sides on the ecology and digital technology is deepening.

Cultural centers have started a high-level of people-to-people dialogue through local institutions on education and tourism, promoting the enrichment of both civilizations. For example, France and China have 111 pairs of sister cities and provinces, and there are 14 Alliances Française centers in China and 18 Confucius Institutes

in France.

To mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of Sino-French diplomatic relations, China and France will offer to their respective nationals the chance to discover the great works of French and Chinese artists, architects, theater personalities, dancers, musicians and filmmakers. Large festivities are also being organized by French-Chinese associations in cities such as Aubervilliers, where several hundred people participated in the events, or in Coutances in Normandy, where about 2,000 people watched the show.

Given the Sino-French history of independence, we can only hope the meeting between the two countries' leaders contributes to world peace. Therefore, this is the right time for other countries to join China in calling for regional and global peace.

—China Daily

Germany’s crackdown on criticism of Israel betrays European values

Matthaios Tsimitakis

A few months ago, I found myself in a forum with German colleagues discussing European media. The conversation was lively and quickly moved from industry issues to broader topics such as German memory culture and the 2008 financial crisis.

Surprisingly, my German colleagues found it inappropriate to criticise the Greek political stance at the time of the crisis, and they also found it inappropriate for me to talk about issues relating to German history, such as the Holocaust. They explained that “you cannot enter into the subjective experience and history of the other, so it is better to avoid it”. I couldn’t disagree more.

If we don’t engage in critical discussion, we can’t align ourselves with what we think is morally right or hold power to account – we end up simply affirming our ethnic, religious, ideological or national alliances. To paraphrase Edward Said’s famous quote, we can’t show true solidarity if we don’t criticise. And we cannot afford not to criticise a power when it is blatantly attacking the very values and principles it is supposed to uphold and protect.

I thought of this discussion I had with German colleagues as I read about the police raid on the Palestine Congress in Berlin on April 12.

The violent interruption and eventual cancellation of the pro-Palestine conference was a worrying escalation in the repression of the Palestinian solidarity movement that has been under way in Germany and across the West for the past six months. German police invaded the venue of the Palestine Congress, organised by Jewish Voice for Peace together with DiEM25 and civil rights groups, and shut it down by cutting off electricity, confiscating microphones, and detaining some of the participants.

Then, in an unprecedented move, it issued a “Betätigungsverbot” (ban on activities) against Yanis Varoufakis, Ghassan Abu-Sitta, and Salman Abu-Sitta – three of the keynote speakers. As a result, former Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis, a vocal figure in the global progressive movement, will not be allowed to speak about Palestine in Germany, not even via a Zoom call, and it is unclear whether he will be able to stand with the German party DiEM25 in the run-up to the European elections in June.

The intervention made it crystal clear that these days in Germany any and all criticism of the State of Israel and its conduct in Gaza is considered anti-Semitism and treated as such. Juxtaposed with the newfound acceptance of far-right figures with documented histories of anti-Semitism due to their defence of Israeli policies against Palestinians, it paints a depressing picture for freedom of speech in one of Europe’s most powerful democracies.

The contrast here is stark. Pro-Israel politicians from the right-wing Alternative for Germany (AfD), including those who are under trial for using literal Nazi slogans, can freely speak on the Israeli war on Palestine under the guise of “fighting anti-Semitism”, but Ghassan Abu-Sittah, the Palestinian surgeon and rector of Glasgow University who worked in Gaza hospitals and documented war

crimes during this latest Israeli assault on the Palestinian enclave cannot give his testimony to the German public.

As Udi Raz, the Jewish activist arrested at the Palestine Congress, said after his arrest, it seems that these days in Germany you can fight anti-Semitism only if you support genocide.

The raid on the Palestine Congress was just the latest in a series of escalating incidents. Under the pretext of security and with vague accusations of anti-Semitism, the German authorities have been suppressing the freedom of expression of everyone showing solidarity with the Palestinians and demanding a ceasefire in Gaza since October 7. Here are a few examples: In November, poet Ranjit Hoskote was forced to resign from the Selection Committee of Documenta 16, one of the most contemporary art exhibitions in the world, after it was revealed that he signed a letter comparing Zionism to Hindu nationalism in 2019. Just a few days after Hoskote’s resignation, the remaining members of the committee also resigned, citing the lack of free speech about Israel-Palestine in Germany as the reason.

“In the current circumstances we do not believe that there is a space in Germany for an open exchange of ideas and the development of complex and nuanced artistic approaches that Documenta artists and curators deserve,” they said in an open letter announcing their resignation.

In December, in a symbolically revealing move, Germany’s Green Party-affiliated Heinrich Boll Foundation withdrew the Hannah Arendt Prize for Political Thought from Masha Gessen, citing Gessen’s New Yorker essay titled “In the Shadow of the Holocaust” as the reason for the decision. In the essay, Gessen criticised Germany’s Israel policy and politics of remembrance, comparing the situation in besieged Gaza to the plight of Jews in Nazi-occupied ghettos in Eastern Europe during the Holocaust.

Then in February, the Berlin Film Festival, one of the biggest and most respected in Europe, faced backlash for awarding a prize to a film by Palestinian filmmaker Basel Adra and Israeli journalist Yuval Abraham which charted Israel’s destruction of Palestinian villages in the occupied West Bank. German Culture Minister Claudia Roth faced calls for her resignation after being filmed clapping at the end of Adra and Abraham’s speech. Rather shockingly, she later claimed that she was applauding only the Israeli filmmaker and not his Palestinian partner. After this incident, politicians threatened to cut funding to cultural institutions for perceived anti-Israel bias, sparking fears of censorship.

Within the same month, Ghassan Hage, a renowned anthropologist, was fired from the Max Planck Institute after a right-wing newspaper accused him of making “increasingly drastic statements” critical of Israel following the Hamas attack and the Israeli assault on Gaza in October. A few weeks later, political theorist Nancy Fraser was stripped of her professorship at the University of Cologne due to her support for the Palestinian cause.

As the world’s second-largest arms exporter, Germany has consistently supported Israel, both politi-

cally and militarily. In 2023, some 30 percent of Israel’s military equipment purchases came from Germany. After South Africa took Israel to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) accusing it of committing genocide in Gaza, Germany offered to intervene in the case on behalf of Israel. In response, Namibia – where Germany committed the 20th century’s first genocide as the colonial ruler between 1904 and 1908 – publicly urged Berlin to “reconsider” its “untimely” decision.

Then-Namibian President Hage Geingob said Germany could not “morally express commitment to the United Nations Convention against genocide, including atonement for the genocide in Namibia” and at the same time support Israel.

In the meantime, Nicaragua brought a separate case against Germany at the same court, accusing it of breaching the UN genocide convention by sending military hardware to Israel.

With these moves, these two countries from the so-called Global South exposed the hypocrisy of Germany’s claims that it is standing with Jewish people and fighting anti-Semitism by supporting – politically and militarily – Israel’s war on Gaza. Furthermore, they showed how Germany is threatening to bankrupt the values and principles at the very core of the European project – human rights, human dignity, freedom, equality and the rule of law, among others – by continuing to arm, fund and diplomatically support Israel as it commits genocide against a people living under its occupation. This hypocritical stance has domestic as well as international consequences.

Indeed, while German authorities claim to be fighting anti-Semitism by censoring pro-Palestinian speech, civil liberties groups warn that the German state’s conflation of anti-Zionism with anti-Jewish bigotry is enabling a xenophobic crackdown within Germany, with migrants and refugees from Muslim-majority countries being accused of bringing “imported anti-Semitism” to the country for their support for the Palestinian cause and being unjustly targeted for deportation. Meanwhile, the German far right, which is gaining support ahead of the European Parliament elections in June, is using the state’s conflation of anti-Semitism and criticism of Israel as cover for its Islamophobia and is doubling down on its intimidation and targeting of Muslims and Arabs in the country.

This hypocritical stance on anti-Semitism and Israel is of course not unique to Germany. Across the Western world, Palestinians, Jews and progressives of all backgrounds who are opposing the Israeli government’s crimes in Gaza are being branded as anti-Semites. Strikingly, Joe Biden and the Democratic Party in the United States, Marine Le Pen’s far-right National Rally in France and the AfD in Germany appear to be on the same page when it comes to conflating anti-Zionist views and criticism of the State of Israel with anti-Semitism.

The students of Columbia University in New York and other US colleges are being arrested and branded as hateful for protesting Israeli crimes against Palestinians.

Earlier, Harvard President Claudine Gay and Penn President Liz McGill were forced to resign

after being attacked as anti-Semites for not shutting down pro-Palestinian protests in their respective institutions under the same equation: Critique of Israel equals anti-Semitism.

In the most telling example of the current state of affairs in the West, earlier this month, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, in Geneva, New York, removed tenured professor Jodi Dean from the classroom because of an article in which, echoing Edward Said, she argued that “Palestine speaks for everyone”.

Dean was censured merely for stating the obvious. Said had taught us decades ago that imperialist wars in the Middle East are aimed not only at erasing the Palestinian nation but also at legitimising the formation of imperialist antagonisms against all suppressed people worldwide and within societies. The Palestinian cause, therefore, is the touchstone for human rights worldwide. Said has also explained in his scholarship, many decades before this latest escalation in Gaza, the grave consequences the Zionist misuse of Jewish suffering to further imperial interests would have for Jews and Palestinians alike.

“I do ... understand as profoundly as I can, the fear felt by most Jews that Israel’s security is a genuine protection against future genocidal attempts on the Jewish people,” Said wrote in his 1979 book The Question of Palestine. “But ... there can be no way of satisfactorily conducting a life whose main concern is to prevent the past from recurring. For Zionism, the Palestinians have now become the equivalent of a past experience incarnated in the form of a present threat. The result is that the Palestinians’ future as a people is mortgaged to that fear, which is a disaster for them and for Jews.”

