

Parliament joint sitting
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has now summoned a joint sitting of both houses of parliament on April 18. The president convened the joint session of parliament under Articles 54(1) and 56(3) of the Constitution. Under Article 56(3) of the Constitution, the president shall address a joint session of parliament at the commencement of the parliamentary year after general elections.



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Israel continues air strikes on Gaza after Iran attack

UN chief calls for ‘maximum restraint’

GAZA / NEW YORK (AFP): Israel launched dozens of air strikes on Gaza overnight, Hamas said Monday, as the Israeli army said it will not be distracted from the war after Iran's unprecedented attack heightened fears of wider conflict.

"Even while under attack from Iran, we have not lost sight, not for one moment, of our critical mission in Gaza to rescue our hostages from the hands of Iran's proxy Hamas," Israeli military spokesman Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari said late Sunday.

As mediators attempt to reach a deal to halt the fighting in Gaza, fears grew over Israeli plans to send troops into Rafah, the far-southern city where the majority of the Palestinian territory's 2.4 million people have taken refuge. The Hamas government media office said Israeli aircraft launched "dozens" of strikes overnight on central Gaza.

Meanwhile, Israeli army opened fire on civilians who were trying to cross to the north to reunite with family members, witnesses told AFP. Rumours of a reopened Israeli checkpoint on the coastal road from the besieged enclave's south to Gaza City in the north sent thousands of Palestinians heading north over the weekend, despite Israel denying it was open.

United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres warned the international community on Sunday against deeper descent into conflict, addressing the Security Council during a meeting over Iran's weekend attack on Israel. "Neither the region nor the world can afford more war," Guterres said. "The Middle East is on the brink," he told the Security Council.

"The people of the region are confronting a real danger of a devastating full-scale conflict. Now is the time to defuse and de-escalate," he added, calling for "maximum restraint." Late on Saturday, Iran launched a direct attack on its long-time arch foe Israel for the first time, firing a wave of more than 300 missiles and drones.

Nearly all of them were intercepted by Israel and others, including the United States, Jordan and Britain.

According to the Israeli army, 12 people were injured. Iran said its attack came in response to a deadly April 1 air strike on Tehran's consulate building in the Syrian capital Damascus that was widely blamed on Israel. That attack killed seven Iranian Revolutionary Guards, including two senior generals, and prompted Iranian threats of retaliation.

The unprecedented exchange, marking a major escalation between the two countries, has sparked renewed fears of a broader conflict, including the potential for an Israel counterstrike. The United States said it will not join any Israeli counterattack on Iran, with President Joe Biden warning Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to "think carefully" about any escalation.

The rising tensions came against the backdrop of Israel's six-month-old war against Hamas in Gaza, which began after the Palestinian militant group's unprecedented attack in Israel October 7 which resulted in the deaths of 1,170 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli figures.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed at least 33,729 people in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to the territory's Hamas-run health ministry. Since the start of the conflict, Iran-backed groups in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen have carried out a flurry of attacks on Israeli and Western targets. Security Council session on the simmering crisis came at Israel's request, with its Ambassador Gilad Erdan urging the council to "take action (and) condemn Iran for their terror." The body must "impose all possible sanctions on Iran before it's too late," he said.

Iran's UN envoy Amir Saeed Iravani meanwhile insisted the Islamic republic was exercising its "inherent right to self-defense." The Security Council... failed in its duty

to maintain international peace and security," Iravani said. Therefore, Tehran "had no choice" but to respond, he said, adding that his country does "not seek escalation or war," but will respond to any "threat or aggression."

During his speech, Guterres repeated his condemnation of Iran's strikes on Israel, and the Israeli attack on the Iranian consulate in Damascus. "It's time to step back from the brink. It is vital to avoid any action that could lead to major military confrontations on multiple fronts in the Middle East," Guterres said. He also repeated his call for an "immediate humanitarian ceasefire" in Gaza, which experts warn is on the verge of famine.

Hostilities between Israel and Iran's regional allies have flared since the outbreak of the war in Gaza. Hamas's October 7 attack that sparked the fighting resulted in the deaths of 1,170 people, mostly civilians, according to Israeli figures. Attempting the journey back to northern Gaza, displaced resident Basma Salman said, "even if it (my house) was destroyed, I want to go there. I couldn't stay in the south."

"It's overcrowded. We couldn't even take a fresh breath of air there. It was completely terrible." Late Saturday, Hamas said it had submitted its response to a truce plan presented by US, Qatari and Egyptian mediators at talks that started in Cairo on April 7. Hamas said it was sticking to its previous demands, insisting on "a permanent ceasefire" and the withdrawal of the Israeli army.

Israel's Mossad spy agency called this a rejection of the proposal, accusing Hamas of "continuing to exploit the tension with Iran" and aiming for "a general escalation in the region". But the United States said mediation efforts continue. "There's a new deal on the table... It is a good deal" that would see some hostages released, fighting halted and more humanitarian relief into Gaza, Kirby said.



ISLAMABAD: Saudi FM Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah walking along with Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar after arrival at airport.

Raisi to reach Pakistan on 22nd



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Iranian President Ibrahim Raisi is set to visit Pakistan on April 22, sources told media on Monday, as regional tensions surge after Iran's unprecedented drone and missile strikes on Israeli territory.

As per sources, Islamabad and Tehran have agreed upon the matters pertaining to President Raisi's visit who will be accompanied by a high-level delegation and will hold meetings with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, President Asif Ali Zardari and the military leadership. His visit comes after Tehran launched more than 300 drones and missiles at Israel in retaliation to the Israeli airstrike on its Damascus consulate that killed several people including Iran's elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) senior commanders Mohammed Reza Zahedi and senior commander Mohammad Hadi Haji Rahimi.

Apart from this, the visit is part of ongoing efforts by the two countries to deepen their cooperation which received a temporary setback earlier this year. In January, relations between the two countries had turned sour after Pakistan, in retaliation to Tehran's cross-border strikes, carried out precision strikes using killer drones, rockets, loitering munitions and stand-off weapons to target terrorists inside Iranian territory.

Rain emergency declared in Balochistan

F.P. Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan government declared rain and flood emergency due to continuous heavy rains which battered different districts of Balochistan, killing and injuring several people across the province.

The areas which witnessed heavy rains include Kohlu, Musa Khel, Zhob, Sherani, Mastung, Nushki, Mehran, Chaman, Qila Abdullah, Pishin, Ziarat, Mastung, Muslim Bagh, Khan Mehtarzai and Kalat saw hailstorms accompanied by strong winds which caused destruction to trees, gardens and solar panels.

Torrential rains and hailstorms also disrupted land connectivity, affecting the communication system of rural areas of Sinjawi, Pishin, Toba Kakari, Shelabagh, Qila Abdullah and Pishin, due to which the citizens are facing severe problems. In Pashni's ward no 5, the roof of a house collapsed due to rain, injuring six people including four children. The rescue personnel took out the injured from the debris and shifted them to the hospital. In Karkh, a 13-year-old girl lost her life after she was buried under the debris due to the roof collapse while three others were wounded in the incident.

Saudi FM-led team arrives in Pakistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan arrived in Pakistan on Monday on a two-day visit aimed at enhancing bilateral economic cooperation, with local media widely showing footage of him being received by Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.

The Saudi foreign minister's visit comes a little over a week after Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman met Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Makkah and reaffirmed the Kingdom's commitment to expedite an investment package worth \$5 billion that was previously discussed.

On his arrival at the Nur Khan air base in the garrison town of Rawalpindi, the Saudi foreign minister, who is leading a high-level delegation comprising several top ministers, was given a red-carpet welcome by Pakistani officials.

"A week after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Saudi Arabia (April 6-8), a high-level delegation of Saudi Arabia is coming to Pakistan," the Pakistani Information Ministry said in a statement. "The Saudi delegation will consult on the next stages of investment and implementation issues," the statement added, saying

Saudi Arabia's planned investment in the Reko Diq gold and copper mining project would also be discussed during the visit.

State media reported that Saudi Arabia was likely to invest \$1 billion in the mine project in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province, one of the world's largest underdeveloped copper-gold areas. Riyadh was also interested in investing in agriculture, trade, energy, minerals, IT, transport and other sectors in Pakistan, the statement said.

"As a result of this visit, Pakistan's export capacity will increase, joint ventures will be launched and new opportunities will be paved." The Pakistani foreign office said last week that the Saudi delegation would comprise the foreign minister, minister of water and agriculture, minister of industry and mineral resources and deputy minister of investment, as well as senior officials from the Saudi energy ministry. The Saudi delegation is expected to hold meetings with the Pakistani president, the prime minister, the foreign minister and other ministers, as well as the army chief and members of the apex committee of Pakistan's Special Investment Facilitation Council, set up last year to oversee all foreign funding.

Eight killed, 12 injured due to rains in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on Monday issued a report on the loss of life and property in the province due to heavy rains during the last three days.

According to preliminary reports, eight people were killed and 12 people were injured. In which four children, three men and a woman are among the dead persons, while the injured include four women, six men and two children. According to report, a total of 85 houses were damaged due to the collapse of walls and roofs in different districts, in which 15 houses were completely damaged and 70 houses were partially damaged.

Due to heavy rain, life and financial accidents took place in different districts of Dir Upper, Chitral Lower, Swat, Malakand and Bajaur. The Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa directed the concerned district administration to provide immediate assistance to the affected

family and provide the best medical facilities to the injured. Relief materials were provided to the victims of the affected districts by PDMA.

Due to continuous heavy rains, the flow of water in the rivers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is normal. The flow of water at Nowshera in Kabul River is record 98,500 cusecs moderate flood. Indus river water flow at Kherabad 103,200 cusecs record as usual. 41,804 cusecs record of water flow of Kabul River at Warsak as usual, flow of water at river Swat at Khawaza Khela is 30,183 cusecs normal and 27,701 cusecs record of water flow River Swat at Chakdara normally. 80,000 cusecs of water flow at Swat riverat Munda high level flood while 42,187 cusecs record water flow Panjkora River at Zolam Bridge low level flood, The PDMA is in constant contact with all district administrations, related and Aid agencies. PDMA's emergency operation center is fully operational, people should report any untoward

incident to 1700.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the rivers at different points are facing flood-like situation on Monday due to heavy rainfalls.

According to an official report on Monday, river Swat is in high flood at Munda with water flow of eight-thousand cusecs. Kabul river at Nowshera with ninety-eight thousand six-hundred cusecs and Panjkora river at Zulam bridge Lower Dir with forty-two thousand two-hundred and eighty-seven cusecs water flow are in medium flood situation.

Similarly, Kabul river at Warsak with forty-one thousand eight-hundred and thirty-two cusecs and Swat river at Khwazakhela with thirty-thousand one-hundred and eighty-four cusecs water flow are facing low level flood situation. Indus river at Attock Khairabad with one-hundred thirty-two thousand and five-hundred cusecs and Swat river at Chakdara with twenty-seven thousand seven-hundred and twenty-one cusecs are flowing normal.

Emergency Flood Control Room setup at CM's Sectt

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Keeping in view the possible flood situation due to ongoing spell of torrential rains in the province, "Emergency Flood Control Room" has been established at Chief Minister's Secretariat, with the purpose to coordinate with relevant stakeholders regarding all kind of activities/information and emergencies across the province.

The control room will perform duties round the clock and bring the information into the notice of Chief Minister in case of any kind of emergency or untoward situation anywhere in the

province. Deputy Secretary (Governance) of Chief Minister's Secretariat Mr. Mohsin Iqbal has been nominated as Focal Person/In-charge of the Emergency Flood Control Room, which can be accessed on the following numbers: UAN: 091-111-712-713, Fax No: 091-9210707, WhatsApp No: 0343-2222949.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has directed the district administrations, Relief and Rehabilitation Department, Rescue Service and all other relevant entities to remain on high alert in order to effectively deal with any possible emergency situation, further directing them to ensure all kind of required arrangements so as to minimize the possible losses to human lives and properties in the prevailing situation. He has also directed the district administration and local government bodies to ensure availability of relevant staff in the field, adding that SOPs and directives issued by PDMA in this regard must be implemented.

He has directed the concerned quarters to regularly monitor the flood situation in the rivers and to take necessary arrangements for protection, rescue and relief of the people in case of any flood emergency.

PTI founder's bail extended
F.P. Report

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Monday extended the interim bail of PTI founder and former prime minister Imran Khan in three cases including Jinnah House attack case. As per details, the ATC judge Arshad Javed heard the interim bail pleas in three cases including Jinnah House attack. PTI founder Imran Khan was directed to mark his attendance in Adila Jail via video link.

Aseefa sworn in as MNA

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Political debutante Aseefa Bhutto-Zardari was sworn in as a Member of the National Assembly on Monday in a session marred by ruckus from the opposition benches.

Aseefa was elected unopposed as an MNA from NA-207 Shaheed Benazirabad (formerly Nawabshah) on March 29. The seat was vacated by her father Asif Ali Zardari after he was elected president. She reached Parliament earlier with her brother, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, in tow.

She was administered her oath by NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq amid sloganeering, shouting and hooting by MNAs associated with the PTI, which led to a walkout by treasury lawmakers in protest against the ruckus. The PTI has alleged that its candidate for NA 207, Ghulam Mustafa Rind, was arrested by the Sakrand police. The party had said that Rind was its representative who was supposed to contest against Aseefa in the by-elections.