We owe great respect to all those who resist power in the name of humanism, peace, democracy, and universal values at a time when the clouds of war cast shadows over our world. Just as we must never forget the Holocaust, we should do everything to stop the genocide against the Palestinians today. Just as we supported the Iranian revolutionaries who took to the streets for human rights in 2020, today we must support the Jews and Israelis who oppose the genocide being perpetrated by the Israeli government. And we must criticise and resist all efforts to silence Palestinian speech and shield Israel from accountability in the name of fighting anti-Semitism and protecting Jews, in Germany and across the West.

We cannot afford, as my German colleagues suggested during our discussion, to criticise power only when its abuses and excesses fall within the perimeters of our own history and identity.

Only by resisting power and demanding the right to disagree, in every context, we keep the doors open to accountability, democracy, and peace where power is working to close down these prospects. As we are more and more interconnected and engaged in global discussions we need to do the exact opposite of protecting our subjective position, shaped through experience and trauma. As Edward Said once said, “never solidarity before criticism”. Speaking truth to power is the best way to show solidarity with the oppressed, and the only way to build a better world for everyone.

— Aljazeera

Child marriage is a problem in the US that needs urgent action

Maniza Habib

ON April 4, the state legislature in Virginia voted to amend state law, raising the marriage age to 18. A couple of days later, Governor Glenn Youngkin signed this measure into law.

Coming amid Sexual Assault Awareness Month in the US, this vote was an important victory for child rights. Protecting vulnerable minors from sexual assault ought to include banning child marriage across the United States. But Virginia is only the 12th US state to ban child marriage. The other 11 enacted their bans between 2017 and 2024. This means that until the year 2017, child marriage was legal across the US under certain conditions: if the parents or a judge consented, or if the minor was pregnant or had a child. These loopholes effectively kept the practice widespread.

Just 12 states out of 50 having a ban on child marriage is a shamefully low number. Much more needs to be done. We need to ban child marriage nationwide.

Though Americans often view it as a “foreign” problem, child marriage is surprisingly widespread throughout the US, cutting across different regions, religions, and cultures, according to a new Population Institute study titled Behind Closed Doors: Exposing and Addressing Harmful Gender-Based Practices in the United States. Between 2000 and 2018, an estimated 300,000 minors under age 18 were legally married in the US. California, for example, does not specify any minimum age for marriage, and more than 8,000 children are married there each year.

Eighty-six percent of child marriages reported in the US took place between adults and minors, most often girls ages 16 to 17, but sometimes as young as 12.

Marrying them to adult men sets up a dangerously imbalanced power dynamic that raises the risk of domestic and sexual violence.

To be clear, child marriage is a form of gender-based violence and a human rights violation. In addition to physical and emotional abuse, it puts minors at higher risk for poverty and exploitation and denies them educational and economic opportunities. It is the leading cause of adolescent girls dropping out of school worldwide. In the US, women who marry before age 19 are 50 percent more likely to drop out of high school, four times less likely to graduate from college, and 31 percent more likely to live in poverty. The consequences reverberate throughout their lives, perpetuating cycles of intergenerational poverty.

But since there is no comprehensive federal law setting a minimum age of marriage, and the patchwork of state child marriage laws is inconsistent and riddled with loopholes, the practice persists. The myth of American exceptionalism, the contrary-to-fact belief that child marriage is someone else’s problem and that it can’t happen here, blocks constructive public discussions and effective legislation.

This misguided belief fuels a cycle of neglect and inaction that keeps states from passing effective measures. Resistance to enacting child marriage bans also comes from both conservative and progressive groups. Conservatives argue it would interfere with religious freedom. Progressives worry it could take sexual and reproductive choice away from minors.

But child marriage threatens the bodily autonomy and reproductive freedom of a

child more than any ban ever could. Ending it is more important to the health and dignity of American children than preserving antiquated traditions. They need protection from entering legal contracts that they do not have the power to escape, and empowerment to make their own choices about their lives.

While the US has vocally opposed child and forced marriage in other countries, laws against it inside the US are patchy, weak, and fail to protect those at risk. In fact, most US states are overwhelmingly noncompliant with international child rights standards.

Ending child marriage in the US will first require recognising it as an urgent, ongoing, domestic problem. Further stigmatising the practice or ostracising affected communities will not help. US policymakers should focus on learning from survivors to understand child marriage’s root causes and real impacts, and work with them to build support for child marriage bans in each state.

Survivor-led advocacy goals include raising awareness, passing effective, implementable legislation, investing in comprehensive sexuality education, and expanding reproductive health support services and resources. State authorities should support such efforts.

All states should work to pass and implement a strong legislative framework setting the minimum age of marriage at 18, with no exceptions. That is the only way to ensure full and free consent. It is incumbent upon policymakers, advocates, and community members to stand up against child marriage and other harmful gender-based practices, and to uphold everyone’s fundamental right to bodily autonomy and dignity.

EU’s future at stake in critical parliamentary election

Chris Doyle

FROM June 6 to 9, the most extraordinarily massive election will take place in Europe. It will involve more than 400 million voters in 27 states. In terms of electoral processes, few are more complex.

In a single country election, voters normally determine their support based on a few key issues, with the economy typically being the top priority. But European Parliament elections are akin to having 27 separate elections, involving 24 official languages, rolled into one. What matters to voters in Finland may not be so crucial to those in Portugal.

For much of the EU’s existence, the 700 or so Members of the European Parliament have had strangely limited powers. Gradually, the parliament has acquired more influence, meaning these elections have therefore evolved into a more significant contest.

Which trend will prevail? The European People’s Party, a center-right group of MEPs, looks likely to remain the largest bloc in the parliament, with it hovering around 22 percent in recent polls. In all likelihood, the socialists will continue to be the second-largest grouping, with polling showing them at 18 percent. The far-right parties may fare better than in previous elections, while the Greens and the left may be the biggest losers.

This hardens the trend of the last decade, with anti-establishment parties prospering at the expense of center-left and center-right political forces. Back in the 1990s, such anti-establishment parties got about 12 percent of the vote. By 2021, this figure was up to 32 percent.

Most of these were on the far right. The far right is either in government or backing the government in Finland, Hungary, Italy, Slovakia and Sweden, while Geert Wilders’ Party for Freedom secured the largest number of seats in last year’s Dutch elections. Many will be closely watching how the far-right vote fares in France, with a presidential election due in 2027. Marine Le Pen looks likely to be a major challenger for the presidency in post-Emmanuel Macron France.

The obvious failure of Brexit — the UK leaving the EU — has meant there is close to zero appetite for leaving the union. Instead, the radical right has opted to try to capture it. One of its standard bearers, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, was chillingly clear in an interview last December: “Our plan is not to leave (the EU), but to take it over.”

The anti-EU contingent is geared toward revolutionary change from within, focused on the significant repatriation of powers to member states. They push for an alliance of nation states in which national laws reign supreme. Radical-right politicians do not fit in with the consensus-style politics of much of the EU and serve as disrupters rather than facilitators of new policies.

After the June election, all the top EU jobs will be up for grabs. Ursula von der Leyen will be hoping for a second five-year term as head of the European Commission. A second stint is not guaranteed, but she is the favorite in the absence of a serious rival. However, enthusiasm is sparse. She has not exited. Pulses have not quickened in her presence. She has to have the backing of the parliament, but firstly the leaders of the 27 EU states have to reach a consensus behind her. Most will back her, though some abhor her starkly pro-Benjamin Netanyahu, anti-Palestinian stance. President Macron of France has cooled toward her, while German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, even though he is from a different party, will probably support his compatriot.

The front-runner for the European Council presidency appears to be former Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa. However, speculation is rife that Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez’s rather dramatic four-page letter to the Spanish people last week, in which he indicated he might step down, is a prelude for him pushing for the role. He has won admirers in Brussels but this is no guarantee. Some of his positions are divisive, not least his support for the recognition of Palestine, which puts him in the

opposite camp to Von der Leyen. But Sanchez on Monday insisted he would not be resigning as prime minister.

As for the chief EU diplomatic role currently held by Josep Borrell, this may be available too as his party is not likely to fare well. Some believe he could be succeeded by Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas.

However, not everyone on the right looks to be faring well. Take Matteo Salvini, once the darling of the Italian far right. In Italy’s 2019 European Parliament elections, his League party gobbled up an impressive 34 percent of the vote. Now, it is polling at a rather more unedifying 8.5 percent.

What will be the defining election issues? Immigration has been a long-term wedge issue. The ongoing shift to the right will only harden anti-immigrant attitudes. Meanwhile, the poor showing of the Greens in the polls means that there is declining support for implementing the European Green Deal.

Defense is another key issue, with Russian aggression amplifying fears surrounding its ambitions. Not all EU states are convinced they can afford major new defense expenditures, while others, largely in the east, passionately believe they cannot afford not to.

The EU today faces huge challenges, most of which it has failed to tackle because of disunity and a lack of leadership. Macron was bleak in a keynote speech at the Sorbonne University in Paris last week, when he dramatically stated: “The era of basing our production in China, of delegating our defense to the US and of getting our energy from Russia is over. The rules of the game have changed.” Much of this is correct. Macron enjoys playing the role of visionary for the EU — a leader who is a believer and is passionate. His speech would never have been made by Scholz or his predecessor Angela Merkel, who have a far more pragmatic approach to the EU.

The stakes for the future of Europe are high. Macron was stark but perhaps accurate: “Europe is mortal, it can die. It only depends on our choices.”

— Arab News

Looking ahead

ZHANG YANSHENG

GLOBALIZATION has manifested differently at various stages of societal development.

During the eras of colonial expansion and the formation of the world market, Western powers supplied industrial products to the world and sourced raw materials from their colonies, establishing a “center-periphery” industrial division of labor.

After World War II, international organizations facilitated the liberalization and convenience of global trade and investment. The import substitution industrialization strategy became a common choice for emerging developing countries.

By the 1980s, free trade and market-oriented reforms were widely adopted by countries, ushering in an era of “hyper-globalization”.

In the 1990s, hyper-globalization coupled with the information technology revolution led to a tripartite international division of labor where the United States and Europe provided markets and technology, East Asia supplied industrial manufactured goods, and resource-rich countries provided energy and mineral resources.

However, during this period of global openness, after reaping the benefits of the tech and financial bubbles, the US fell into the sub-prime mortgage crisis of 2007 and the subsequent financial crisis of 2008. In a speech on the New Washington Consensus, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan conducted a thorough reassessment of US policies since the 1980s, which focused on tax reductions, deregulation, privatization over public action, and trade liberalization as objectives, which eventually led to the hollowing out of US industries.

Why does globalization, based on Western rules, constantly change but never make significant progress?

Globalization has three deep-seated flaws that are difficult to overcome. First, globalization has

created an open and interdependent global village but failed to establish a workable global economic governance mechanism or multilateral adjustment mechanism to handle global economic imbalances.

Second, while globalization has created an economy that maximizes welfare based on market mechanisms, it has failed to fairly distribute the profits gained by the cross-border flow of capital and technology nor has it established a global safety net and multilateral compensation mechanisms.

Third, despite fostering a golden age of global economic and trade growth, globalization has not resolved the contradictions of geopolitical conflicts triggered by shifts in the relative power of major nations, nor has it established a multilateral political and economic coordination mechanism.

Therefore, the Western-driven new globalization is characterized by geopoliticalization and de-sinicization. Even though China repeatedly stresses that it does not seek hegemony, the US is intent on preventing any transfer of power to China in the process of globalization. It is therefore trying to prevent China from taking the lead in technologies such as artificial intelligence, quantum information and microelectronics, which could potentially spark a new technological revolution.

It also seeks to prevent China, through its governance, ethos and self-cultivation, from winning the hearts of the global population, and to prevent the modernization of Chinese culture from becoming influential soft power.

In this context, the push by the US toward decoupling and trade protectionism has become a stark reality. Since 2010, China has faced a completely new international policy environment, with countries such as the US and Japan revising their trade policies or shifting toward a

new form of capitalism.

Recently, developed Western countries that have developed close trade ties with China have started to adopt new industrial policies to guide or intervene in industrial development. Studies by Oxford and Harvard universities have found that the number of observed industrial policies globally was only 34 in 2010, but it has surged to 1,594 by 2021, among which protective policies have increased from 8 percent to 48 percent.

The global cross-border investments that benefited China in the past have been widely disrupted by geopolitical conflicts and investment protectionism. A study by the Peterson Institute for International Economics noted that while Chinese mergers and acquisitions only accounted for 4 percent of their sample, 15 percent of them were subjected to scrutiny.

Another study by the International Monetary Fund found that in 2021, foreign direct investment flows between geopolitically close countries accounted for 52 percent of total flows, significantly higher than those between geographically close countries.

Western countries that used to have close exchanges and cooperation with China have been influenced by the US’ strategies of reshoring, nearshoring and friend-shoring, and emulated the US in decoupling their trade, technology and industries with China.

Japanese companies’ overseas investments will primarily focus on Western “nearshoring” sectors, accounting for 55 percent to 75 percent of the country’s investment expansion this year. “Friend-shoring” sectors will make up 44 percent to 55 percent of the expansion; while expansions below 43 percent will mainly include Thailand, Singapore and the Chinese mainland (27 percent).

In the new international environ-



In brief

National Challenge Cup

ISLAMABAD (APP): The final round of the National Challenge Cup (NCC) 2023, being organized by the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF), was set to kick off on May 1 here at the Jinnah Stadium of Pakistan Sports Complex. The participating teams have been divided into four groups, with each group comprising four teams. Group A: PACA, Pakistan Army, NIMSO and HEC; Group B: KRL, Pakistan Navy, SA Farms and Masha United; Group C: Otto Crains, Wapda, WSTC and Pakistan Police; Group D: PAF, Asia Ghee Mills, SA Gardens and Pakistan Railway. The group stage matches will take place from May 1 to 6 with each team competing in (03) matches. The top two teams from each group would advance to the quarter-finals, which were scheduled for May 7 and 8 followed by the semifinals on May 10 while the final will take place on May 12.

South Africa back Nortje

Johannesburg (AFP): Anrich Nortje's raw pace and proven quality earned him a place in South Africa's squad for the T20 World Cup, head coach Rob Walter said when he announced a 15-man squad on Tuesday. The tournament will be played in the United States and West Indies from June 1 to 29. Nortje, 30, has not played an international match since suffering a back injury during a one-day series against Australia in September 2023 and has struggled for form in the current Indian Premier League. His seven wickets have cost 42 runs each and he has conceded 13.86 runs an over. But Walter said he backed the quality of the player who was South Africa's leading bowler at the 2022 T20 World Cup in Australia. "He has another month before the World Cup and I have no doubt he will hit his straps," said Walter. "It's good to see that his speed is up. The one thing that Anrich has from separates him from others is raw pace, not many guys can bowl at 150 (kilometres an hour)." He said he had picked bowlers who he believed would be able to strike in the early stages of matches. "Taking the top four wickets in the first 10 overs is a large factor in winning games," he said. Nortje, Gerald Coetzee, Kagiso Rabada and Marco Jansen will spearhead South Africa's fast bowling attack but Walter also named three specialist spin bowlers in Keshav Maharaj, Tabraiz Shamsi and Bjorn Fortuin for what he said are likely to be varied conditions in the USA and the Caribbean. South Africa have been drawn in Group D of the 20-team tournament. Their first three matches, against Sri Lanka, Netherlands and Bangladesh, will be at the custom-built Nassau County International Stadium near New York. Their final group match against Nepal will be in Saint Vincent in the West Indies. The match between South Africa and Sri Lanka on June 3 will be the first to be played at the new stadium, which will feature a drop-in pitch imported from Adelaide, Australia. 21t is incredibly exciting to be going to a new venue which has literally been created for the World Cup," Walter said of playing in New York. "It creates a level playing field because no one really knows what we're going to get. The ability to respond quickly to conditions will be imperative."



LAHORE: Hayley Matthews' 68 off 49 set the platform for a strong finish, Pakistan vs West Indies 3rd Women's T20I.

Rishabh Pant included in India's T20 World Cup squad, Rahul misses out

NEW DELHI (Agencies): India have included wicket-keeper-batsman Rishabh Pant in their 15-man squad for the Twenty20 World Cup in the West Indies and United States in June, the country's cricket board (BCCI) announced on Tuesday. Pant was involved in a near-fatal crash in December 2022 that required him to have multiple surgeries and he missed last year's Indian Premier League (IPL) as well as India's 50-overs World Cup campaign on home soil.

The 26-year-old has slowly returned to his best after his comeback in this year's IPL, scoring three fifties and racking up 398

runs in 11 matches to convince selectors. The Delhi Capitals skipper was not the only player rewarded for his IPL form, as Chennai Super Kings batsman Shivam Dube also made the squad after scoring 350 runs in nine matches. Shubman Gill, Rinku Singh, Khaleel Ahmed and Avesh Khan were among the reserves, but there was no place for wicketkeeper-batsman KL Rahul. India will be led by Rohit Sharma as they bid for a second title in the June 1-29 tournament following their triumph in the inaugural edition in 2007. They made the semi-

finals two years ago in Australia, losing to eventual champions England. India begin their campaign against Ireland in Group A, with the match to be played in New York on June 5. India squad: Rohit Sharma (captain), Hardik Pandya, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant, Sanju Samson, Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj. (Reporting by Shrivathsa Sridhar in Bengaluru Editing by Christian Radnedge).

Swiatek fights back to reach Madrid semi-finals



MADRID (Agencies): Top seed Iga Swiatek fought back from a set down against Beatriz Haddad Maia to book her place in the Madrid Open semi-finals.

After sweeping past

Spain's Sara Sorribes Tormo in just 68 minutes on Monday, Swiatek needed two hours 30 minutes to wrap up a 4-6 6-0 6-2 win against the Brazilian.

It was the first time the world number one

dropped a set in the tournament. Swiatek will face Tunisian eighth seed Ons Jabeur or American 18th seed Madison Keys, who play later on Tuesday.

The 22-year-old Pole, bidding for her third title of 2024, broke first and raced to a 4-1 lead, but Haddad Maia eventually found her rhythm and reeled off five consecutive games to take the opening set.

However, the 11th seed won just 12 points in the second set as Swiatek claimed a 6-0 bagel.

After exchanging breaks early in the decider, Swiatek broke for a 3-1 lead before striking again at 5-2 to reach her fifth semi-final of 2024.

Panesar to stand for election



LONDON (AFP): Former England cricketer Monty Panesar is to stand at the next UK general election for the fringe Workers Party of Britain, its leader George Galloway said on Tuesday.

Galloway, a left-wing firebrand who was re-elected to parliament in March after tapping into anger over the Israel-Hamas war, said Panesar was one of 200 candidates the party is putting up for the vote.

Left-arm spinner Panesar, 42, played 50 tests for England, taking 167 wickets between 2006 and 2013.

Born Mudhsuden Singh Panesar in Luton, north of London, to Sikh parents who emigrated from the Indian Punjab, he became a firm fan favourite and a distinctive figure in the field in his black patka.

He will stand in the Ealing Southall constituency in west London at the vote, which is expected to be held later this year.

To be elected, he will have to overturn a 16,084 majority set by Virendra Sharma, from the main opposition Labour party, at the last national poll in 2019.

Galloway told LBC radio that Panesar "will be our candidate in Southall", which is a majority Sikh area.

"Monty, of course, was a great left-arm spinner so we could do with him," he said.

Wealth gap Panesar said he wanted to stand up for the working class and address Britain's wealth gap.

"When I played for England there was so much support from the fans and the whole nation when they put me where I am today," he told the domestic Press Association news agency.

"It's my turn now to actually help the working-class people, whatever problems they have. The gap between the rich and the poor is getting bigger and bigger."