The PPP termed the occasion as a "historic moment". Aseefa's sister Bakhtawar Bhutto-Zardari celebrated her sibling taking office, saying that the event was a "surreal and proud moment for our family". PPP Central Information Secretary Faisal Karim Kundi also called Aseefa's swearing in a "historic moment for Pakistan's parliamentary democracy".

Sindh Transport Minister Sharjeel Memon extended his congratulations on as well. Aseefa holds a bachelor's degree in politics and sociology and a master's in global health and development. She initially served as a goodwill ambassador for polio eradication in 2012 which made her face familiar among masses. She played a pivotal role in politics in the general elections when she ran an aggressive election campaign for her brother and other party candidates in Sanghar.

Shaheed Benazirabad and Naushahro Feroze districts.

PM directs for vital steps to reduce power price

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed for drastic measures including shifting of imported coal-run plants, improvement in power supply system, setting up cost effective and renewable energy plants, and functioning of solar projects to reduce cost of electricity per unit thus benefiting the ordinary people.

The prime minister chaired a high level review meeting regarding the power sector. The meeting was attended by federal ministers Ishaq Dar, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Ahad Khan Cheema, Attaullah Tarar, Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari and Dr Mussadik Malik, former minister Muhammad Ali, Member of the National Assembly Bilal Zaheer Kiyani, Rana Ahsan Afzal, Salman Ahmed and relevant authorities, the PM Office Media Wing said in a

press release.

The prime minister directed for shifting of the coal-run power plants from the imported fuel to local coal, besides improvement in the power supply system. He said that in future, only clean, cost effective and renewable power plants should be set up in the country. The meeting was apprised of the 600MW solar power project and the prime minister directed for expediting work on the foreign investment in this regard.

The prime minister also asked for proposals for better utilization of the current surplus power generation capacity in industries. He observed that wheeling price of electricity should be reduced for the industrial consumers so that power supply at reduced price could be made possible, besides for the industrial development and increase in export, grid stations should be installed near big industries.

The process of auction of those power plants of Generation Companies (GENCOs) that were lying dysfunctional and defective should be accelerated, he further directed. The prime minister said that the government was taking all measures to reduce price of power per unit for the common man whereas to reduce circular debt, reforms in the power sector were being carried out on priority basis. The meeting was briefed over the existing power generation capability, supply system, government's steps and proposals. It was also apprised of the future power demand and supply. The meeting was told that by shifting the coal-run plants from the imported fuel would not only save the precious reserves but also would make it possible to reduce power price by Rs 2 per unit for the consumers. The prime minister directed for swift implementation of all the measures within the stipulated time frame.

Indian hand found in attack on Tamba: Naqvi

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday said India was suspected to be behind attack on Amir Saffraz Tamba who allegedly tortured to death an Indian terrorist Sarabjit Singh in jail in 2013.

"Police are investigating the firing on Amir Tamba and so far, they suspect India is behind it. India was involved in four other murder incidents on a similar pattern as well. However, it will not be suitable to say anything until the investigation is complete," he said addressing the media at the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) office in Lahore. Police on Sunday said two motorcycle riders

fatally shot Tamba in the limits of Islampura police station.

"India always wants to maintain good relations with its neighbouring countries ... But if anyone shows India the angry eyes again and again, comes to India and tries to promote terrorist activities, we will not spare them," Singh said. Pakistan on April 6 denounced Indian defence minister's comments, terming them as "hyper-nationalistic sentiments" fuelled for "electoral gains".

Reacting to the Indian minister's statement, the Foreign Office said: "India's ruling dispensation habitually resorts to hateful rhetoric to fuel hyper-nationalistic sentiments, unapologetically exploiting such discourse for electoral gains." The FO had said such myopic and irresponsible behaviour not only undermined regional peace but also impeded the prospects of constructive engagement in the long term.

"Pakistan has always demonstrated its commitment to peace in the region. However, our desire for peace should not be misconstrued. History attests to Pakistan's firm resolve and ability to protect and defend itself," the statement read. According to the FO, Pakistan, on January 25, provided irrefutable evidence, elucidating India's campaign of extrajudicial and transnational assassinations on Pakistani soil.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Raza Naqvi addressing a press. —APP Photo

PTI Sindh shocked over delay in Karachi public gathering permission

KARACHI (PPI): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh on Monday raised serious concerns over bureaucratic delays in obtaining permission for holding a public gathering (Jalsa) at Bagha-e-Jinnah Ground in District East of Karachi.

In a letter addressed to the Chief Secretary Sindh and Inspector General Sindh Police, PTI Sindh's President Haleem Adil Shaikh highlighted the unnecessary delays in processing their application for the public gathering.

Mr Shaikh stated that the application for the Jalsa, scheduled to be held on April 28, 2024, was submitted in person to the Deputy Commissioner East Karachi during a meeting with a PTI delegation, led by Advocate Ali

Palh, on March 21, 2024.

Despite assurances from the Deputy Commissioner, there is still sluggishness in processing the application, says PTI Sindh leader. He mentioned that a reminder was issued on April 1, 2024, as the original public gathering date of April 21, 2024, was approaching rapidly.

Faced with continued delays, PTI Sindh decided to reschedule the public gathering to April 28, 2024, to allow sufficient time for permissions. However, as of April 15, 2024, they have yet to receive a response, raising fears that their event may face deliberate obstacles.

Sheikh emphasized that obtaining permission for the Jalsa is not only a

legal right but also guaranteed by the Constitution of Pakistan under Articles 17 and 18, which ensure freedom of association to all citizens.

Expressing frustration over the reluctance of district administrations to grant permission, PTI Sindh has appealed to the Chief Secretary Sindh and Inspector General Sindh Police for urgent intervention.

Sheikh reiterated that the purpose of the public gathering is to engage in peaceful political activities, conducted in an orderly manner without disrupting public affairs. He stressed the importance of addressing these concerns promptly to ensure that PTI Sindh can exercise its democratic rights.

Six illegal construction demolished in LDA operation

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) on Monday, conduct mega operation in Johar town and demolished six illegal constructions and sealed one.

On directions of Director General Lahore Development Authority Tahir Farooq, Director Town Planning Four along with his teams took action under the supervision of Chief Town Planner II Azhar Ali.

LDA teams demolished illegal constructions in Plot No. 26, A-1 Military Accounts society, demolished illegal constructions on Plot No. 227 in UET Society. Illegal structure on Defense Road and marble shop in Kakezai Society were demolished.

LDA team demolished the illegal constructions on Plot No. 970 L and Plot No. 7 AF2 in Johar Town L Block. LDA team sealed Plot No. 178 Block B in Nespak Housing Society. Several notices were issued to these properties before the operation.

Body formed to investigate woman's death

LAHORE (PPI): A three-member committee, headed by DIG Railways Police, has been formed to probe the death of a woman after she was allegedly tortured by a policeman on Millat Express.

The committee will submit its report to Railways Chairman within three days. Maryam Bibi was travelling to Faisalabad from Karachi before Eid when, reportedly, she started to throw away goods of other passengers.

They called a police constable and protested her behavior which led to the policeman torture the woman severely before everyone. Police on Monday said that the body of the woman, who was subjected to torture by policeman Mir Hasan on a moving train, was found near Chani Goth Railway Station in Bahawalpur.

The incident happened about a week ago. The policeman was arrested last week after the video went viral in which he could be seen holding the woman by her hair and hitting her multiple times while other passengers watched silently.

Crackdown to ensure revised prices of roti, naan

LAHORE (APP): The district administration has initiated a crackdown to ensure prices of roti and naan, Rs 16 and Rs 20 accordingly.

In a move, 296 roti and naan points were inspected, resulting in 46 notices being issued, 19 heavy fines imposed, and seven arrests were made over violations.

The enforcement action was led by assistant commissioners and price control magistrates who con-

ducted checks across various tehsils in Lahore.

Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider told media on Monday that 76 inspections were carried out in Tehsil Raiwind, 65 in tehsil City, 45 in tehsil Cantt, 40 in Model Town, 70 inspection were conducted in tehsil Shalimar.

Assistant Commissioner Model Town Sahibzada Yusuf arrested four violators and imposing fines total Rs 70,000. Similarly, Assistant Commissioner Cantt Nabeel Memon oversaw three detentions and levied fines amounting to PKR 90,000.

The approved rates have been set at Rs16 for a 100-gram roti and Rs 20 for a 120-gram naan.

The district administration is actively ensuring the implementation of the new pricing across the city. Citizens are encouraged to report any discrepancies in roti and naan prices by calling the helpline 0800003245.

اشتبہار برائے تبدیلی بھرتی مقام / ہیڈ کوارٹر فرنیچر کور (نارتھ) صوبہ خیبر پختونخوا

1- فرنیچر کور (نارتھ) صوبہ خیبر پختونخوا میں بھرتی کے اشتباہ جو کہ 30 مارچ کو پاکستان کے مختلف اخبارات میں شائع کئے گئے تھے۔ اس میں کچھ اطلاع کے بھرتی مقام متبادل میں ہوئے تھے۔ جو درج ذیل ہیں۔ بھرتی کے خواہشمند امیدواروں کو بذریعہ اشتباہ ہذا مطلع کیا جاتا ہے کہ مطلوب معیار پر پورا اترنے والے امیدواران مندرجہ ذیل دیئے گئے مقامات اور تاریخوں پر جمع 08:00 بجے سے لے کر دوپہر 02:00 بجے تک شریف لائیں۔

الف۔ جنرل ڈپٹی سپاہی (مرد)			
نمبر شمار	ضلع	رجسٹریشن / ملحق حائر	تایم بھرتی مقام
1	توخر	29-30 اپریل 2024	142 روڈ چیمپئنس بتالین کپ جتن ضلع کوئٹہ کوہستان
2	کوئی پال کوہستان	1-2 مئی 2024	142 روڈ چیمپئنس بتالین کپ جتن ضلع کوئٹہ کوہستان
3	اپ کوہستان	1-2 مئی 2024	142 روڈ چیمپئنس بتالین کپ جتن ضلع کوئٹہ کوہستان
4	لوہ کوہستان	1-2 مئی 2024	142 روڈ چیمپئنس بتالین کپ جتن ضلع کوئٹہ کوہستان
5	بنوں	27-28 & 25 مئی 2024	116 بریگیڈ کوجو بیٹ
6	بومیر	6-7 مئی 2024	6 بریگیڈ کوجو بیٹ سوات
7	سوات	8-9 مئی 2024	6 بریگیڈ کوجو بیٹ سوات
8	شالنگر	10-11 & 13 مئی 2024	6 بریگیڈ کوجو بیٹ سوات
9	ملاکنڈ	14-16 مئی 2024	6 بریگیڈ کوجو بیٹ سوات

2- بھرتی کے لیے معیار			
(تعلیمی قابلیت)			
(الف) GD سپاہی / میٹرک پاس			
5 فٹ 6 انچ / کم از کم فرنیچر کور (نارتھ) کے شہداء کے بچوں کے لئے 2 فٹ 6 انچ کی رعایت موجود ہے۔ 5 فٹ 8 انچ اور اس سے زیادہ قد والوں کو ترجیح دی جائی گی۔			
33x31 فرنیچر کور (نارتھ) کے شہداء کے بچوں کے لئے 2 فٹ 6 انچ کی رعایت موجود ہے			
30 جن 2024 کو کم از کم 17 سال اور زیادہ سے زیادہ 23 سال ہونی چاہیے۔ فرنیچر کور (نارتھ) کے شہداء کے بچوں کیلئے اپر اینج میں 2- سال کی رعایت ہے۔			

3- امیدواران مندرجہ ذیل کاغذات کی اصل اور تصدیق شدہ ڈوکیمنٹس کا پائل مبراہ لائیں۔			
(1) تعلیمی اسناد (ب) قومی شناختی کارڈ یا فارم "ب" (ت) چار عدد یا پھوٹو سائز تصویر (ث) ڈومیسائل سرٹیفکیٹ (ج) فرنیچر کور (نارتھ) کے شہداء / اعزاسروں اور ریاکار حضرات کے اپنے اپنے والد کا ڈیپانچ سرٹیفکیٹ یا جانشین ک جس سے اس کا رشتہ ظاہر ہوتا ہو مبراہ لائیں۔ (ح) فرنیچر کور (نارتھ) کے حاضر دروں اور ریاکار حضرات کے بچے اور شہداء کے بیٹے یا بھائی متعلقہ یونٹ سے تصدیق شدہ بھرتی فارم بھی مبراہ لائیں۔			
4- اضافی قابلیت رکھنے والے حضرات اپنی قابلیت کے سرٹیفکیٹ (مثلاً ڈرائیونگ لائسنس، لیپ اسسٹنٹ، ایکٹریٹیشن اور کمپیوٹر ڈیو مد وغیرہ) اپنے مبراہ لائیں۔			
5- بھرتی کے لئے نا اہلیت:-			

(الف) وہ شخص جو کسی بھی گورنمنٹ سروس سے ڈیپانچ یا برخاست شدہ یا محکوم الزام غیر حاضر ہو چکا ہو۔			
(ب) وہ شخص کسی جرم میں عدالت سے سزا یافتہ / مطلوب ہو۔			
(ت) جعلی اسناد فراہم پر بھرتی ہونے کی کوشش کرنے والے، رشوت لینے اور دینے والے کے خلاف سخت قانونی کارروائی کی جائے گی۔			
(ث) اصل شناختی کارڈ (18 سال) یا فارم (17 سال) کے علاوہ کوئی بھی سند بھرتی کے اہل نہیں ہوگا۔			
نوٹ:- جعلی اسناد فراہم پر بھرتی ہونے کی کوشش کرنے والے، رشوت لینے اور دینے والے کے خلاف سخت قانونی کارروائی کی جائے گی۔ بھرتی کے بارے میں مزید معلومات فرنیچر کور کی ویب سائٹ www.frontiercorpskp.gov.pk سے بھی حاصل کی جاسکتی ہے۔			

لیفٹیننٹ کرنل برائے انسپکٹر جنرل فرنیچر کور (نارتھ)

CM seeks comprehensive development plan for Murree

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif sought a comprehensive plan for the development of Murree, while co-chairing with PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif a special meeting on Murree's problems, and development needs.