Panesar said Galloway's

party was "more aligned" with the working class than the Labour party under Keir Starmer, which is traditionally the home of blue-collar voters.

Galloway, a former Labour lawmaker, is hoping to tap into what he sees as disaffection with the Conservative government and other mainstream parties.

Starmer is widely expected to win the election, but Galloway has condemned him for his stance on Israel's military action against Hamas in Gaza and is hoping to exploit Labour divisions on the issue.

At Galloway's own election, the Labour candidate withdrew after touting a conspiracy theory that Israel allowed Hamas to carry out its deadly attack on October 7 last year.

The Workers Party has set out a 10-point programme, including a call for "an end to imperialist wars and financial domination, starting with withdrawal from NATO".

Galloway said voters were rejecting the "Tweedledee, Tweedledum politics" of the Tories and Labour, as well as "culture war" issues over "race and gender, wokery and greenery and quackery".

"We stand up for the working people. Our country is falling apart at the seams.... Not since 1941 have we been in such trouble," he added.

"And there's no Mr Churchill to step into the breach."

US Ambassador hosts Pakistani cricket team ahead of T20 World Cup

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): US Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Bloom, hosted a reception for the Pakistani cricket team ahead of the T20 World Cup set to take place in the United States.

The event, held in Islamabad, provided an opportunity for Ambassador Bloom to extend his best wishes to the national cricket team for the upcoming tournament.

During the reception, Ambassador Bloom warmly welcomed the players and expressed his excitement for the T20 Cricket World Cup competitions scheduled to be held in America. As a token of goodwill and friendship, Ambassador Bloom presented the team members with a commemorative cricket ball and a signed softball ball.

In return, the Pakistani team presented Ambassador



Bloom with the official cricket shirt of Pakistan, along with a signed bat.

The camaraderie continued as Ambassador Bloom joined the national team players in a friendly game of cricket, fostering bonds beyond borders.

Notably, the T20 Cricket World Cup will mark the first time that America hosts the prestigious tournament, with matches set to commence in

June. Among the anticipated fixtures, the clash between Pakistan and the United States on June 6 has garnered significant attention, promising an exciting encounter on the cricket field.

Meanwhile, as part of the preparations for the World Cup, almost 25 Pakistani cricketers and 21 officials underwent biometrics at the US Embassy. While some players already possessed

USA visas, others obtained them for the first time or renewed them for tournament participation.

During their visit to the US Embassy, the team members engaged in discussions with Ambassador Bloom regarding the significance of the forthcoming World Cup for both Pakistan and the United States.

The event also provided an opportunity for players to showcase their skills, with Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shadab Khan, Imad Wasim, and others delighting embassy employees with their bowling and batting prowess.

The reception concluded on a high note, with players and embassy staff exchanging pictures, selfies, and autographs, further strengthening the bonds of friendship and sportsmanship between Pakistan and the United States.

SBP defeat WAPDA in President's Cup match

RAWALPINDI (APP): State Bank of Pakistan defeated Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) by six wickets in a reduced-overs but high-scoring fourth-round match of the President's Cup one-day tournament here at Shoaib Akhtar Cricket Stadium on Tuesday.

In a match reduced to 23-overs-per-side due to overnight rain, WAPDA batted first and collected 201 for three with opener Muhammad Akhlaq scoring an unbeaten 101. He faced 66 balls and struck 13 fours and four sixes. Together with Ahmed Shehzad, Akhlaq added 146 runs for the second wicket. Shehzad's 47-ball 59 was punctuated with seven fours and a six.

In turn, SBP achieved the target for the loss of four wickets on the penultimate delivery with Salman Ali Agha upstaging Akhlaq with a punishing 56-ball 101 not out that was laced with 13 fours and four sixes. After SBP lost four wickets for 127 runs, Salman and Mohammad Mohsin added 77 runs for the unbroken fifth wicket with Mohsin contributing 23 not out from 13 balls.

The other fixture between Ghani Glass and Higher Education Commission (HEC) was abandoned without a ball at the Abbottabad Cricket Stadium.

Scores in brief: SBP beat WAPDA by six wickets at Shoaib Akhtar Cricket Stadium WAPDA 201-3, 23 overs (Muhammad Akhlaq 101 not out, Ahmed Shehzad 59, Bismillah Khan 22 not out) SBP 204-4, 22.5 overs (Salman Ali Agha 101 not out, Rameez Aziz 36, Mohammad Mohsin 23 not out; Akif Javed 2-51) Ghani Glass v HEC - match abandoned without a ball being bowled

Thursday's fixtures: HEC v PTV, Abbottabad Cricket Stadium; SNGPL v WAPDA, Shoaib Akhtar Cricket Stadium; SBP v KRL, Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

Archer recalled to England squad for T20 World Cup

LONDON (AFP): Paceman Jofra Archer was Tuesday recalled to England's squad for the defence of their T20 World Cup crown after a year out of action.

The 29-year-old, who has endured a string of injuries since his international breakthrough in 2019, has not played competitive cricket for a year but has recovered from a right elbow injury.

He takes his place in a 15-man provisional squad captained by Jos Buttler for the tournament that starts on June 1 in the West Indies and the United States.

The same group will play take on Pakistan in a four-match T20 series beginning at Headingley on May 22. All the players who are currently featuring in the Indian Premier League will return in time for the series against Babar Azam's men. Archer has managed just 15 T20 appearances for England since making his international debut five years ago but is still considered a potential game-changer.

Another factor in England's favour is that he grew up in Barbados so is knowledgeable about Caribbean conditions.

Veteran seamer Chris Jordan, also born in Barbados, returns to the squad alongside uncapped spinner Tom Hartley but there is no place for Chris Woakes, a World Cup winner in both the 20-over and 50-over formats.

Test captain Ben Stokes, who was part of the England squad who surrendered their 50-over title meekly in India last year, ruled himself out of the T20 World Cup in an effort to regain full fitness to play as an all-rounder. England begin the defence of the title they won in Australia in 2022 against Scotland in Barbados on June 4.

Managing director of England men's cricket Rob Key said Archer was "desperate" to play on his home island. "Jofra's a bowler that is just so special you do everything you can to try to get him back playing and we've sort of taken the

longer road this time but as always with Jofra, it's fingers crossed until he's out there playing," said Key.

"It's like when you're waiting for something really good to happen, you don't quite believe it until he's there but he's tracking well at the moment."

"The next step is when he gets into that Pakistan series. It's going to be full match intensity, how he keeps going through there but at the moment we're doing everything we can and he's in a good spot."

All teams are allowed to make changes to their squads until May 25, after which any alteration will require approval from the International Cricket Council. England provisional squad for T20 World Cup and Pakistan series

Jos Buttler (capt, wk), Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, Jonny Bairstow, Harry Brook, Sam Curran, Ben Duckett, Tom Hartley, Will Jacks, Chris Jordan, Liam Livingstone, Adil Rashid, Phil Salt, Reece Topley, Mark Wood.

KP Handball gets new office-bearers

PESHAWAR (APP): Bahre Karam and Noor Zada have elected unanimously as President and General Secretary of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Handball Association in an election meeting held here at University Campus premises on Tuesday.

Amjad Khan of KP Olympic Association, Sarah Nisar, Secretary KP Archery Association attended the election as observers while Ahmad Zaman, Regional Sports Officer (RSO) Hazara witnessed the election as nominee of the Directorate General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The meeting approved the previous accounts and other matters in the meet-

ing and unanimously elected new officials for the next four years term. According to which the Director General Sports University of Peshawar University of Peshawar Bahre Karam was elected as the President of the Provincial Handball Association. Dr. Noor Zada elected as General Secretary, Safdar Khan as Joint Secretary, Mohammad Haroon as Press Secretary and Sajjad Ahmed elected as finance secretary while the members of the executive committee include Ahmed Zaman, Anwar Khan, Adalat Khan, Bahar Hussain, Mohammad Zahidullah, Nasir Khan, Khalid Mahmood,

Afshien and Sadia Gul.

President Bahre Karam and General Secretary Noor Zada paid tribute to all the attendees and said that they will do their best to fulfill the trust they have shown in them. All resources will be used for the promotion and development of handball in the province.

Bahre Karam said that Inter-Club, Inter-District, Inter-Provincial and National level competitions will be organized and efforts will be made to ensure that our players are not only play at the provincial level but also at the national and international levels so that they could enlighten the nation's name around the world.

LeBron tight-lipped on future after Lakers playoff exit

LOS ANGELES (AFP): LeBron James declined to be drawn on his NBA future on Monday in the wake of the Los Angeles Lakers' playoff exit to the Denver Nuggets.

The 39-year-old NBA superstar once again produced another superb performance that belied his age with 30 points, 11 assists and nine rebounds.

But it was not enough to stop the Lakers from falling to an agonizing 108-106 loss as Denver completed a 4-1 series victory to end James' hopes of adding a fifth NBA championship ring in the twilight of his career.

A year ago, James had sparked speculation he could retire after the Lakers were swept 4-0 by Denver in the Western Conference finals, confirming to reporters he was considering walking away from the sport.

On Monday, questions about James' future dominated



the post-game press conference in Denver after a disappointing end to the 21st season of a glittering career. Asked if Monday's defeat could have been his final appearance in a Lakers' uniform, James smiled before replying: "I'm not going to answer that."

James, who has a year left on his current Lakers contract but reportedly has an opt out clause that leaves him free to join other teams, said he had not given serious thought to his next steps. "I just want to get home to the family honestly," James said.

"I'll start looking at the schedule. One of my boys is just trying to decide if he's going to enter the Draft or go back to school, I've got another kid playing ball, my daughter's playing volleyball. And my wife is doing so many great things. So it's about family right now."

"And then in a couple of months I gotta go to Vegas for (Olympics) training camp. So I'm gonna rest my body for USA Basketball. That's kind of the initial thoughts." James has previously talked about prolong-

ing his NBA career in order to play alongside eldest Bronny James if he eventually enters the league.

James though played down that possibility on Monday, insisting he hadn't "given it much thought lately." "Obviously I've thought about it in the past but at the end of the day the kid has to do what he wants to do ... he will decide what he wants to do and how he wants his career to go."

Lakers defensive stalwart Anthony Davis meanwhile said he had no inkling of what James might decide to do next season. "He's been in this position numerous times in his career where he had to make a decision, for himself and his family," Davis said.

"And I'll be right there supporting him whatever he decides to do. I don't know but I'm pretty sure he'll come and talk to me and tell me what's going on before it becomes public."



In brief

IRSA releases 175,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 175,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 332,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1457.55 feet and was 43.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 51,800 cusecs and 5,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1153.70 feet, which was 103.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 127,800 cusecs and 18,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 104,700, 52,100, 54,100 and 25,800 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 120,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 23,300 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

PNCA to organize art exhibition

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) would organize a solo art exhibition and book launch titled "Mureed o Murshad" by Muhammad Sajjad Akram and Dr. Arjumand Faisal on May 6. The exhibition will be inaugurated by Dr. Arjumand Faisal at gallery 1, PNCA. A doctor by profession Dr. Arjumand is the owner and curator of Gallery 6. The event will remain open to the public until May 16, with daily viewing hours from 10 am till 4 pm, Saturday closed. Director General PNCA Muhammad Ayoub Jamali will also attend the inauguration ceremony of solo exhibition and book launch. PNCA extended a warm invitation to art enthusiasts, cultural connoisseurs and the general public to attend the activity.

HoD directs to create awareness about dengue

RAWALPINDI (APP): Head of the District Monitoring Committee Engineer Qamar Ul Islam Raja on Tuesday said that recent rains had increased the threat of dengue larvae spread which needed to be tackled on an urgent basis. Presiding over a meeting to review anti-dengue arrangements along with Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Hasan Waqar Cheema, Member Nation Assembly Malik Ibrar and Members Punjab Assembly, Raja Muhammad Hanif, Naeem Ijaz and Imran Ilayes, he directed the officials of concerned departments to create awareness among people by organizing seminars, walks and other activities. He directed the officials to display banners, and posters at important places in the city about the hazards of deadly diseases and organize a Truck meeting at the Tehsil level under the chair of provincial assembly members, adding the district administration must take the area MPA into the loop before conducting any anti-dengue activities. Islam directed to devise arrangements for the drainage of stagnant rainwater as accumulated rainwater was a leading cause of dengue breeding. On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner briefed the meeting that from January 1 to date, only four patients had been reported in the district that were sent to their homes after treatment while no patient was admitted to any health facility of the district. He further briefed that indoor and outdoor surveillance was underway to check the breeding of larvae.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Qatar Ali Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khater called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House.

68,800 Pakistanis to perform hajj this year; Secretary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Secretary for Religious Affairs, Dr. Ataur Rehman has said that around 68,800 Pakistani pilgrims will perform Hajj this year under the government's regular scheme. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, has taken several steps to ensure a smooth and comfortable experience for Pakistani pilgrims during their Hajj journey, he told PTV News.

The operation will cater to 34,300 pilgrims destined for Madina, while 34,500 will land in Jeddah, continuing their travel to Makkah. The pre-Hajj flight operation is scheduled to conclude on June 9. Similarly, he said Pakistani pilgrims will be provided with train station tickets for travel during the Mashair days from Mina to Arafat, Muzdalifa, and Jamarat.

Dr. Ataur Rehman highlighted that this year,

63 per cent of pilgrims will be stationed in Old Mina and 37 per cent in New Mina, strategically situated along main routes and train stations.

Furthermore, accommodations in Madinah have been arranged to accommodate 100 per cent of pilgrims in Markazia.

The federal secretary said ministry has introduced new initiatives to enhance the pilgrim experience, including a 'Short Haj' program spanning 20 to 25 days, accommodating 16,000 pilgrims. However, due to airline costs, expenses for this program may be slightly higher. To streamline communication and facilitate pilgrims, the government has launched the HajApp, mandating its installation on pilgrims' smartphones for seamless communication and information dissemination. Additionally, pre-installed SIM cards will be provided to pilgrims to address communication

needs, including WhatsApp calls.

In a bid to enhance pilgrim identification and convenience, standardized bags of the same size and color will be distributed.

Dr. Ataur Rehman said selection of Haj Assistants (Moavineen) has been made through a transparent and merit-based process, with an accompanying app to monitor their performance. To a question, he said improvements have also been made to the weekly food menu during the pilgrims' stay in Makkah, with an emphasis on protein-rich meals including beef, chicken, and eggs, offering a diverse and nutritious diet. In addition to pilgrims under the regular scheme, those participating in private schemes will benefit from the 'Road to Makkah' facility at Karachi and Islamabad airports, he said in response to another query.

PHA to organize Jashan-e-Bahran from May 7

RAWALPINDI (APP): Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi would organize three-day 'Jashan-e-Baharan' from May 7.

According to a PHA spokesperson, all the arrangements were being finalized to organize a three-day Jashan-e-Baharan festival at Allama Iqbal Park, Shamsaabad, Murree Road from May 7.

She said, most of the arrangements had been finalized on the special directives of Director General, PHA, Ahmed Hasan Ranjha.

All available resources would be utilized to provide a healthy entertainment to the citizens, she said adding, the government was making all-out efforts to promote cultural and healthy activities for the people. She said, efforts would be made to organize a unique festival this year. The event would provide best recreational facilities to the citizens, adding, PHA would organize different colorful programmes including flowers show, art and crafts exhibition, food festival, fireworks, rangoli, sports festival and a prize distribution program under 'Jashan-e-Bahran.'

‘Govt introducing tech in curricula to align new generations’

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Secretary of Ministry of Education and Professional Training, Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani Tuesday said that the government was introducing technology in the curriculum to align the new generation with the demands of present era.

He was addressing the "STEM Mela 2024" organized under the project "STEM Pakistan Policy Unit" to provide access to science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics to secondary school girls under the Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training.

"We are bringing technology into our curriculum so that our new generation can also understand technology in time and be in line with the modern requirements of the present," he said.

The federal secretary said that the government was making every effort to bring out-of-school children into schools, adding "We want every child to get education and contribute to the development of the country." New Tell Pakistan CEO Wahaj Siraj advised the students to make their hobby their profession, maintain their character, be a problem solver, and ask questions to clarify matters.

Thousands of female students from the federal capital participated in the Mela on the day when Prime Minister Muhammad

Shehbaz Sharif declared an educational emergency to promote education in the country and learned how their education should be. One of the objectives of this fair was also to appreciate the schools, school heads, teachers and students who had actively participated in the STEM Pakistan program in the previous academic year.

The STEM Pakistan program has now expanded to over 4,000 public schools across the country, with over 3500,000 students enrolled.

The program aims to engage students in hands-on activities in classrooms and provide them with a better learning environment. The program is also being implemented in over 200 middle and high schools of the Federal Directorate of Education. More than 1200 children and 250 teachers participated in the fair.

They participated in quiz game shows, treasure hunts, art activities, science shows, and other activities.

Science shows, mathematics, astronomy and biology learning zones were set up for the students. Guidance sessions and professional development workshops were conducted by the guests. The Mela was a fun and educational experience for the students, encouraging them to take an interest in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

SPARC to launch month-long campaign against tobacco consumption

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) launched a month-long campaign to raise awareness about the threats of tobacco consumption in Pakistan.

The campaign, titled "Youth Against Tobacco: Healthier Generation - Thriving Economy," was inaugurated during an event held on Tuesday at the Punjab Group of Colleges.

During this campaign, SPARC, with the support of the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK), will engage youth in anti-tobacco control activities for the entire month instead of just one day.

The young participants will engage in various activities, including forming clubs, participating in speech competitions, designing posters, conducting social media campaigns, and creating video messages, leading up to the grand celebration of World No-Tobacco Day on May 31, 2024. Dr. Maheen Malik, Regional Director South Asia at Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, emphasized the urgent need to empower youth for a healthier

generation and its direct impact on the economy, stating, "Empowering our youth for a healthier future is not just a moral imperative; it's an economic necessity."

Mahnoor, Member of Anti Tobacco Youth Club, delivered a poignant message, highlighting tobacco consumption as the biggest threat to the youth of Pakistan, declaring, "Tobacco not only steals our health but also our future. We must unite to protect our youth from this menace."

Ch. Muhammad Akram, Director of Punjab Group of Colleges, Rawalpindi/Islamabad, emphasized the pivotal role of academic institutions, stating, "Educational institutions must lead the charge against tobacco consumption, shaping healthier habits and brighter futures for our students." Dr. Khalil Ahmad Dogar, Program Manager at SPARC, underscored the ongoing efforts of SPARC in combating tobacco use, stating, "At SPARC, we are committed to protecting the rights of children and ensuring a tobacco-free environment for future generations."

Romina, Azerbaijani Ambassador vow to maintain close collaboration

ISLAMABAD (APP): PM's Coordinator on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam on Tuesday held a meeting with Ambassador of Republic of Azerbaijan, Khazar Farhadov where both sides vowed to maintain

close collaboration for pre-COP and post-cop arrangements alongside the commitment to raise the same voice and stance during the global summit.

The PM's Coordinator on climate change & environmental coordination held the meeting with Ambassador of Republic of

Azerbaijan to discuss upcoming UN led global climate summit COP-29 being held in Azerbaijan in November this year, a news release said.

Pakistan offered Azerbaijan all the technical expertise which they required in connection with COP-29. The ambassador

while thanking the offer of Pakistan stated, "our goals are same so inevitably our future is same. Azerbaijan immensely values its ties with Pakistan." The both sides reiterated for consistent engagements, people-to-people exchange for enhancing business & trade and sustainable development.