According to a handout issued here on Monday, the Chief Minister directed to ban use of plastic in Murree and other tourist spots to ensure cleanliness and environmental preservation. She examined a proposed site for the construction of state-of-the-art hospital in Murree. She approved, in-principle, Water Supply Scheme to bring water from river Jhelum to Murree, besides seeking a plan for the maintenance and filtration of existing water scheme.

A ban on the entry of vehicles into Murree was considered in the meeting. The Chief Minister directed to start cable car and modern tram service for safe parking in Murree. A proposal to issue permit cards to the vehicles entering Murree was also reviewed in the meeting.

The Chief Minister directed to ensure parking space in every building. She directed to identify and immediately demolish illegal buildings in Murree. Final plan for clearing encroachments in Murree was also approved in the meeting. It was decided to make bus stand functional, besides closing all illegal bases in Murree.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed to develop New Murree, Kotli Sattian and other adjoining areas into alternative tourist destinations. She directed to construct motorway-like clean toilets in Murree. She also approved the establishment of Solid Waste Management, and Parks and Horticulture Authority for Murree.

The CM directed to widen Murree roads and make them one-way. "The streets of Murree will be cleared of potholes and street markets will be restored." The extension of Zhika Gali Chowk was also reviewed in the meeting.

The PML-N Quaid said that construction standards have not been taken into consideration, adding that construction of hotels and buildings on land sliding points can be very dangerous. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif said in the past, the goal was to make money, destroying the ancient beauty of historical buildings. Tourist sites present a dismal picture of mismanagement, he added. The Quaid highlighted, "I congratulate Shehbaz Sharif for removing illegal buildings in Murree."

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said bad structures are distorting the natural beauty of Murree, adding the protection of people's life is the foremost duty of the government. MPA Bilal Sati, Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman, Commissioner Aamir Khattak, Deputy Commissioner Zaheer Shirazi, RPO and other officials attended the meeting. Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, and MNA Osama Ashfaq Sarwar joined the meeting via video link.

People's Bus Service in Mirpurkhas

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, while delivering good news to the people, announced the commencement of the People's Bus Service in Mirpurkhas and the addition of two new routes to the Pink Bus Service starting from April 19.

A meeting was convened in Karachi under the chairmanship of Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, Mass Transit, Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control, Sharjeel Inam Memon. Secretary of Transport, Asad Zamin, and Sindh Mass Transit Authority MD Kamal Dayo were in attendance. During the meeting, it was decided to add ten new buses to the pink bus service.

Speaking on the occasion of the meeting, Senior Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon announced that the new routes of the pink bus service would be inaugurated on April 19. Additionally, the People's bus service would commence for the people of Mirpurkhas from April 20, while a cashless automated Fare Collection Smart Card system would be launched from April 25.



He emphasized that the vision of the People's Party leadership and the Sindh government is to provide affordable and comfortable bus services throughout Sindh. A robust transport network will not only create new employment opportunities but also promote economic activities in the region.

Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon emphasized that the launch of the People's Bus Service across Sindh will bring revolutionary relief to the people. Additionally, he highlighted that establishing the best transport network will also attract trade and investment to the province.

He directed that the transport projects should be completed soon so that the people can obtain relief. In the meeting, various transport projects, including the Red Line BRT, Green Line, and Yellow Line, were also discussed in detail.

ٹینڈر برائے نیلامی عام گاڑیاں

(1) انسپکٹر جنرل فرنیچر کور خیبر پختونخواہ (نارتھ) پشاور کی جانب سے مندرجہ ذیل گاڑیوں کی نیلامی کیلئے سربراہیہ ٹینڈر مطلوب ہیں۔ جو کہ ای ایم ای پبلیکس شاکس ضلع خیبر میں کھڑی ہیں مورخہ 03 مئی 2024 بوقت 10:00 بجے سے 2:00 بجے تک نیلامی بھی ہیں جہاں ہیں کی بنیاد پر اوپن ٹینڈر یعنی عام نیلامی ہوگی۔ ٹینڈر سے متعلق شرائط و ضوابط معلومات متعلقہ ٹینڈر ڈاکیومنٹس میں مہیا کی گئی ہے۔ جو کہ 10:00 بجے سے لیکر 15:00 بجے تک ای ایم ای پبلیکس شاکس سے تین ہزار مبراہ (ناقابل واپسی) کے عوض حاصل کیے جاسکتے ہیں۔

نمبر شمار	گاڑیوں کی اقسام	تعداد
ا۔	لینڈرو ڈیفینڈر سنگل سیکن	7
ب۔	ڈیون ہائیکس ڈبل سیکن	1

مختصر شرائط و ضوابط

مختصر شرائط و ضوابط

- ہیڈ کوارٹر فرنیچر کور اس بات کا حق محفوظ رکھتا ہے کہ وہ کوئی ایک یا سب نیلامی کو PPRA قوانین کے مطابق قبول یا مسترد کر سکتے ہیں۔
- گاڑیوں کا معائنہ کرنے کے لیے ٹینڈر کے اعلیٰ کاغذات اور قومی شناختی کارڈ لازماً ہونی چاہئے۔
- تمام بولی دہندگان ٹینڈر میں جتنی قیمت بعد ازاں اوقات تک درج کریں گے۔
- ہیڈ کوارٹر فرنیچر کور اس بات کا حق محفوظ رکھتا ہے کہ وہ گاڑی کی طے شدہ قیمت سے کم بولی لگنے پر مسترد کر سکتا ہے۔
- کا مایاب بولی دہندگان کے لیے لازمی ہوگا کہ وہ گاڑی کی نیلامی کے چار ماہ کے اندر اندر گاڑی ایکسائنز اینڈ ٹیکسیشن آفس میں رجسٹرڈ کروائیں گے۔ بصورت دیگر نیلام شدہ گاڑی کو بعد قیمت ضبط کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ اسکے علاوہ کا مایاب بولی کے 5 فیصدی ماہ کے حساب سے ڈیمرج ادا کرنا ہوگی۔
- مندرجہ بالا ٹینڈر نوٹس ویب سائٹ www.ppra.org.pk سے بھی ڈاؤن لوڈ کیا جاسکتا ہے۔

لیفٹیننٹ کرنل

برائے انسپکٹر جنرل فرنیچر کور خیبر پختونخوا پشاور

ٹینڈر برائے نیلامی عام گاڑیاں

(1) انسپکٹر جنرل فرنیچر کور خیبر پختونخواہ (نارتھ) پشاور کی جانب سے مندرجہ ذیل گاڑیوں کی نیلامی کیلئے سربراہیہ ٹینڈر مطلوب ہیں۔ جو کہ ای ایم ای پبلیکس شاکس ضلع خیبر میں کھڑی ہیں مورخہ 02 مئی 2024 بوقت 10:00 بجے سے 2:00 بجے تک نیلامی بھی ہیں جہاں ہیں کی بنیاد پر اوپن ٹینڈر یعنی عام نیلامی ہوگی۔ ٹینڈر سے متعلق شرائط و ضوابط معلومات متعلقہ ٹینڈر ڈاکیومنٹس میں مہیا کی گئی ہے۔ جو کہ 10:00 بجے سے لیکر 15:00 بجے تک ای ایم ای پبلیکس شاکس سے تین ہزار مبراہ (ناقابل واپسی) کے عوض حاصل کیے جاسکتے ہیں۔

نمبر شمار	گاڑیوں کی اقسام	تعداد
ا۔	جیب ٹیوٹا 3 ڈور ٹینڈر 4x4	2
ب۔	نسان / مشوینش (L-200) ڈبل سیکن	3
پ۔	ٹیوٹا ہائیکس سینڈر ڈر / لینڈرو ڈیفینڈر سنگل سیکن	7
ت۔	اسوزو 4x2 FTR / اسوزو 4x4 NPS ڈرک	2
ث۔	واٹر پوزر موزا	1
ج۔	موشو سائیکل ہنڈا 125CC	3
ح۔	واٹر ٹریلر	5

مختصر شرائط و ضوابط

- ہیڈ کوارٹر فرنیچر کور اس بات کا حق محفوظ رکھتا ہے کہ وہ کوئی ایک یا سب نیلامی کو PPRA قوانین کے مطابق قبول یا مسترد کر سکتے ہیں۔
- گاڑیوں کا معائنہ کرنے کے لیے ٹینڈر کے اعلیٰ کاغذات اور قومی شناختی کارڈ لازماً ہونی چاہئے۔
- تمام بولی دہندگان ٹینڈر میں جتنی قیمت بعد ازاں اوقات تک درج کریں گے۔
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- مندرجہ بالا ٹینڈر نوٹس ویب سائٹ www.ppra.org.pk سے بھی ڈاؤن لوڈ کیا جاسکتا ہے۔

لیفٹیننٹ کرنل

برائے انسپکٹر جنرل فرنیچر کور خیبر پختونخوا پشاور

Heavy rainfall lashes City as inundated roads disrupts traffic

Ali Sheikh

PESHAWAR: Heavy rainfall continued in Peshawar on Monday, leading to inundated roads across various parts of the city. The torrential downpour, which began early this morning, resulted in overflowing drains and inundated roads, severely disrupting normal life.

Continuous rains have created havoc across the country killing around 39 persons.

Several low-lying areas in Peshawar were submerged under water within hours of the relentless rainfall. The inundation of roads resulted in significant traffic congestion, making it difficult for commuters to navigate through the city.

Large number of motorcyclists were seen parking their bikes under the BRT bridges during the heavy downpour while the traffic at inundated roads as traffic police officials were seen helping the motorists.

Emergency services, including rescue teams and disaster management personnel, have been deployed to the affected areas to assist those stranded by the flooding. Efforts are underway to provide relief and support to the affected population.

This recent bout of extreme weather highlights the vulnerability

of Peshawar roads during heavy rains. It underscores the need for better urban planning and infrastructure development to mitigate the impact of such natural disasters in the future.

River situation

Meanwhile, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the rivers at different points are facing flood-like situation on Monday due to heavy rainfalls.

According to an official report on Monday, river Swat is in high flood at Munda with water flow of eight-thousand cusecs. Kabul river at Nowshera with ninety-eight thousand six-hundred cusecs and Panjkora river at Zulum bridge Lower Dir with forty-two thousand two-hundred and eighty-seven cusecs water flow are in medium flood situation.

Similarly, Kabul river at Warsak with forty-one thousand eight-hundred and thirty-two cusecs and Swat river at Khwazakhela with thirty-thousand one-hundred and eighty-four cusecs water flow are facing low level flood situation.

Indus river at Attock Khairabad with one-hundred thirty-two thousand and five-hundred cusecs and Swat river at Chakdara with twenty-seven thousand seven-hundred and twenty-one cusecs are flowing normal. The Rescue 1122 in the KP province has been put on high alert and engaged in rescue activities

along with the necessary equipment in the rain affected areas.

Director General Rescue 1122, Dr. Khateer has cancelled holidays of all staff members to ensure swift rescue operation. The district control rooms of Rescue 1122 are fully operational and the people can contact the helpline 1122 to report any emergency situation.

A total of eight people have died and twelve others injured due to heavy rains in various parts of the province during past three days.

PDMA issues alert

The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on Monday issued an alert letter to all district administrations in the wake of a forecast for more widespread rains with winds in the province till April 21.

DG, PDMA Muhammad Qaiser Khan directed all the district administrations to ensure availability of manpower and machinery to cope with any emergency situation including flooding in the low-lying areas due to heavy rains and landslides in the upper districts.

The PDMA asked the district administrations to issue tourists advisory besides instructing the local population to take precautionary measures. It said that PDMA's emergency operation center was fully operational and people could report any untoward incident to 1700.



PESHAWAR: Vehicles passing through rainwater accumulated on road in front of Radio Pakistan during heavy rain in the city. — APP photo

Emergency Flood Control Room established CM directs authorities to remain high alert

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Keeping in view the possible flood situation due to ongoing spell of torrential rains in the province, "Emergency Flood Control Room" has been established at Chief Minister's Secretariat, with the purpose to coordinate with relevant stakeholders regarding all kind of activities/information and emergencies across the province.

The control room will perform duties round the clock and bring the information into the notice of Chief Minister in case of any kind of emergency or untoward situation anywhere in the province. Deputy Secretary (Governance) of Chief Minister's Secretariat Mr. Mohsin Iqbal has been

nominated as Focal Person/In-charge of the Emergency Flood Control Room, which can be accessed on the following numbers:

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has directed the district administrations, Relief and Rehabilitation Department, Rescue Service and all other relevant entities to remain on high alert in order to effectively deal with any possible emergency situation, further directing them to ensure all kind of required arrangements so as to minimize the possible losses to human lives and properties in the prevailing situation.