ANF recovers 76 kg drugs in 11 operations; arrests 15 accused

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 11 operations across the country managed to recover 76 kg drugs, 580 liters liquor and arrested 15 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that 1.4 kg Ice was recovered from a passenger going to Doha at Lahore Airport.

1.1 kg ketamine, 201 grams heroin and 969 grams caffeine were recovered from the possession of three passengers going to Malaysia from

Islamabad airport, 290 grams heroin was recovered from a passenger going to Bahrain at Peshawar Airport.

1 kg Ice was recovered from a parcel booked for New Zealand at Karachi Airport.

40 kg hashish was recovered from three suspects rounded up near Othal Road in Lasbela.

20 kg hashish and 580 liters liquor were recovered from Panjgur area while 7.2 kg hashish was recovered from an accused arrested in Dera Ismail Khan.

2.9 kg hashish and 100 grams opium were recovered from three suspects netted in two different operations in Islamabad.

1.2 kg opium and 250 grams Ice were recovered from an Afghan resident arrested on GT Road Peshawar.

59 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the stomach of two suspects arrested near M-1 Motorway Islamabad. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

CDA all set to start complimentary Yoga classes

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Sports and Culture Department of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) is all set to start complimentary Yoga sessions for the residents of federal capital from May 02.

"The Yoga sessions will be organized at the Multipurpose Ground in Sector F-6 Markaz and Mehran Gate near Baradri in F-9 Park with a purpose to provide healthy activities to the residents," an official told APP. He said that Yoga classes will be divided into two shifts including: morning sessions, which will run from 6:00am to 8:00am, and evening sessions, scheduled from 4.30pm to 6.30pm.

The official said the residents of all ages, both males and females, can participate in these classes free of cost.

In addition, he said the Department of

Sports and Culture will start coaching classes for basketball, lawn tennis, and futsal specifically designed for children under 16 years of age at Sector F-6 Markaz, Multipurpose Ground, and Sector G-11 Multipurpose Ground.

While keeping in mind of the welfare of the citizens, he said the Sports and Culture Wing has set a helpline numbers 051-9201607 and 0331-5181508, aiming to ensure that the citizens face no obstacles.

Furthermore, the official said that the CDA places great importance on offering healthy pursuits to citizens, particularly youth, as a top institutional priority. While tirelessly striving to provide optimal citizen services, he said the authority is equally committed to fostering wholesome activities.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation from the Implementation Minority Rights Forum (IMRF) and the Christian Lawyers Association Pakistan had a meeting with Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar.

Minister visits hospital
KABUL (BNA): Dr. Qalandar Ibad, the Acting Minister of Public Health, recently paid a visit to a provincial hospital in Kandahar, reaffirming the ministry's commitment to enhancing the quality of healthcare services and uplifting the capacity of healthcare personnel. During his visit, Dr. Ebad closely examined the provision of healthcare services at the hospital, aiming to gain first-hand knowledge of the challenges and opportunities within the healthcare system.

TA to resume flights
KABUL (Khaama Press): Turkish Airlines (TA) announced that it will resume its flights to Afghanistan starting from May 21. The commencement of the airline's flights to Afghanistan. Turkish Airlines will operate flights between Kabul and Istanbul and vice versa four times a week on Sundays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. It is noteworthy that Turkish airlines, like several other countries, had suspended their activities in Afghanistan following the resurgence of the Taliban.

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

Kabir reiterates IEA will not give in to int'l pressure



KABUL (Ariana News): Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the political deputy prime minister, said on Tuesday that the Islamic Emirate will not give in to international pressure and will not take orders from any country. Speaking at the graduation ceremony of Kabul Polytechnic students, Kabir said that transit within the region is not possible without Afghanistan and that the government is working

on the issue. Kabir also said the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) is working on the implementation of projects and on developing the mining sector. He also emphasized the need to provide conditions for the return of immigrants to the country. The Islamic Emirate's minister of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, Mohammad Khalid Hanafi, also spoke at the

event and said the IEA is not against the development of modern sciences in the country, but that Western countries are spreading negative propaganda against the Islamic Emirate. Nada Mohammad Nadim, Acting Minister of Higher Education, also emphasized that the Islamic Emirate was victorious on the battlefield and will also win in the field of economy, health and education.

On the other hand, some officials of the Ministry of Higher Education said that the ministry is trying to make progress in the direction of scientific and educational expansion and to be equal to global standards. Over 530 students graduated from seventeen departments of this university, and their graduation certificates were presented by the authorities of the Islamic Emirate.

Travelers call for reopening of main Kabul-Jalalabad route

KABUL (TOLOnews): Drivers and passengers on the Kabul-Jalalabad highway stated that the closure of this highway has caused them difficulties. They requested that the authorities reopen this highway as soon as possible. The Kabul-Jalalabad highway has been blocked due to a landslide, and drivers are using a detour through the Mahipar area. "The Islamic Emirate and officials should fix this road before rocks fall from the mountain," Abuzar, a

driver on the Kabul-Jalalabad highway, told a TOLOnews reporter. Mashaal, a passenger on this highway, stated: "This is not the first time; it has happened several times that rocks have fallen from the mountain and passengers face problems. We especially ask the Ministry of Public Works to fix this road and do a substantial job." Mohammad Ashraf Haqshenas, spokesperson for the Ministry of Public Works, said: "Last night,

due to a landslide 30 kilometers from the Kabul gate, the main route of the highway was temporarily blocked to traffic, but traffic is flowing through an alternate route previously constructed by the Ministry of Public Works." The head of the road cleaning and reopening company has stated that the cleaning of the blocked road has begun and it may be reopened in the next two days. Bawarkhan Babak-arkhail, the company official,

said: "This road has been closed since yesterday afternoon. The rainfall has blocked the road. We are currently busy, and God willing, it will be freed in the next two or three days." The Ministry of Public Works also stated that due to rainfall and flooding in Takhar, Badakhshan, Nuristan, Parwan, Ghor, Uruzgan, and Kandahar, several routes were temporarily blocked to traffic but have been reopened after clearing.

Officials discuss early completion of Herat Noorul Jihad substation

HERAT (Ariana News): Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS) leadership has met with a delegation from Turkmenistan to discuss the completion and inauguration of the new Herat Noorul Jihad substation. At the meeting, Mawlawi Abdul Rahman Rahmani, Chief Operating Officer of DABS, provided an update on the progress of the substation and said work on the project is almost complete. It was agreed that the substation will be operational once all remaining technical issues between the two parties are resolved. Murad Artikov, Turkmenistan's Head of International Projects, commended DABS for its coop-



eration in the construction of the Noorul Jihad substation, and expressed confidence that the project will be completed in the near future.

He also said that a protocol outlining equipment and technical matters will be finalized by both parties. Upon the completion of

this project, the import of electricity from Turkmenistan to Herat is expected to increase, benefiting thousands of new customers in the province.

Construction begins on Herat-Ghor highway

HERAT (TOLOnews): The interim government has begun the construction of the Herat-Ghor highway. Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the deputy prime minister for economic affairs, at the opening ceremony of this highway, stated that the government plans to start working on inter-provincial roads along with constructing national highways. "With the rise of power of the Islamic Emirate, work on the country's highways has practically begun, including the Kabul-Kandahar corridor, the Wakhan corridor, and road construction in major cities beyond Kabul," said Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar. The Herat-Ghor highway is one of the important highways of the country that connects the western region through Bamian and Maidan Wardak to the capital. Officials say that the construction of this highway is complicated and time-consuming due to its passage through mountainous and central parts of the country. Noor Ahmad Islam Jar, the governor of Herat, said: "This road is very complex and requires a lot of work; it is an international road that demands advanced technology and significant capital."

This highway connects Herat to Ghor province through the districts of Pashtun Zarghun, Obe, and chasht Sharif. A number of residents from the districts along the Herat-Ghor highway route have requested the government to complete this project within the specified time. Abdul Wahab, a resident of Herat, said: "We couldn't even reach our own funeral if the asphalt doesn't start from that side, a grader should be run over this road."

Sabghatullah Mawlawi Zada, a religious scholar, said: "If the road is built, the journey will not take eleven hours, instead only two to three hours, and the lives of patients can also be saved in time." The Herat-Ghor highway, 480 kilometers long and twelve meters wide, is expected to be constructed over the course of five years. The budget for this project is \$450 million, which is provided by the Islamic Emirate government.

KABUL (Ariana News): China's ambassador to Kabul Zhao Xing, said in a meeting with Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, the administrative deputy prime minister of the Islamic Emirate, that relations between the two countries were unique on a regional level and that China wants to expand these relations as much as possible in the political, economic and cultural fields. Zhao said in order to further strengthen relations between the two countries, China provides scholar-

Tehran ready to help IEA fight terrorism

KABUL (Ariana News): Iran's embassy in Kabul has announced Tehran is ready to work with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) to fight terrorism. This came just hours after a gunman opened fire on worshippers at a mosque in Herat province. At least six people are believed to have been killed in the shooting – which the Iranian embassy labeled a "terrorist incident". The embassy said it wants the perpetrators identified and punished. Abdul Mateen Qani, the spokesman of Afghanistan's Ministry of Interior, said the incident happened on Monday night in Herat province, in the Shahrak area of Guzara District, when an unknown gunman opened fire on worshippers with an AK-47. Qani said six people died and one was wounded. He stated that further details would be released

later. So far, no group or indi-

vidual has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Karzai condemn Herat mosque attack

KABUL (TOLOnews): Iran's embassy in Kabul has condemned the recent attack on a Shia mosque in Herat province, which occurred on the evening of April 29. The embassy issued a statement expressing readiness to enhance cooperation with Afghanistan in counter-terrorism efforts. It also urged the Islamic Emirate to apprehend and bring to justice those responsible for the attack. Meanwhile, Afghanistan's former president, Hamid Karzai, denounced the assault and called it a terror attack. Hamid Karzai on X labeled it a violation of all religious and human norms. Abdullah Abdullah, the head of the High Council for National Reconciliation in the former government on the other hand has called the attack on a Shia mosque in Herat "cowardly and terrorism." He expressed sympathy with the victims and survivors of the incident, stated that the attack is contrary to Islamic and human principles. The attack in Gozara district of western Herat province resulted in the deaths of seven worshippers, including the mosque's Imam, and left several others injured. To date, no group has claimed responsibility for the incident. Security officials have not commented on the issue yet.