He has also directed the district administration and local government bodies to ensure avail-

ability of relevant staff in the field, adding that SOPs and directives issued by PDMA in this regard must be implemented.

He has directed the concerned quarters to regularly monitor the flood situation in the rivers and to take necessary arrangements for protection, rescue and relief of the people in case of any flood emergency.

"Affected and displaced people due to rain related incidents be provided with temporary accommodation/shelters and other necessary facilities", the Chief Minister has directed.

He has asked the health department to set up medical camps in the rain affected districts of the province, ensuring avail-

ability of required staff, equipment and medicine so as to provide immediate and best medical assistance to the people injured in the flood caused incidents.

The chief minister has further directed to take steps for availability of staff and medicines in the hospitals. He has directed the authorities concerned to compile detailed report of losses to human lives and properties due to current rains and flood.

He has expressed deep sorrow over the loss of precious human lives in certain parts of the province, and said that the provincial government would provide all possible assistance to households/individuals affected by recent rains and flood in the province.



PESHAWAR: A traffic police officials performing duty at the side of inundated University Road during heavy rainfall. — F.P. photo

Govt focused on uplift of merged districts: Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali has said that federal and provincial governments are fully focused on the development and provision of health and education facilities in the merged districts of the province.

Talking to a delegation from Speen locality of the tribal district North Waziristan here on Monday, he said that government is taking crucial steps in this regard and results of it would be visible soon.

The delegation headed by Maulana Javed Iqbal was consisted of Irfanullah, Aslam Yar, Amir Hamza, Asghar Khan and others. The members of delegation briefed the Governor regarding problems faced by the people of the area and

called for their resolution.

Governor Haji Ghulam Ali said that the development of all backward districts including merged districts is the joint responsibility of all stakeholders and they would have to play their due role in this regard.

The Governor assured the delegation that he would take up the matter relating to problems in the tribal districts with the authorities concerned to ensure the availability of medical staff in hospitals and teachers in schools.

However, he also told the delegation to raise complaints of their respective areas in written with the departments concerned, so their problems could be resolved in short period of time.

Haji Ghulam Ali said that all elected representatives including councilors, Members of National and Provincial Assembly are responsible to monitor health and education and local problems and bring the issue of the absent doctors and students in the notice of their respective departments.

Meanwhile, a representative delegation from district Malakand headed by Sajid Khan, Farhan and Maulana Islam also called on the Governor at the Governor's House and informed the Governor about the problems and difficulties faced by the people of the area. The Governor assured the delegation of his full cooperation to solve the problems.

Cut of Rs.5 in price of roti announced

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has announced to reduce the price of roti by Rs.5 in the province in order to provide relief to people.

Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur has made this announcement after holding consultations with Provincial Minister for Food, Zahir Shah Toru and Secretary Food on Monday.

According to the notification issued here, the new rate of 100-gram roti will be Rs.15 and 200-gram roti at Rs.30 respectively.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food, Zahir Shah Toru has said that the provincial government is taking such kind of steps for the welfare of the people and added that more similar people welfare-oriented measures are also in the pipeline.

600,000 tourists visit KP on Eid

PESHAWAR (APP): As many as 600,000 local tourists visited different tourist spots in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during five days of Eid, said the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Tourism Authority in an official press release issued here on Monday.

According to the report 237,000 tourists visited Galliyat, 151,900 Malam Jabba, 92,000 Kumrat Valley, and 77,000 went to Naran and Kaghan. Similarly, more than 24,000 tourists spent their Eid holidays in Chitral.

Spokesman of the Tourism Authority Muhammad Saad said that during the Eid holidays, the tourism police and helpline 1422 remained active round the clock and provided all possible facilities to the tourists.

Ministers visit flood-hit areas of Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Health, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, accompanied by the Minister for Higher Education, Meena Khan Afridi on Monday paid a visit to 25 villages and residential colonies situated alongside Budhni Nala.

They visited Charsadda Road, Pajagi Road, Shahi Kotha, Sardar Colony, Shagi Hindkian, and

Hassan Ghari and other areas affected by heavy rains in Peshawar city.

The visit was also attended by Senate nominee Irfan Salim, AC Shah Alam, and other party officials.

During the visit, the ministers inspected flood-affected houses, interacted with the affected populace, and assured them of relief efforts to mitigate their losses. Expressing condolences

for the loss of life and property, they instructed relevant authorities to take necessary measures, including implementing safety protocols to protect the lives and property of citizens.

Both the ministers directed the swift completion of the remaining portion of Budhni Nallah Side Wall and instructed the relevant departments to initiate relief operations without delay.

Heavy downpour disrupts power supply from 120 feeders: PESCO

PESHAWAR (APP): Apart from other damages to properties, lives and livestock the intermittent rains caused the suspension of power supply from 120 feeders in the province.

According to the spokesman of Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO), the rain affected electricity transmission across the province, adding that PESCO field staff were busy in the restoration of power supply from the affected feeders.

He said that the field staff were facing problems due to the rain but assured that soon the electricity

would be restored.

The spokesman advised the PESCO consumers to stay away from electrical

installations during rains and in case of any emergency dial helpline number 118.



Faiq urges de-escalation tension in Middle East

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Muhammad Faiq Shah, founder and chairman of the Amun Taraqqi Party called for "utmost restraint" following Iran launching retaliatory strikes against Israel in response to its early attack on Iranian consular office in Syria.

Shah expressed fear that flames of war, spreading over the entire Middle East will engulf the whole world, according to a statement issued here on Monday.

He underlined the necessity of international efforts to prevent expansion of hostilities in the region and for a ceasefire in Gaza.

"It is now critically urgent to stabilize the situa-

tion and restore peace. We call on all parties to exercise utmost restraint and move towards de-escalation," Faiq added.

The ATP chief urged world organisations, nuclear powers, and Muslim Ummah to play a role and halt Israeli aggression, violation of human rights and war crimes.

He emphasized that decisions must be made on human rights and humanitarian grounds. Faiq asked to avoid raging war on Islam and Islamophobia.

He highlighted the role of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkiye and China vital to end conflict in the Middle East.

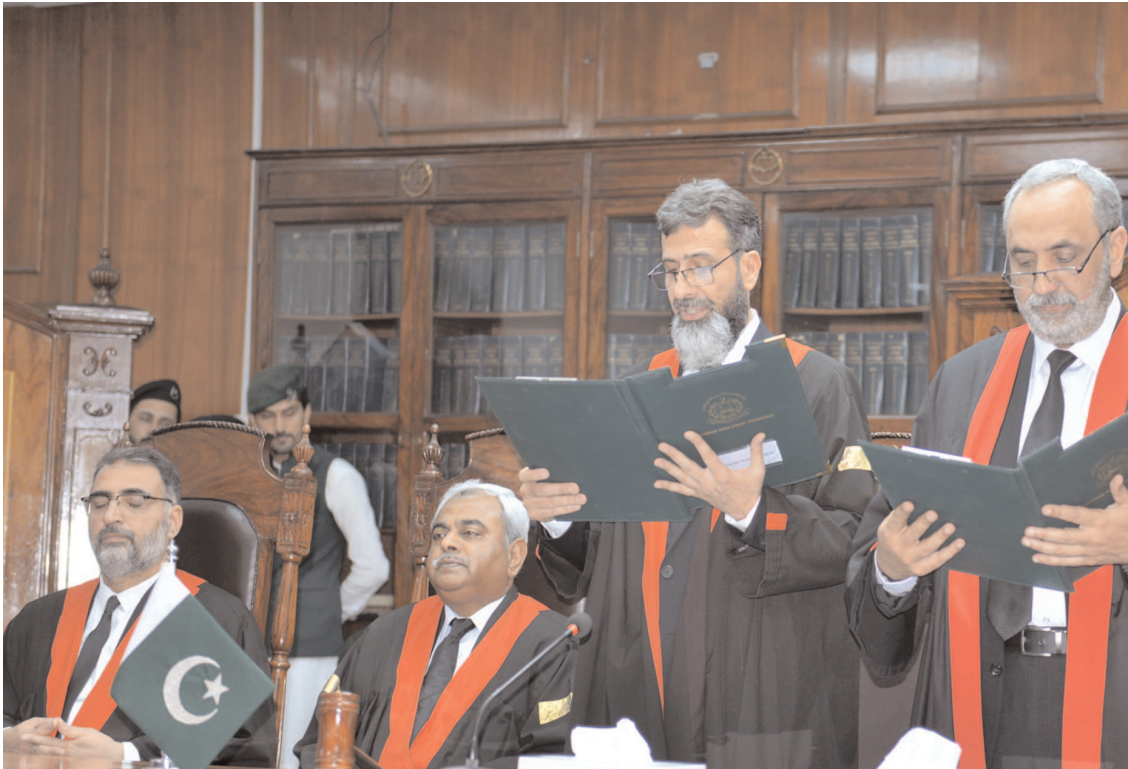
He added that world war is unaffordable for the region.

The party leader said humanity, society, and economy, everything has been destroyed.

He added billions of people have suffered from hunger and poverty across the globe.

Shah called for maximum restraint after the Iranian massive drones and missiles attacks on Israel in retaliation for last week's suspected Israeli strike on its consulate in Damascus that killed 13 people.

He stressed the peaceful solution of the Iran-Israeli conflict as adventure will pose a threat to the whole region.



PESHAWAR: Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim taking oath as acting Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court



In brief

4 die as room's roof collapses F.P. Report

BARA: At least four people of the same family including women and children were killed and six others injured when roof of a room, they were staying in, collapsed due to heavy downpour in Shin Drang area of Bara tehsil in Khyber district on Monday. Rescue 1122 officials said the unfortunate incident occurred near Abaseen School in Shin Drang where the roof of a room of a house owned by Abdur Razzaq collapsed during heavy rain. Soon after receiving information rescue teams reached the site and started their operation. Rescue officials retrieved all the people from the rubble and shifted them to hospital where four of them succumbed to injuries. The treatment of six injured was underway at the hospital. The dead included two girls, a woman and a 14-year-old boy named Ibrar, son of Munawar Shah.

Procurement centres activated

MULTAN (INP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rizwan Qadir has said that at least five wheat procurement centers (PR) have been activated at the direction of Punjab government. After the set up, DC Rizwan Qadir paid a surprise visit to PR-2 center and Budhla Sunnat center to ensure the smooth working of the centres. Assistant Commissioner Simal Mushtaq and District food Controller Ahmed Javed gave the briefing to the DC on procedure and dispensation in the centres. The DC said an official rate of Rs. 3900 per maund has been fixed to provide relief to the farmers. By registering through an online official app Bardana, farmers will receive a receipt, and date for depositing wheat, the DC said. He said that the private sector and flour mills are allowed to buy wheat directly from farmers at official rates.

Student defends MPhil theses F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Imran Khan, MPhil Scholar in Department of Chemistry, University of Malakand (UoM) has successfully defended his MPhil thesis under the supervision of Dr Faiz Ali, Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry, University of Malakand. According to University's spokesman, the External Examiner was Dr. Muhammad Naem, Assistant Professor, Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad. The Chairman, Department of Chemistry, UoM Prof Dr Sultan Alam Kakakhel & Faculty Members Congratulated the MPhil Scholar & Research Supervisor in this regard.

Schools closed in Balochistan F.P. Report

QUETTA: The government of Balochistan has announced that schools will remain closed for two more days (Monday and Tuesday) amid rain and urban flooding emergency. As per details, a rain and urban flooding emergency was declared in Balochistan in the wake of torrential rains in the province. Chief Minister Balochistan Sarfaraz Bugti presided a meeting attended by PDMA officials and Divisional Commissioners where he was dismayed over not addressing the public complaints. Yesterday, the Met Office forecast rainfall in over 25 districts of Balochistan on third day of the wet spell in the province.

Five more killed in rain related incidents in Dir

Rains and floods disrupt traffic on GT road

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Torrential rains and flooded streams on Monday continued to batter parts of the Lower and Upper Dir district as five more persons including children were killed in rain related incidents in Lower Dir district. Two minor girls and a woman were killed in such rain related incidents in Dir here the other day. According to Rescue 1122 sources four persons including two children were killed when the house of one Muslim Zada collapsed due to heavy rains and landslide at Luqman Banda village in the jurisdiction of Khall police station here on Monday.

The deceased were identified as the wife of Muslim Zada 20, his son Mujtaba Hassan 9, sisters Rahamsiat Bibi 17 and Husna Bibi 9. All of them were buried under the debris of the damaged house. Local volunteers and Rescue 1122 disaster team rushed to the site and retrieved the bodies from the debris after five hours of hectic efforts. The bodies were shifted to a nearby hospital and then handed over to the heirs. All the four persons were laid to rest at their ancestral graveyard amid moving

scenes.

Similarly a pick up vehicle's driver identified as Saleem Khan, a resident of Shamoza Swat was drowned in flood water at Shamshi Khan Talash while his son Hamza 10 was rescued by local volunteers and was shifted to the Dir Levis post Bandagai.

The Rescue 1122 divers started a search operation for the deceased's body. The operation continued till the filing of this report. The assistant commissioner Lal Qila Noor Zali Khan along with Dir Levis Subidar Major visited the Luqman Banda victim's family and expressed grief over the incident. The family was also provided with food and non-food items. The AC offered fateha for the departed souls and promised to contact the provincial government for proper compensation.