Deputy PM meets with Chinese ambassador



ships to Afghan students and also organizes short-term training courses to improve the capacity of Afghans. In addition to expressing his sympathy to the victims of the recent flash floods in the country, the Chinese ambassador also announced his country's offer of \$100,000 in aid to flood victims. Hanafi in turn described relations between the two countries as historical and emphasized the need to keep expanding these ties. He also said the IEA

appreciates China's position regarding the Islamic Emirate in international forums and said that the Islamic Emirate supports China's policy and Beijing's economic projects such as One Belt and One Road. Hanafi added that the Islamic Emirate wants good relations with all countries and does not allow anyone to use Afghanistan's soil against other countries. He said the IEA expects other countries to treat Afghanistan based on mutual respect.

Gul-e-Lala festival in Sheberghan begun

S H E B E R G H A N (TOLOnews): The Gul-e-Lala Poetry Gathering has begun in Sheberghan, Jowzjan. Local officials aim to support poets, writers, and also to promote the culture of reading among the youth. Ahmad Shahrokh Joinda, the head of Culture and Tourism for the Jowzjan Department of Information and Culture, stated: "We fully support poets, writers, cultural figures, and cultural enthusiasts of Jowzjan province, and we strive to support poets by organizing such

programs." During the ceremony, several poets and writers called for financial support and the publication of their works by the Ministry of Information and Culture. Said Mohammad Abedi, a poet and writer, said: "Currently, our poets hold a pen in one hand and their livelihood in the other and face economic difficulties. We demand support for this segment of society, which represents the spirituality and soul of the community. They are the writers and the history makers." Mohammad Zaker

Waheedyar, another poet and writer, suggested: "They should cooperate in publishing the poems or works of poets and also promote more such poetry gatherings to develop new talents." The Deputy Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Sharafuddin Muslim, at the event urged poets and writers in the province to reflect realities through their poetry and writing and to make officials aware of their shortcomings. "Express truth in your poems, let your poetry

show what writers and literature enthusiasts are interested in, and reveal the facts. Another point is that they should gently advise officials through their poetry to also make an effort in this regard," said Sharafuddin Muslim. According to information from the Jowzjan Department of Information and Culture, dozens of other programs are also planned to be launched this year with the goal of supporting poets, cultural figures, and promoting reading among the youth in the province.

US shows greater willingness to engage with IEA

KABUL (Ariana News): Washington is willing to move towards greater engagement with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) as it seeks to tread a fine line between its human rights concerns and helping the Afghan people, interviews with top US officials and senior aid figures reveal. Speaking to The New Humanitarian on the sidelines of a donor meeting in Istanbul last month, Karen Decker, chargé d'affaires of the US mission to Afghanistan, said Washington has "learned the hard way that isolation is ruinous. It's ruinous for the Afghan people. It's ruinous for the region". In the past year, the UN, several international and local NGOs, and Washington have all signaled that avoiding the Islamic Emirate won't solve Afghanistan's economic and humanitarian

issues. The New Humanitarian reported. This comes despite the IEA still refusing to allow girls and women to study beyond the sixth grade. Decker told The New Humanitarian that Washington is now in a position where it must "very carefully navigate the non-recognition policy", which requires a delicate balance of keeping in mind that the IEA took power by force rather than a democratic vote while still finding ways to reach the millions of Afghans who require emergency assistance. One NGO source, who asked to remain anonymous, was quoted as saying by The New Humanitarian that "engagement [with the IEA] is necessary, but we have to find a way to balance engagement while not compromising on our principles."

Decker agreed, saying Washington would continue to engage with the IEA on "pragmatic issues", with humanitarian assistance and human rights being her primary areas of concern. Because its non-recognition policy precludes US officials from working in the country, Washington has partnered with local and international groups on the ground to deliver assistance directly to the Afghan people. But even with that cooperation, it's not always so easy, as these groups must also tread carefully amid increasing IEA restrictions and regulations. The New Humanitarian reported. Even though there is still a long way to go, particularly in terms of addressing US human rights concerns, Decker told The New Humanitarian she feels Washington's efforts have led to some positive results.

"Eighteen months ago, we were worried about famine, and there is no famine in Afghanistan," Decker said, crediting this largely to the work of local and international aid organizations. However, she pointed out that Afghans still need more food assistance than in the past: "So, in some respects, you trade one problem for another." Decker raised another issue that adds to the difficulty of engaging further: the Islamic Emirate's unwillingness to acknowledge any problems in the country: "They like to present Afghanistan as a success story... [and] they don't want anyone thinking there's anything wrong." She said if the Islamic Emirate were more straightforward to deal with, then humanitarian actors would save a lot of time and money and be able to reach those in need

more quickly. "We use a lot of time and effort making it work, because of the Taliban (IEA). They are fundamentally the challenge to making this work. We are able to navigate [it], but it would be much more efficient if the Taliban were much more [open]."

Decker did, however, give the Taliban some credit, saying they had shown some flexibility, especially in emergency situations. She pointed to the Islamic Emirate's responses to a series of earthquakes that rocked the western province of Herat, and the recent mass expulsions of hundreds of thousands of Afghans from neighboring Pakistan, as examples of when the IEA saw it necessary to amend or loosen some of their restrictions. The New Humanitarian reported. "Women were suddenly allowed to work because

they had to reach women beneficiaries," she said. While engagement efforts have sparked widespread criticism, all the sources The New Humanitarian spoke to said they saw little benefit in pretending the Islamic Emirate does not exist. With an "overwhelming need in the country", simply ignoring the IEA will do nothing to improve the lives of the millions of Afghans who remain in need, said Decker. "It's not in anyone's interest for us to isolate the country," she added. "And I say this over and over: I feel strongly that if the United States does not advocate for the Afghan people, nobody will. So, I don't need any more motivation than that."

The New Humanitarian reached out to the Islamic Emirate's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for comment on several matters related to



the issue of engagement, but it failed to respond. Decker and other sources did however, express some hope based on private meetings and the public statements of several high-ranking Islamic Emirate officials, who have acknowledged that all girls and women should be allowed to return to school and that the government must expand beyond just the IEA. "We know that there [are] senior Taliban leaders who have their daughters in

school outside of the country, and some of them have even been open in their own statements about the importance of education," said Decker. However, for progress to be made towards US recognition, she said the Islamic Emirate must officially change some of its policies, pointing to increased work opportunities for women and real inclusion of non-IEA members in the government as concrete examples of possible game-changers.

Pro-Palestinian protesters occupy Columbia Varsity

COLUMBIA (Reuters): Pro-Palestinian activists occupied a building at Columbia University early on Tuesday, escalating a battle with administrators who have begun suspending students for refusing to dismantle tents set up on the New York campus.

Protesters entered Hamilton Hall - the site of student protests dating back to the 1960s - and suspended a banner reading "Hind's Hall" from an upper floor. Others outside blocked the doors with outdoor tables and linked arms to form a barricade in front. "This building is liberated in honor of Hind, a six-year-old Palestinian child murdered in Gaza by the Israeli occupation forces funded by Columbia University," a protester shouted from inside, with those outside repeating each phrase.

Israel has denied targeting civilians in its war on Hamas in Gaza, accusing the militants of hiding among them. Minutes after the protesters gained access to the building, New York City police officers arrived outside the school gates in unmarked cars, the Columbia Spectator newspaper reported. It said police told the paper they would only enter school grounds if someone was injured.

Some three hours after students entered the Columbia building, the school sent out a notice saying that effective immediately access to the campus has been limited to students residing in residential buildings on campus and employees providing essential services. "This access restriction will remain in place until circumstances allow otherwise," it said. "The safety of every single member of this community is paramount. We thank you for your patience, cooperation and understanding."

The building occupation at Columbia is at the center of Gaza-related protests roiling university campuses across the US in recent weeks. Students at dozens of campuses from California to New England have set up similar tent encampments to demonstrate their anger over the Israeli operation in Gaza and the perceived complicity of their schools in it.

The pro-Palestinian rallies have sparked intense campus debate over where school officials should draw the line between freedom of expression and hate speech. On Monday, Columbia University began suspending pro-Palestinian student activists who refused to dismantle the protest camp on the campus after the Ivy League school declared a stalemate in talks seeking to end the demonstration.

University President Nemat Minouche Shafik said in a statement that days of negotiations between student organizers and academic leaders had failed to persuade demonstrators to remove the dozens

of tents set up to express opposition to Israel's war in Gaza. Protesters on the Manhattan campus are demanding that Columbia meets three demands: divestment in Israel, transparency in university finances, and amnesty for students and faculty disciplined for their part in the protests.

Shafik this week said Columbia would not divest from finances in Israel. Instead, she offered to invest in health and education in Gaza and make Columbia's direct investment holdings more transparent. At Cal Poly Humboldt University, police early on Tuesday swarmed the campus, where students were occupying a school building, and starting detaining people, local media reported.

Police late on Monday had declared the protest an unlawful assembly and warned people they faced arrest if they did not disperse. The campus was earlier closed to all people except students and faculty because of the ongoing protest. Neither the school nor a police spokesman was immediately available for comment or to detail how many people may have been detained.

Civil rights groups have criticized law enforcement tactics on some campuses where police have clashed with protesters and have used chemical irritants to disperse crowds. Police detained about 30 protesters at their encampment at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill early on Tuesday after the university gave them until 6 a.m. local time to disperse, according to a statement from the school, noting that students had trespassed into classroom buildings overnight.