Also the roof of a house caved in due to a landslide in Maidan. The house is owned by one Ibrahim Khan. The Rescue 1122 emergency team shifted the inmates to a safe location. One of the rooms of Nazir's house also caved in at Sakhawono Asbanr in the jurisdiction of Asbanr police station. However the inmates remained unhurt.

It continued to rain heavily in parts of the Lower

and Upper Dir district for the fourth consecutive day here on Monday. All roads leading to Peshawar from Timergara remained blocked for the whole day due to high flooded streams at Talash, Kharkanai and Gulabad. The Talash bypass road also remained blocked due to mudslides while the Bagh Dushkhel road was also blocked for hours due to landslides in the hilly areas. The Bagh Pengal road was later on cleared with the help of heavy machinery.

The additional deputy commissioner relief and human rights Tariq Hussain supervised the clearance operation. The motorists from and to Timergara used a narrow village road in Talash to reach their destination but traffic on it also caused misery to motorists and passengers. Local volunteers throughout the day helped the motorists in maintaining smooth traffic flow. The Badwan Chakdara road also remained blocked for all kinds of vehicular traffic due to landslides at Badwan Tarai because of heavy rains. Similarly several vehicles came under the debris during a landslide at the Darangal area of Samarbagh. The motorists remained unhurt.

Inmates set fire official blankets in Hafziabad jail

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: In the District Jail, Hafizabad, the inmates created a ruckus when the staff met with slashing hands, beatings and alleged heavy offerings. Meanwhile, the inmates set fire to the official blankets and attacked the Head Ward of the jail and strangled him. 3 prisoners were also injured during the commotion.

According to the details, the district jail of Hafizabad is hearing new echoes of the inappropriate behavior of the staff and taking money and making meetings with the relatives.

According to jail sources there, the prisoners of Block No. 7 were angry for not being allowed to meet the other prisoners. They also set fire to the official blankets and strangled Head Warden Muhammad Sarwar. When the prison employees tried to control the tension, two prisoners, Arif son of Aashiq, Tanveer Ahmad son of Abdul Majeed, injured themselves with a safety razor and Tanveer Ahmad son of Abdul Majeed and a case was registered against

them.

The relatives of the prisoners have alleged that huge amount of money is being taken in the district jail for the last several months under the guise of family meetings, special meetings and protocol meetings with the common prisoners. Due to which there is severe anxiety among the prisoners and their families, which the Chief Minister and the IG of Jails should take immediate notice, while Jail source has denied it.

Meanwhile, unidentified thieves stole two motorcycles in two separate incidents in Hafizabad. The incidents of motorcycle thefts have reached a peak in the entire district. The police have failed to stop the incidents.

According to the details, Muhammad Jahanzeb son of Rahmatabad parked his motorcycle in front of the house from where unknown thieves stole his motorcycle. The second incident took place in Madhrianwala where Mohsin Afzal came to his in-law's house and parked his motorcycle at Mohammad Zaman's house. Meanwhile,

unknown thieves stole his motorcycle from there. The citizens have demanded that the IG Police Punjab take notice of the increasing incidents of motorcycle thefts across the district.

DC visits DHQ hospital: Deputy Commissioner Madam Sundas Irshad visited DHQ Hospital, where he inspected the new Children's Ward, General Emergency, Medical Children's Ward, Dialysis Center, Ultrasound Room, OPD and other departments constructed in the hospital. While visiting, reviewed the treatment facilities available to the patients, supply of medicines, cleanliness and other arrangements. CEO Health Dr. Umar Sharif Rathoor, MS Dr. Shakeel Ahmad Shahid were also with her.

The Medical Superintendent of DHQ Hospital said that separate arrangements will be made for children suffering from thalassemia in the new children's ward where they will be provided with blood supply and other medical facilities. The Deputy Commissioner also checked different washrooms to review the sanitation system of the hospital.

Fourth wave of Fenimism and Pakistan

Areeba Amjad

THE fourth wave of feminism is an ongoing feminist movement that emerged in early 2010. This movement focuses on issues like gender based violence, internet activism and discrimination of women in various aspects such as education, employment and social nouns.

In Pakistani Society, women face a range of challenges that impact their lives. According to United Nation development Programme *UNDP). One major issue is gender inequality, where women face discrimination and unequal treatment in areas such as education, employment and discussion making processes.

According to Human Right Watch, access to education is another significant challenge for women in Pakistan. Factors like poverty, early marriage and cultural biases create obstacles for girls to access education and continue their studies, they prioritize the education of boys over girls due to traditional gender roles.

Additionally, cultural, biases and societal nouns may discourage girls from pursuing education, leading to enrolment rates. Similarly, Gender discrimination does not only occur in practical situations but can also happen through language. Language can perpetuate Gender discrimination in several ways, One way is through the use of Gendered language, where

certain words or phrases are associated with specific Genders, this can reinforce stereotypes and limit opportunities for women.

Additionally, languages can also include subtle biases, such as using masculine term as the default or downplaying the achievements of women. However, the fourth wave of feminism has had a profound impact on Pakistani society. The fourth wave of feminism involves political activism and efforts to address issues like Gender discrimination and promote equal opportunities for women. Moreover, Internet activism is a key feature of the fourth wave, As Social media plays a crucial role in increasing awareness which is gaining momentum in Paksitan.

Girl killed in Nasirabad, 3 arrested

F.P. Report

SHAHADKOT: On the last day, a young man, Aslam Jatoi has killed his cousin Saba Ali Khan Jatoi, 17-year-old girl, by firing with pistol on charges of misbehavior in Chanhar village of Naseerabad Tehsil of Qamber Shahdadkot district.

The police made an arrest in Naseerabad police station and confessed to the crime, while the police handed over the body of the deceased girl from Naseerabad Tehsil Hospital to the heirs after necessary procedures. After the failure of the interests, the accused falsely accused the girl and killed her, while in

the complaint of Naseerabad Police Inspector Obaidullah Abbasi, a case was registered against Mills Aslam Jatoi under crime number 59, pen 302, 311, 109, B120. While the police have also arrested Zulfiqar Ali Jatoi and Tawfiq Jatoi for further investigation of this murder.



QUETTA: A view of destroyed house after rains in Balochistan.

Three-day Eid Mela in Dir concluded

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The three-day Eid Mela organized by Frontier Corps North culminated with fervor and joy at Lal Qila Maidan in the Dir area. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from both local residents and tourists, highlighting the cultural richness and diversity of the region. The festivities included a delightful array of stalls showcasing traditional food and clothing, offering attendees a taste of local cuisine and the opportunity to explore indigenous crafts.

Adding to the festive ambiance, local artists captivated audiences with mesmerizing performances of regional music, further enhancing the cultural tapestry of the event. In line with the spirit of inclusivity and community engagement, special games were organized for boys and girls, fostering a sense of camaraderie and joy among participants of all ages.

Tourists lauded Dir as a true gem of Pakistan, praising its breathtaking natural beauty that rivals destinations across the globe. With its picturesque landscapes and unparalleled charm, Dir continues to enchant visitors, drawing more than twenty thousand tourists from various parts of Pakistan during the Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations. Notably, the influx of tourists from Sindh and Balochistan underscores Dir's growing appeal as a premier tourist destination in the country.

Second grand Jirga held in Wana

F.P. Report

WANA: The second grand Jirga of 9 major tribes of Ahmedzai Wazir was held in Wana bazaar today, the headquarter of lower Waziristan, to make the Pak-Afghan Angoor Adda gate the largest trade corridor in the region with Afghanistan.

Addressing the Jirga, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam district Amir Maulana Mirza Jan, Malik Saadullah, Malik Jameel, Malik Sidra Noor and president Waziristan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Saifur rehman said in their addresses to jirga participants that due to the closure of closure of Angoor adda gate, all tribes suffered colossal losses; and commercial activities at the gate have also collapsed. After this, billions of rupees could not be collected for government's kitty.

The leading elders of the 9 tribes said that all the tribes should take concrete steps to increase the trade activities at Angoor adda gate and continue the Pak-Afghan trade permanently. So that our future generations can benefit from this trade corridor with Afghanistan in future.

They emphasized in the Jirga that all the tribes of Ahmedzai Wazir should not be satisfied with taking temporary measures this time, but should unanimously take such measures to end unemployment and poverty here in the Wana region. While announcing a unanimous decision, they categorically stated that in the future those who disrupt Pak-Afghan trade activities, will be dealt with iron hands and heavy fines will be received from them.

Torrential rain stuck life in Hazara division

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Three days of continuous torrential rain have paralyzed life in the Hazara division, severing many road connections and triggering landslides that have blocked several roads, including the Karakoram Highway (KKH) in Kohistan. Flash floods have engulfed residential areas in Abbottabad.

According to reports, the persistent heavy downpour in upper Hazara division, including Abbottabad city, Galyat, Kaghan, Naran, Kohistan, Battagram, and Thandiani, has resulted in numerous road blockages due to landslides. Flash floods have also breached defenses, entered homes and caused

widespread destruction. In Havelian, Abbottabad, Qalandar Abad, and Manshra, the KKH has been blocked at multiple points by flash floods, leaving thousands of vehicles stranded in the water.

Heavy rain, accompanied by thunderstorms, has caused significant damage to electricity transmission lines and telecommunication systems across most parts of Hazara division. Several link roads throughout the division have been cut off due to flash floods and landslides.

In Abbottabad city, the overwhelmed sewerage system has led to the inundation of streets and homes with filth carried by flash floods, sweeping away furniture and household items in various parts of the city.

Key roads such as KKH, Main Murree Road, Kakul Road, Mandian, Supply Bazaar, and Link Road Abbottabad have turned into virtual cesspools.

Numerous thoroughfares and connecting roads in Galyat, Thandiani, Mansehra, Battagram, and the Kaghan Valley have been destroyed by heavy rain, landslides, and flash floods.

In Mansehra, structural collapses and other incidents triggered by windstorms and heavy rain have been reported. The meteorological department has forecasted more rain and thunderstorms in the next 24 hours for the Hazara division, particularly in the upper parts, which may exacerbate flooding and landslides.

DC takes swift action against corrupt Patwari

Anees Takar

MARDAN: In response to a complaint lodged by a citizen, Deputy

Commissioner of Mardan Division, Shaukat Ali Yousafzai has taken decisive action against a patwari found guilty of soliciting bribes. According to details a man named Hameed filed a complaint at the office of the Commissioner alleging that the patwari of the Jungara circle Wasal Ahmed was involved in corrupt practices, demanding an unlawful sum of 60,000 rupees and further extortion.

Commissioner Shaukat Ali Yousafzai promptly referred the matter to Deputy Commissioner Mardan, Muhammad Fayyaz Khan Sherpao, who appointed Additional Deputy Commissioner Saeedullah Jan as the inquiry officer. After conducting an investigation, the inquiry officer found the patwari, Wasal Ahmed, guilty of misconduct.

In light of the inquiry report, Deputy Commissioner Mardan Division, Shaukat Ali Yousafzai, has taken stringent action against patwari Wasal Ahmed, immediately

terminating his employment for abusing authority, obstructing justice, and engaging in corrupt practices.

Furthermore, Commissioner Shaukat Ali Yousafzai warned that no government employee would be allowed to harass the public or impede the delivery of justice. He emphasized that strict action would be taken against employees involved in misconduct and other illegal activities.

BISE Mardan holds workshop: Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education BISE In the workshop organized in Mardan about matriculation exams, the chief guest provincial education minister could not come. It is not a challenge to improve the results. Chairman Board Farid Ahmad Khattak declared it a mission to exterminate booty mafia.

According to the details, despite being invited to the workshop held in Mardan Education Board on April 18th in connection with the Matriculation and Inter examinations, the guests were invited. Specially, Provincial Education Minister Faisal Khan

Tarkai did not attend, the ceremony was presided over by Chairman Board Farid Ahmad Khattak, in which members of Assembly Abdul Salam Afridi and Tariq Aryani, besides Secretary Board Inam Toru, Controller of Examinations Ishrat Ali, education experts and others participated in this occasion.

Chairman Board Farid Ahmad Khattak gave a detailed briefing on the importance of modern cameras in the examination centers including online surveillance and other arrangements while clarifying that the mission is to exterminate the booty mafia. He said that transparent examinations are the first priority. On the occasion, the members of the Provincial Assemblies said in their address that the performance of the government schools is improving day by day, therefore the Chairman Board should focus on bringing positive changes in the performance of the government schools in the merit based examinations so that the children of the poor people can think of higher education.

Buner Press Club newly elected cabinet takes oath

F.P. Report

BUNER: Adviser to the Chief Minister Syed Fakhar Jahan talked to the media persons after taking Buner Press Club new cabinet oath ceremony. He congratulated the new cabinet and assured all possible support to the journalists of the Buner Press Club.

Representing the KP Govt he said that education is being given importance throughout the province, including Buner, and efforts are being made to increase the literacy rate of women especially in Buner district but no DEO will be allowed to commit corruption and anyone found involved will be prosecuted.

He also informed about the measures to prevent corruption in the health card and expressed his govern-

ment determination to implement the oath of the Chief Minister on end to corruption in every possible way. He claimed that government to complete the Karkakar Tunnel the Sarzi Marble Zone and other pending development schemes. However, in case of non-receipt of funds and arrears from the center, he boldly expressed the options of Dumma Dum Mast Qalandar would be utilized.

The Chief Minister Aide further said that PTI was put against the wall and its governments were derailed first, then delayed holding general elections for the year long. He complained that PTI opponents were given the chance like the unelected PDM government established in the center and cooperatives gov-

ernments in provinces and then stole the PTI mandate in the general elections and now obstacles are making in the way of the KP provincial government, but the KPK government the PTI leadership and activists have their clear stand that they want peace and going with the federal government and institutions for the sake of national interests and peace.

He repeated all of them want to play a full role for the development, prosperity and peace in the country. He continued to add even if the attitude of walling up KPK government and PTI is continued, then they will use every option and stand on every front and raise their voice for having their rights and not accept to deprived them of their due rights.



‘We’re on the edge’: Palestinians terrified by Israeli settler violence

GAZA: Palestinians in the occupied West Bank are living in fear as armed Israeli settlers attack them, their families and homes in vengeful acts of violence which could uproot hundreds of Palestinians from their lands, residents said.

The latest round of settler violence began shortly after a 14-year-old Israeli boy was found dead in the illegal settlement outpost of Malachei HaShalom, an area Palestinians are prohibited from entering. The Israeli army said the boy was killed in a “terrorist attack” but has not provided evidence. Since then, the army has supported Israeli settlers as they attack Palestinian villages, injuring and expelling many.

“We’re terrified... Most people are trying to leave the town or to [go to] other countries if they have other citizenships,” said Hind*, a 25-year-old living in Deir Dabwan, east of Ramallah. The recent settler attacks are part of a broader wave of violence which has heightened since Israel’s devastating war on Gaza. The war, which began in response to Hamas’s surprise attack on Israeli military outposts and communities on October 7, has killed nearly 35,000 Palestinians.

Armed settlers and the Israeli army have also killed 460 Palestinians in the occupied West Bank since October 7, while uprooting hundreds of people from their lands. “They’re attacking civilians and displacing Palestinians from the river to the sea. They are trying to terrorise us and kick us out any way they can,” said Hind. On April 13, Israeli settlers spearheaded a large-scale attack on the village of al-Mughayyir where they killed one Palestinian man and injured 25 others. Since then, settlers have attacked more towns and villages near Ramallah including

Bukra, Deir Dubwan and Kfar Malik, all in proximity to the illegal outpost the 14-year-old settler was from.

Abbas Milhem, the executive director of the Palestinian Farmers Union, told Al Jazeera that farmers are trying to resist by simply staying on their land. A farmer was abducted from Kfar Malik on April 14, he continued, and settlers also entered the town of Ayn el-Helwa to destroy tents, steal goats and expel families. “Farmers are just resisting with their naked chests in front of settlers who are acting as criminals because they are shooting to kill.”

The violence risks mass unrest that could lead to even more deadly violence against Palestinians, experts and residents told Al Jazeera. Omar Shakir, the Israel and Palestine director for Human Rights Watch, said settler attacks against Palestinians are a form of state-sanctioned violence. He added that while some Western countries have imposed sanctions on some occupied West Bank settlers, more needs to be done to hold Israeli officials accountable. “It’s important not to just focus on individuals who have carried out the violence but also on the officials that have created the culture of impunity for settlers and, in some, cases facilitated armed settler violence,” he told Al Jazeera. Israel’s National Security Minister Ben Gvir, a settler and Jewish supremacist, has played a significant role in encouraging attacks on Palestinians. Shortly after October 7, he distributed semi-automatic rifles and other weapons to settlers and far-right Israelis.

These weapons, Milhem said, are now being used to gun down Palestinians. “The plan is to empty the lands of Palestinian farmers by increasing their attacks. The attacks have jumped

from two a day before October 7 to about 12 to 13 attacks per day,” he said. The uptick in settler violence is flying under the radar due to the ongoing war in Gaza and the recent standoff between Israel and Iran, according to Omar Raman, an expert on Israel-Palestine with the Middle East Council on Global Affairs, a think tank in Doha, Qatar. “We shouldn’t diminish what is happening there, it’s just been overshadowed by the sheer devastation in Gaza. But Israeli settlers and soldiers are acting with reckless abandon, attacking people and property,” he told Al Jazeera.

“There is also a genuine concern [among Palestinians] in the West Bank that what is happening in the Gaza Strip could extend to them if [Israel] has a pretext to do it.” Hind from Deir Dabwan said she has not left her home for days and lives in terror for herself and her family. Palestinians, she feels, have nothing to protect them.

In fact, Palestinians are frequently criminalised for defending themselves from state-sanctioned settler attacks. They fear arrest by the Israeli army and the Palestinian Authority, which cooperates with Israel on security matters and has resulted in a crackdown on activists and political opponents deemed threatening. Since October 7, Israel has arrested more than 7,350 Palestinians from across the occupied West Bank, many without charge, taken captive for writing innocuous posts on social media that express sympathy with Palestinians in Gaza or for raising Palestinian flags. While the sweeping arrests have terrorised Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, Hind said people are more scared of encountering settlers. — Aljazeera

Mass evacuations as floods in Russia’s region set to peak

MOSCOW: Authorities in Russia are warning people to evacuate affected areas as Russia’s Kurgan and Tyumen regions and swaths of northern Kazakhstan are flooded. Tens of thousands have already abandoned their homes.

Flooding is expected to peak on Monday in Kurgan, a region of 800,000 people at the confluence of the Ural Mountains and Siberia, as the Tobol River swelled with meltwater and burst its banks, rising to 6.31 metres (20.7 feet) in the main city. Russia and neighbouring Kazakhstan have been grappling with some of the worst flooding in living memory after very large snowfalls melted swiftly amid heavy rain over land which was already waterlogged before winter. Kurgan Governor Vadim Shumkov said there was almost a “sea” of water approaching the area and fresh rainfall was making the situation worse. “The city of Kurgan itself will be next,” Shumkov said. “The flow of the Tobol is acceler-

ating. The water level in it is constantly rising,” he added, urging his countrymen to “leave the flooded areas immediately”. However, he said some were refusing to evacuate.

More than 7,100 people were evacuated from several hundred residential buildings that had been flooded, state news agency RIA Novosti reported, citing Russia’s Ministry of Civil Defence, Emergencies and Disaster Relief, as the waters threatened 62 settlements and 4,300 homes. The Kurgan and Tyumen regions are threatened the most by the floods, and measures are being taken to address those risks, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday. “Waves of large water are coming towards the Kurgan region, the Tyumen region,” he told reporters.

“A lot of work has been done there, but we know that the water is treacherous, and therefore there is still a danger of flooding vast areas there.” Water levels in

the rivers of the Tyumen region could reach all-time highs, RIA reported, quoting regional Governor Aleksandr Moor as saying. In Kazakhstan, where more than 108,000 have been evacuated since floods began last month, waters submerged more than 1,000 additional homes in the city of Petropavlovsk, forcing the evacuation of more than 4,500 people.

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said earlier this month that this was the country’s worst natural disaster for the last 80 years. The Tobol, a tributary of the Irtysh, rose 23cm (9 inches) in the four hours to 6am (01:00 GMT) on Monday, regional authorities said. Floods were also inundating homes in the Tomsk region in the southwestern part of Siberia, regional officials said on Telegram. Almost 140 houses near the city of Tomsk, which is the regional administrative centre, were underwater on Monday and 84 people were evacuated. — Aljazeera

Azerbaijan urges top UN court to toss out Armenian case

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP): Lawyers for Azerbaijan on Monday urged the top United Nations court to throw out a case filed by Armenia linked to the long-running dispute over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, arguing that judges do not have jurisdiction.

Armenia filed the case at the International Court of Justice in 2021, accusing Azerbaijan of a “state-sponsored policy of Armenian hatred” that has led to “systemic discrimination, mass killings, torture and other abuse.” The legal dispute stems from long-standing tensions that erupted into a 2020 war over Nagorno-Karabakh that left more than 6,600 people dead. The region is within Azerbaijan, but had been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since the end of a separatist war in 1994.

Armenia’s case is based on an international convention on stamping out racial discrimination, which has a clause allowing disputes to be resolved by the world court if bilateral negotiations fail to broker a settlement. However, Azerbaijani deputy Foreign Minister Elnur Mammadov told judges Monday that Armenia could not bring the dispute to the court in The Hague, arguing that the two countries had not first engaged in serious negotiations.

“Armenia had its sights firmly set on commencing these proceedings before the court and using the effect of these proceedings to wage a public media campaign against Azerbaijan,” Mammadov said. International law professor Stefan Talmon, representing Azerbaijan, added that Armenia “never gave negotiations a chance.” He said that “with no negotiations and no genuine attempt at negotiations, that basically is the end of Armenia’s application” to the court.

Azerbaijan also argued that most allegations in Armenia’s case fall outside the scope of the discrimination convention, meaning the court did not have jurisdiction. Armenia is scheduled to respond Tuesday to Azerbaijan’s arguments. Azerbaijan has also brought a case against Armenia at the world court alleging breaches of the same convention. Objections filed by Armenia to the Azerbaijani case will be heard later this month.

The 2020 conflict ended with a Russia-brokered ceasefire agreement that granted Azerbaijan control over parts of Nagorno-Karabakh as well as some adjacent territories. Azerbaijan waged a lightning military campaign in Nagorno-Karabakh last year that resulted in the vast majority of the region’s 120,000 residents fleeing. In December, the two sides agreed to begin negotiations on a peace treaty. However, many residents of Armenia’s border regions have resisted the demarcation effort, seeing it as Azerbaijani encroaching on areas they consider their own.



GAZA: Displaced Palestinians walking along al-Rashid Street, to return to Gaza City.

Croatia’s election follows harsh contest between top two officials

ZAGREB (AP): Croatia’s upcoming parliamentary election, set for Wednesday, follows a campaign that was marked by heated exchanges between the country’s two top officials, sparking a political crisis in the Balkan country that belongs to both the European Union and NATO.

The ballot will pit the ruling conservative Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) led by incumbent Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic against an alliance of centrist and left-wing parties informally led by populist President Zoran Milanovic and his Social Democratic Party (SDP). A lot is at stake in the race for Croatia’s 151-seat parliament, not just in the country itself but for Europe as it grapples with the instability from Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

If the HDZ stays in power, the country would maintain relative political stability and continue on the pro-Western course in supporting Ukraine in its fight against Russia. A success for SDP could put it on track for victory in the European Parliament elections in June and the presidential election in December. It would shake the HDZ’s long dominance of politics and potentially open space for stronger pro-Russian influence in the country, akin to Hungary and Slovakia. The HDZ has largely held power since Croatia gained inde-

pendence from the former Yugoslavia in 1991. The Adriatic Sea nation became the newest member of the European Union in 2013, and joined Europe’s passport-free travel area and the eurozone last year.

The president holds a largely ceremonial role in Croatia, while the prime minister exerts most of the political power. After Milanovic scheduled the election and announced his surprise bid for prime minister, he began campaigning on behalf of the SDP. But Croatia’s constitutional court judges stepped in, saying the move was unconstitutional. They said that the president can’t run for prime minister, take part in the upcoming parliamentary election or campaign in favor of any party, unless he first resigns.

Milanovic refused, openly ignoring the top court and continuing to campaign in favor of the left-wing alliance. He accused Plenkovic and the HDZ of rampant corruption and “massive theft” of state funds, referring to past and present scandals, some of which had ended up in the courts. Plenkovic denied the accusations. The election has played out as the final episode in the long-running rivalry between Plenkovic and Milanovic. Milanovic’s colorful use of insults against his opponents and critics has jarred many but he remains

the most popular politician in surveys, seen as speaking openly and using plain words as opposed to the more reserved Plenkovic.

Milanovic has often voiced a pro-Russian stance during the war in Ukraine, opposing the training of Ukrainian soldiers in Croatia as well as sending weapons to Ukraine because, in his view, it only prolongs the war. He called Plenkovic an “ordinary coward” for allegedly preventing him from directly taking part in the election. “It will be game over for Plenkovic” after Wednesday, Milanovic said, calling on voters to turn out in great numbers “to get rid of Plenkovic and his cartel.” Plenkovic, like Milanovic a former career diplomat, accused his rival of being irresponsible and of “pushing Croatia and the Croatian people into the ‘Russian World.’”

Plenkovic said Milanovic should not hold any public office, describing him as a “political waste that brought only negativity.” Most pre-election polls predict a comfortable HDZ victory, but without enough seats to rule alone. The left-wing opposition may benefit from discontent with high inflation and the general economic malaise in most EU member states. Smaller parties on the right and the left could be key to both the HDZ and SDP in their quest to power.

Sudan conflict: A front-row seat to my country falling apart

KHARTOUM (BBC): I’m not supposed to cry as a journalist when I am covering stories, but I have been crying a lot lately. Before December, when I travelled on a reporting trip from my home in the Sudanese city of Omdurman - just across the river from the capital, Khartoum - the only people I would see from my window were those carrying the dead bodies of loved ones on their shoulders.

They were looking for a roadside space to bury the corpses as going to a proper cemetery was too dangerous. The dead civilians, many killed by bullets and shells, were the collateral damage of a war that began exactly a year ago, when Sudan’s two leading military men fell out over the country’s political future, after seizing power together in a coup in 2021. I have lost many friends and acquaintances.