"After the area was cleared, the remaining protesters escalated their tactics, attempting to forcibly enter South Building by pushing officers," the school said. At the University of Texas at Austin, police arrested dozens of students whom they doused with pepper spray at a pro-Palestinian rally on Monday.

At least 100 were arrested during the demonstration as protesters chanted "Free Palestine" and erected dozens of tents in an encampment, local media reported. The new encampment was an escalation by protesters after almost 60 people were arrested and charged with criminal trespassing during a protest on campus last week. At Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, protesters squared off with police who used chemical irritants on the crowd and detained numerous people. The protesters had set up a "liberation zone" of tents surrounded by barriers. "After repeated warnings and refusal to disperse, law enforcement must protect Virginians," Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin, a Republican, wrote on social media after the incident.

Miscreants storm school in N Waziristan

F.P. Report

MIR ALI: Unknown miscreants stormed a school in North Waziristan and set solved examination papers on fire.

According to police sources, miscreants stormed a government higher secondary school in Mir Ali, North Waziristan district of KP, and burnt the solved examination papers of ninth and 10th standard. The burnt papers were from 23 examination centres, the sources said. Meanwhile, the peon of the school said as many as 12 miscreants stormed the school. Police have launched an investigation into the incident after registering an FIR. Separately on December 30, 2023, miscreants set fire to a girls' school in district Bannu's Meryan Tehsil.

The overnight incident targeted the Government Girls' Higher Secondary School in Kotka Mumbati Barakzai, which suffered significant damage. The school's science lab was turned to ashes. The miscreants stole solar panels and other items and vandalised the school's boundary wall as well. They also wrote threatening graffiti near the main gate, warning of additional attacks if the school tried to resume classes.

No contact with PTI founder: Sh Rasheed

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Former interior minister and Pakistan Awami Muslim League head Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed has viewed that he has no contact with the founder or any leader of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf.

Speaking to reporters outside the anti-terrorism court, Rawalpindi, he said only Shibli Faraz could talk about dialogue (between the Establishment) and the PTI. As for the slot of deputy prime minister, he said there was no such provision in the constitution of Pakistan. He taunted that "only the Jati Umra constitution offers the slot of deputy prime minister." He apprehended that Pakistan would face economic crisis in the next two months. "Industrialists are already facing tough conditions and now growers are up in arms," he said.

He said the wheat procurement was yet to begin and the financial condition of the masses was pathetic. The former federal minister reiterated that the innocent people having no connection with crimes should be released from jails. He asked the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to take notice of the wheat scandal immediately. He urged the government to review its policies as next two months would be crucial for the politics of Pakistan.



HERAT: Afghans mourning at a burial ceremony of slain Shias after gunmen attacked a mosque in Guzara district, Afghanistan.

Trump fined \$9,000 for violating gag orders

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The judge overseeing Donald Trump's criminal hush money trial fined the former US president \$9,000 for contempt of court on Tuesday and said he would consider jailing him if he continued to violate a gag order.

In a written order, Justice Juan Merchan said the fine may not be enough to serve as a deterrent for the wealthy businessman-turned-politician and lamented he did not have the authority to impose a higher penalty. "Defendant is hereby warned that the Court will not tolerate willful violations of its lawful orders and that if necessary and appropriate under the circumstances, it will impose an incarceration punishment," Merchan wrote.

Merchan had imposed the gag order to prevent Trump from criticizing witnesses and others involved in the case. The judge fined Trump \$1,000 for each of nine online statements that he said violated his order not to criticize witnesses or other participants in the trial. Prosecutors had flagged 10 posts as possible violations.

The posts, made between April 10 and April 17, included an article calling his former lawyer Michael Cohen a "serial liar." Cohen is expected to be a prominent witness in the trial. Another post quoted a Fox News pundit who claimed "undercover liberal activists" were trying to sneak onto the jury. Merchan rejected Trump's argument that he could not be held liable for "reposts" of material he did not write himself.

Merchan will consider whether to impose further penalties for other statements at a hearing on Thursday. The judge also ordered Trump to remove the statements from his Truth Social account and his campaign website by 2:15 p.m. EDT (1815 GMT). When asked by reporters to comment on the fine during a break, Trump did not respond.

Trump has argued that the gag order violates his free speech rights, and his lawyer Todd Blanche told Merchan last week that the statements at issue were responses to political attacks. Merchan

noted that Blanche was unable to provide any evidence that the expected witnesses had attacked Trump before he insulted them. The \$9,000 fine, due by Friday, is a relatively small penalty for Trump, who has already posted \$266.6 million in bonds as he appeals civil judgments in two other cases.

Imprisonment, however, would be an unprecedented twist in the first criminal trial of a former US president. If that happened, it is unclear whether Trump would be sent to New York City's jail on Rikers Island or whether security concerns would require more lenient treatment, such as home confinement in his Trump Tower triplex. As a former president, he remains under Secret Service protection. Trump, the Republican candidate in the 2024 presidential election is charged with falsifying business records to conceal a \$130,000 payment to porn star Stormy Daniels in exchange for her silence about a sexual encounter she said she had with Trump in 2006.

Trump has pleaded not guilty and denied having sex with Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford. The trial so far has featured testimony from former National Enquirer publisher David Pecker, who told jurors he used his supermarket tabloid to suppress negative stories about Trump ahead of the 2016 election.

The paper, for example, paid for former Playboy model Karen McDougal's story of an alleged affair with Trump but did not publish it, a tabloid practice known as "catch and kill." Lawyer Keith Davidson, who represented McDougal, testified on Tuesday that he understood he would be helping Trump's campaign by selling her story to the Enquirer, rather than other media outlets. Trump is required to attend the trial and has said he could instead be campaigning ahead of his rematch with Democratic President Joe Biden in the Nov. 5 election. The criminal case is one of four pending against Trump, but could be the only one to go to trial and result in a verdict before the election.

Rana Sana nominaed as PM's advisor

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday accorded approval of Rana Sanaullah's appointment as Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs.

The president approved the appointment on the advice of Prime Minister under Article 93 (1) of the Constitution of Pakistan, said a press release issued by President Secretariat Press Wing. Rana Sanaullah would have the status of a federal minister in his capacity as Adviser to the PM.

CM: PTI ready for talks with establishment

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur says they (PTI) are ready to talk to the establishment for the sake of the country.

Also, CM Gandapur clarified that no ransom was paid for the recovery of the judge. He said that he saluted the forces that recovered the judge. Moreover, he said that the federal government is earning Rs 300 billion from tobacco from his province. He criticised the federal government for receiving this money. The CM further said that this time the federal government would not get this money but only GST.

PHC suspends ECP's summon notice issued to KP CM: A two-member bench of Peshawar High Court comprising Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Shakeel Ahmed on Tuesday suspended the suo moto notice of the Election Commission of Pakistan issued to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur's in assets case.

The court issued a notice to ECP seeking a reply for issuing a summon notice to Ali Amin for an explanation of his previous years' statements related to assets.

Govt to block mobile phone SIMs of non-filers

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a robust action against non-filers amid the prevailing financial crisis being faced by the cash-strapped country, the government on Tuesday directed the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and the telecom companies to block mobile phone SIMs of over 500,000 non-filers.

In a statement, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) said: "In exercise of the powers conferred under section 114B of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001, the FBR is pleased to issue this Income Tax General Order (ITGO) to disable the mobile phone SIMs in respect of following persons who are not appearing on active taxpayer list but are liable to file the Income Tax Return for Tax Year 2023 under the provisions of the Income Tax Ordinance, 2001.

The development came a day after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif hinted at undertaking "massive economic reforms" at the special meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Speaking at the closing plenary of a special meeting of the WEF, the premier vowed to introduce deep-rooted reforms and adopt meaningful austerity to steer

the country out of the economic crisis.

The FBR asked the PTA and all telecom operators to ensure compliance with the Income Tax General Order (ITGO) with immediate effect. "The mobile SIMs in respect of the above-mentioned individuals will remain blocked until restored by FBR or the Commissioner Inland Revenue having jurisdiction of the person." The tax collection body further said: "The compliance report in this regard is to be furnished to the FBR on May 15." The FBR made public the names of 506,671 non-filers and said that these individuals were not filing income tax returns despite having taxable income. The mobile SIMs of these individuals could be blocked at any time, the FBR added. These individuals are not included in the list of active taxpayers list, read the statement.

It is pertinent to mention here that the tax collection body, last year, secured additional powers in a bid to increase the tax net and was authorised, under Section 114B in the Income Tax Ordinance 2001, to disconnect utility connections and block mobile SIMs if a return is not filed in response to notices issued to them.

Bilawal raised voice for labor force

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, reaffirmed the founding vision of the Party - Roti, Kapra Aur Makaan, on the International Labour Day, with a conviction that the prosperity of Pakistan is interwoven with the welfare and dignity of its labour force.

According to the press release issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP, in a message on International Labour Day, paid homage to the martyrs of Chicago.

Sindh can call Army for support in Katcha operation

F.P. Report

SUKKUR: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said today that the Army can be called in for assistance in Katcha operation against dacoits if the Sindh government wants.

Mohsin Naqvi said the time is not for politics now but it's time to work for progress of the country. While talking to media men during his visit to NADRA office in Sukkur, the interior minister said that they have to work for the development of the country.

Mohsin Naqvi said that they will further improve law and order situation in Sindh including Karachi. He said that the Sindh government can use the Army for operations in Katcha area whenever it wants. He said that they will take all possible steps in order to

establish peace in Kashmore, Ghotki and Shikarpur. There will be a meeting with the Sindh Chief Minister in this regard, Interior Minister said, adding "I have come here to see the situation regarding unrest in Sindh."

He said that President Asif Ali Zardari also expressed his concern regarding unrest in some districts of Sindh. The President of the State is holding a meeting regarding law and order, including the Katcha operation, the Interior Minister said. He said people are facing problems regarding NADRA office and passport office. He said that NADRA office Sukkur will be shifted within the city soon while passport office building will be completed within six months.

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