The bustle of my close-knit, working-class neigh-

bourhood was replaced by silence, sometimes interrupted by the sound of a military plane foreshadowing an airstrike as the army would be targeting an area controlled by fighters from the rival Rapid Support Forces (RSF) paramilitary group. People would flee their homes fearing that they would be hit. On 15 April last year, I remember looking forward to breaking the Ramadan fast in the evening with some fellow journalists. I was planning later to reunite with a long-lost childhood friend.

We never met and I have not seen him to this day. He left the country while I remained. I began to feel uneasy that morning when I started seeing social media posts about RSF attacks near the city. Then I read about clashes at the international airport. I still thought that the violence would stop. But when a third friend posted that there was fighting at the presidential palace, I knew

that this was war. While many others decided to leave the city, my family and I stayed put. We were hoping that the war would end soon, believing that maybe the international community would intervene to stop this madness, but the suffering of the Sudanese people was seemingly ignored.

Residents not only feared the street combat that was taking place, but also the armed men - from both sides - coming to loot. They stripped homes, taking everything from cars to spoons. I have been back to Omdurman but have not been able to reach my home. I have received reports that even its doors and windows have been taken off and carried away.

As the conflict wore on, people began to look thinner and paler, due to the scarcity of food and drink as little aid was reaching the city. The only small market in my neighbourhood was hit by airstrikes as the army tried to

flush out the RSF. The remaining hospitals were only treating the war wounded, those with other conditions were not being seen. My diabetic grandmother died as she could not get treatment.

I too got very sick because of a lack of food. The only clinic that was functioning was a 30-minute walk away. My cousin accompanied me and I had to stop in the shade every two minutes as my energy was spent. The one doctor on duty prescribed me some medicine which, thanks to friends in Europe, I managed to get my hands on. While things have been bad in Omdurman and Khartoum, the worst-affected area is the western region of Darfur, where the conflict has assumed an ethnic dimension. I came here just over three months ago to report what was going on, following last year’s mass killings in cities like Geneina, the capital of West Darfur state.

Ukraine’s power plants at the mercy of Russian missiles

KYIV (BBC): Russia’s war on Ukraine has entered a new phase. Drone and missile attacks on Ukraine’s energy infrastructure are now frequent and massive, overwhelming its current air defences. They often include the same Iranian-made Shahed drones launched by Tehran at Israel.

Seeing the robust response to that attack by Israel’s allies, President Volodymyr Zelensky noted that when it came to Ukraine “rhetoric does not protect the sky”. He said the sound of those drones, whether over the Middle East or in Europe, “must serve as a wake-up call to the free world”. Officials in Ukraine say they can “count on one hand” the thermal and hydro power plants across the country that are not yet badly damaged or totally destroyed. As Ukraine scrambles to repair what it can, and keep the electricity flowing to homes and industry, Russia’s assault has not stopped. A major facility close to Kyiv was hit last week and to the northeast, in Ukraine’s second city Kharkiv, all three major power plants are in ruins.

The red-and-white striped chimneys of Kharkiv’s Thermal Power Plant No.5 are still visible from miles away. Approach a little closer, and the destruction beneath is revealed. The main building has a huge hole blown through the heart of it. All around is a

mess of blackened metal and smashed concrete. The attack on 22 March was deliberate and devastating. Five Russian missiles struck the same spot, mangling turbines, generators and transformers and taking the plant offline. A week later, Russia targeted the city’s power plants again.

For Ihor Orlovskiy this feels personal. “It’s like looking at the ruins of your own home. It brings pain and tears,” the deputy director says, leading me across chunks of metal and stone to the spot where the missiles exploded. He’s worked here since Soviet times. “It’s a very bitter feeling. But this mobilises us too, to build back. Because we know a city of more than a million people is depending on us.”

There have been six attacks on this plant since the start of the full-scale invasion, but the one in March was the worst by far. It was also the most demoralising: it took engineers a full year to repair one section of the plant, then two weeks after it was restarted Russia hit exactly the same spot. Other industry sources tell similar stories of increasingly accurate strikes. In the past, they say, missiles would fall short or cause less damage. That leads some to suspect Russian agents inside Ukraine are feeding information to Moscow: the power plants cover vast territory and the damage, or repairs, are impossible to

conceal.

But Russia already knows where to target. The heavy machinery dates back to the USSR, there are still Soviet labels on the ruins, and Moscow has the old blueprints of the plants. Ihor Orlovskiy suspects the increased precision is more likely down to the sheer intensity of recent attacks. “When you launch five, six, seven missiles at the same spot, some are bound to hit.” In the fields all around there are giant electricity pylons. But since March there’s been nothing flowing along the lines from Power Plant No.5, or Kharkiv’s other thermal power plants. The city has to bring in power from western Ukraine, which means limited supply and regular blackouts. The Russians have targeted electricity substations too.

Local authorities are scrambling to minimise the impact and reduce the time homes and businesses are left in the dark. Residents have learned to charge their devices, and multiple power banks, as soon as the electricity comes on. They also keep reserves of water for drinking and washing. The Kharkiv metro is back working, albeit in fits and starts, and so are the traffic lights. But with an unreliable power supply that could get worse, businesses are creating their own solutions. Kharkiv is a major publishing hub and Oleksandr Popovich, the boss of a large printing firm, says for

weeks they have been relying on three generators.

Early in the war a missile hit 100m (330ft) from the main production line. “It destroyed all our storage and 10 tonnes of paper. But a tough day only makes us tougher,” says Mr Popovich, radiating the spirit of defiance and determination that has become Kharkiv’s trademark. “Unfortunately, I can’t fix the electricity,” he says. “But everyone has to do their own job. Mine is to produce books until our victory. We must keep working. We must give people in Ukraine the chance to read new books.”

The firm did consider relocating further away from the Russian border, but they decided to stay and have even invested in increasing production. Now that Russia is targeting Kharkiv with renewed focus he admits to worrying: “Then I think about our army. Our soldiers need to know they are not defending empty cities. They are defending cities with people.” Dozens of his own staff have signed up to fight. The photograph of one, killed in action on the eastern front line, hangs beside the main entrance. Reports from the front are now sobering.

Ukraine’s commander-in-chief, Gen Oleksander Syrskiy, said at the weekend the situation along sections of the front line had “significantly

worsened”. Warmer weather and firmer ground were helping Russia launch assaults in armoured vehicles and put Ukrainian forces under renewed pressure, he wrote on Telegram. Fighting around Chasiv Yar in the Donbas is especially intense. The general believes Russia wants to take the territory by 9 May, a symbolic date when Moscow celebrates the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany. Gen Syrskiy described the “heroic” efforts of his troops in “holding back the enemy’s daily attacks”. But he also mentioned the need to improve their “moral and psychological” state. After more than two years, they are exhausted. But when MPs in Kyiv finally voted on a new law regulating how men are mobilised, the amendment setting a limit for how long they have to fight had been removed.

Against the larger army of its enemy, Ukraine needs all the soldiers it can muster. The slip in morale is compounded by a shortage of ammunition now reaching the front lines and the continuing failure of the US Congress to approve a critical package of aid for Kyiv. Ukraine’s troops, like everyone here, sense their war sliding down the international agenda. And now there’s new cause for dismay, as many note the difference in response to the escalating crisis in the Middle East.

Israel has had direct support to

protect its skies from Iranian missiles and drones, even as the same countries limit their help to Ukraine which is under Russian attack every day. President Zelensky hinted at the frustration in his condemnation of Iran’s actions. “The world cannot wait for discussions to go on,” Ukraine’s president wrote on Twitter, or X. “Words do not stop drones and do not intercept missiles. Only tangible assistance does. The assistance we are anticipating.” Germany has just promised to send an addit zonal Patriot air defence unit to Ukraine “immediately”. Thanking Chancellor Olaf Scholz for the support at a “critical moment”, Volodymyr Zelensky urged other countries to follow suit. The staff of Kharkiv’s power plant No.5 would welcome the protection. “We’d only just repaired things, and now we have to start all over again,” a worker called Yuri told me. “We will sort it, but the main thing is not to get hit again!” As he and others assess the damage, salvage what they can and draw up a plan for rebuilding, they face numerous air raid sirens every day. There are two kinds of alert, a fire safety officer explains. If the threat seems focused around the border, about 40km (25 miles) away, some keep working. “But if we see there’s a rocket risk for Kharkiv then there’s an announcement: ‘Urgent! To the shelter immediately!’,” he says.

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Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

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Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

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

Saudi Foreign Minister in Pakistan

Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud's recent visit to Pakistan is aimed at discussing a range of bilateral and regional issues. The visit, which was an official and planned tour, included meetings with Pakistani officials to review and enhance mutual cooperation across various sectors. There's no specific mention in the publicly available details of the discussions whether the recognition of Israel was on the agenda for discussion. There was no specific mention in the details released about the discussions of the Rekodiq deal during the Saudi Foreign Minister's visit to Pakistan. The agenda primarily focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation and discussing regional issues. Pakistan has historically played a significant role in the security of Saudi Arabia, reflecting their strong bilateral military and strategic relationship. This involves Pakistan providing training, support, and potentially personnel for security purposes.

These ties are reinforced by their mutual interests in regional stability and cooperation under various defense and security agreements. Pakistan should have a balanced foreign policy, advocating for neutrality to avoid becoming entangled in regional conflicts. Such a stance would aim to prioritize Pakistan's national interests, foster stability within the region, and maintain diplomatic relationships with all neighboring countries. This approach could also help Pakistan focus on internal challenges, including economic, social, and security issues, ensuring a stable and prosperous future.

This approach will help in highlighting the importance of economic cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, emphasizing that financial support from Saudi Arabia could be seen as integral to maintaining and enhancing their mutual security and strategic ties. This perspective suggests that the investment in Pakistan's economy by Saudi Arabia is not only beneficial for economic stability but also crucial for strengthening their long-standing alliance, which helps both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Tokyo and Manila hope

The two US officials visiting Beijing from Sunday to Tuesday will have found themselves at the forefront of the United States' "efforts to maintain open lines of communication and to responsibly manage competition", as the US State Department described the nature of their trip. That is because Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Daniel J. Kritenbrink and National Security Council Senior Director for China Affairs Sarah Beran will have been quizzed by Beijing about the markedly heightened security cooperation among the US and Japan and the Philippines after their first trilateral summit in Washington last week. The leaders of the three countries have made no bones about China being the rationale for what promises to be a bigger military footprint in the East and South China seas and intensified provocations.

The trilateral mischief-making clique is just the latest in a series engineered by Washington with the aim of containing China. It joins the Quad, AUKUS and Five Eyes in bringing countries together for that purpose. For the US, it is taking comfort in numbers. For the Philippines, it is an attempt to curry favor with the US in the hope of receiving some largesse. As evidenced by Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. repeatedly calling on the US to invest in the Philippines.

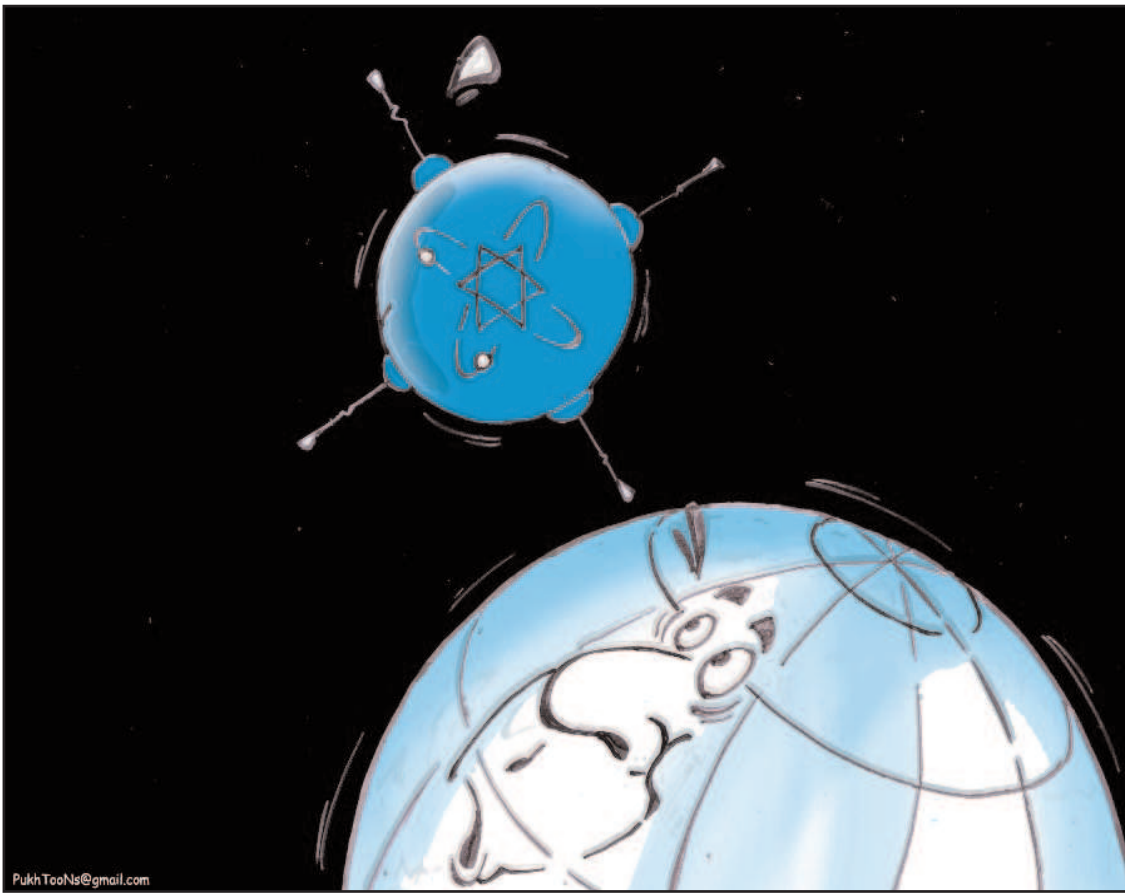
What Tokyo covets is Japan gaining the status of a "normal" country, which it thinks it can achieve by hitching itself to the US' "Indo-Pacific" strategy. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida couldn't hide his satisfaction with the upgraded Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the United States and Japan, the main outcome of his meeting with US President Joe Biden on Wednesday. Compared with Manila's shortsighted opportunism, Tokyo's scheming deserves much more vigilance from regional countries, as well as the US, something Kritenbrink and Beran should be urged to realize, because if realized, it will pose a grave challenge to peace and stability in the region and beyond.

Kishida has warmly welcomed the newly upgraded defense treaty with the US, which covers technology, command coordination, space and intelligence, as technically it puts Japan on a quasi equal footing with the US in security affairs, representing a solid step forward for Japan to not only end its subordination to the US but also become a global power. The US intends its security alliance with Japan to become the focal point from which its other regional security mechanisms — including its envisioned "Indo-Pacific NATO" — radiate.

Thus the US military command in Japan is to be restructured to strengthen operational planning and military exercises involving the two countries' armed forces. This will ensure their security cooperation evolves into the core of the "Indo-Pacific" wing of the US' security network, with Tokyo helping to dovetail it with the transatlantic wing. In this way, Japan is taking a ride on the US' strategy to contain China using the pretext of shared values. That being said, it was interesting to hear Kishida stress in Washington that Japan will cooperate with China "on common challenges" and that Tokyo envisions a "stable Japan-China relationship" on all levels. That leaves one wondering whether saying one thing and doing the other is something Tokyo has learned from Washington or it is the other way round.

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How Russia's disinformation campaign seeps into US views

Tatiana Vorozhko

On a near daily basis, Scott Cullinane talks with members of Congress about Russia's war in Ukraine. As a lobbyist for the nonprofit Razom, part of his job is to convince them of Ukraine's need for greater US support to survive. But as lawmakers debated a \$95 billion package that includes about \$60 billion in aid for Ukraine, Cullinane noticed an increase in narratives alleging Ukrainian corruption. What stood out is that these were the same talking points promoted by Russian disinformation.

So, when The Washington Post published an investigation into an extensive and coordinated Russian campaign to influence US public opinion to deny Ukraine the aid, Cullinane says he was not surprised. "This problem has been festering and growing for years," he told VOA. "I believe that Russia's best chance for victory is not on the battlefield, but through information operations targeted on Western capitals, including Washington."

The Post investigation is based on more than 100 documents collected by a European intelligence service. The files exposed a Kremlin-linked campaign in which "political strategists and trolls have written thousands of fabricated news articles, social media posts and comments that promote American isolationism, stir fear over the United States' border security and attempt to amplify US economic and racial tensions," the Post reported.

One of the main methods for spreading such disinformation is social media, according to Roman Osadchuk, a researcher at the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab and an expert on propaganda and influence campaigns. "The process begins with a Russian publication on a small website or social media account. This is then picked up by a small Russian Telegram channel, which is subsequently shared by a larger channel with more subscribers," Osadchuk said. From there, someone will translate the content into English and share it, for example, on X.

"This is how Russian disinformation can quickly

spread within the English-speaking X community," Osadchuk said. In an article published April 8, The Washington Post cited Microsoft and the social media intelligence company Graphika as saying that some articles created within this operation could have been first published on sites known as doppelgangers.

University, says the Kremlin messaging is effective because it plays on existing fears. He says the disinformation seeks to reinforce already held beliefs such as the wastefulness of aid to Ukraine, or fuels existing anger and energizes opposition to sending assistance. "When such alignment occurs, it is

ganda efforts are. "Russian influence operations are not necessarily always designed to get people to believe anything in particular, but to get them to believe nothing at all," she told VOA. Belogolova added that claims of the efforts being successful in swaying opinion "is not only irresponsible, it's dangerous."

Last month, the US Treasury Department issued sanctions on two people and two companies that it says are connected to a "foreign malign influence campaign." They include Moscow-based Social Design Agency, its founder Ilya Gambashidze, Russia-based Group Structura LLC and its CEO Nikolai Tupikin. The Social Design Agency and Gambashidze are believed to be involved in the campaign described in the Post article on April 8.

Kalenský advises governments on countering disinformation and says its success requires countermeasures. These include strengthening detection and documentation of Russian disinformation campaigns, increasing awareness and resilience of audiences to the propaganda efforts, and preventing the aggressor from exploiting weaknesses of social media and societies.

"Finally, we need to impose higher costs on the information aggressors. So far, they are almost unopposed in conducting their aggression," Kalenský said. For Cullinane, the Russian disinformation campaign makes his job harder. He says the debate about the role the US should play in the world appears to be shifting and invoking pre-World War II isolationism. But he remains resolute. Part of his work is finding what resonates most with each lawmaker.

"Some offices focus very much on the human rights situation in Ukraine. Many members are very moved by the plight of religious communities in occupied territories of Ukraine and the persecution they face at the hands of the Russian military," Cullinane said. "Other offices are very intrigued by the military reform and the military innovation brought about by an active war in Ukraine." The national security spending bill is currently awaiting approval in the House.

Osadchuk told VOA that these are deceptive replicas of legitimate media websites. They feature fake articles and are often taken down, only to be replaced by clones with slightly different web addresses.

"Nobody would know about these sites' existence unless they are promoted on social media platforms. However, as soon as they detect them, social media block them. So, Russians quickly replace banned sites with their clones," he said. In interviews with US media, two influential Republicans said they believe the propaganda has influenced their base and some of their colleagues.

"It is absolutely true. We see, directly coming from Russia, attempts to mask communications that are anti-Ukraine and pro-Russian messages, some of which we even hear being uttered on the House floor," House Intelligence Committee Chair Mike Turner said in an interview with CNN. In an interview with the US news website Puck, Michael McCaul, head of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said, "Russian propaganda has made its way into the US, unfortunately, and it's infected a good chunk of my party's base."

Serhiy Kudelia, a political scientist at Baylor

University, says the Kremlin messaging is effective because it plays on existing fears. He says the disinformation seeks to reinforce already held beliefs such as the wastefulness of aid to Ukraine, or fuels existing anger and energizes opposition to sending assistance. "When such alignment occurs, it is

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Sorry, but Iran is not the aggressor here

Belén Fernández

On Saturday, April 13, Iran launched hundreds of drones and missiles at Israel in retaliation for a deadly Israeli strike on the Iranian consulate in Damascus, Syria, that took place on April 1.

The vast majority of the projectiles were intercepted by Israel's air defence system, with assistance from the ever-helpful United States military, and damage was minimal. Having completed its retaliation, Iran has now declared that the matter can "be deemed concluded" — although Israel is not usually one to let anyone else have the last word. In the meantime, the barrage of criticism of Tehran's "aggression" has continued unabated in the West.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak condemned "in the strongest terms the Iranian regime's reckless attack against Israel", which he insisted had once again shown that Iran was "intent

on sowing chaos in its own backyard". The Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs lamented that "Iran's long term aggressive behavior is preventing the Middle East region to live in peace and security". For his part, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau whined about Iran's "disregard for peace and stability in the region", and regurgitated that old, tired slogan about "Israel's right to defend itself".

Germany's Ambassador to Israel Steffen Seibert took to social media to proclaim German solidarity "with all Israelis tonight whom Iran is terrorising with this unprecedented and ruthless attack".

Lastly, US President Joe Biden, who was forced to cut his beach weekend short due to the developments, announced: "Our commitment to Israel's security against threats from Iran and its proxies is ironclad." The Iranian attack, mind you,

occurred a little over six months into Israel's ongoing pulverisation of the Gaza Strip, which has killed nearly 34,000 Palestinians, including some 13,800 children. And yet given the thousands of missing persons presumed to be buried under the rubble, even these terrifying numbers are no doubt grave underestimates.

More than 76,000 people have been wounded, as the Israeli military has busied itself flattening entire neighbourhoods and blowing up schools, hospitals, and other basic infrastructure, all the while condemning the territory's inhabitants to famine and starvation. Talk about "terrorising". Indeed, genocide is nothing if not "long term aggressive behaviour" — to borrow the Czech Foreign Ministry's words. If the whole business weren't so unprecedently heinous, it would be almost laughable to claim that Iran is the one

"intent on sowing chaos" and disregarding "peace and stability in the region".

But because Israel's outsize role as a prized US partner in crime entitles it to a total subversion of logic, genocidaires become victims and unmitigated Israeli aggression becomes "self-defence". And never mind the April 1 Israeli attack on the Iranian consulate in Damascus; that was just pre-emptive retaliation, right?

In light of the unceasing slaughter in Gaza, though, the Western response to the intercepted Iranian missiles and drones is sickeningly cynical. Sunak's pathetic claim that "no one wants to see more bloodshed" fails to account for the reality that, as long as it's Palestinian blood, it's all totally fine.

Unfortunately, the Iranian spectacle may provide the Biden administration with exactly what it needs to shift the focus

Can Swiss initiative open the door for peace in Ukraine?

Yasar Yakis

An international conference on the Ukrainian question is scheduled to be held on June 15-16 in the resort of Burgenstock in Switzerland. This country has a tradition of mediating in complicated processes. Therefore, the summit stands a chance of success. The idea is to work out a framework for a comprehensive and lasting peace regarding the situation in Ukraine.

Russia has announced that it will not participate in the meeting because it believes that Switzerland has relinquished its neutrality in the conflict. China previously conducted a similar initiative by issuing a 12-point plan for the solution of the Ukrainian problem, but without entering into specifics. Russia displayed a lukewarm attitude to the Chinese initiative but did not discard it entirely.

China has now said that, if the Burgenstock meeting materializes, it might consider participating in it. This will be the first serious attempt to find a solution to this complicated problem. Swiss President Viola Amherd did not promise the moon but said that it was worth trying.

As the Ukraine crisis has unfolded, some transatlantic community countries have grown skeptical about whether NATO will be able to militarily sustain Kyiv for a prolonged period. Such misgivings have also been voiced in certain quarters in the US, with some having lost their appetite for getting deeply involved in the Ukraine war.

Presidential candidate Donald Trump says that he could bring the Ukrainian crisis to an end within 24 hours. He believes that both Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky have strengths and weaknesses. He probably believes that Ukraine might settle for an arrangement that will give Russia the territories that it already occupies. Zelensky will, of course, strongly oppose such a solution, especially in light of the present US administration's policy of prolonging the war to weaken Russia. There are differences between President Joe Biden's approach to the Ukrainian crisis and that of Trump. The present US administration believes that a joint NATO mission may be set up in Ukraine. It will not aim at declaring war on Russia but will try to improve Kyiv's military capabilities in terms of planning, training and fighting.

Turkiye has intricate relations with both Russia and Ukraine. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan maintains fair relations with Putin. He also maintains good relations with Zelensky. This combination allows Ankara to remain neutral in the Russia-Ukraine conflict, although the risks of it getting out of control are also real.

Relations between Turkiye and Ukraine have followed a stable course since the dismemberment of the Soviet Union. A few weeks before the outbreak of the Ukrainian war in February 2022, Ankara and Kyiv signed a deal to allow Ukrainian factories to manufacture Turkish

drones and, as this was a commercial deal, Russia did not oppose it. This arrangement is still valid and Moscow does not make it a problem with Turkiye. The deal is now bearing fruit. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg referred to this project as an example of how NATO allies were supporting Ukraine and increasing this country's capacity to manufacture its own weapons. Hopefully, this will not drag Turkiye into a conflict with Russia.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken also seems deeply committed to making Ukraine a member of NATO sooner or later. He said that a roadmap had to be drawn up as soon as possible to that effect. The election of a new secretary-general for NATO is another issue that keeps the alliance busy. This time we have been lucky enough to produce several candidates. Stoltenberg, whose term expires on Oct. 1, is the second longest-serving NATO secretary-general after Joseph Luns. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte is one of the new candidates. He is supported by the US, UK and Germany. Romanian President Klaus Iohannis and Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas are also in the running. As the secretary-general is elected by consensus, a compromise has to be worked out.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan insisted that whoever becomes secretary-general has to "fully and unconditionally support Turkiye in its fight against terror." Ankara may try to obtain as firm a promise as possible on this critical issue, but the US will probably again attempt to distinguish between the Kurdish fighters in Syria and the PKK terror organization.

NATO's expansion toward Asia-Pacific is another major concern in the alliance. China is the biggest challenge for the US. If reelected, the Trump administration will probably give priority to the Pacific Rim. The US has initiated in the Pacific area a loose cooperation framework known as the Quad, which includes the US, Australia, India and Japan. It is a loose gathering with no binding mechanisms. AUKUS is another pact and it brings together Australia, the UK and the US. It aims to contribute to the military presence of the West in the Pacific area. These cooperation mechanisms contribute to the militarization of Japan and South Korea.

The US wanted NATO to open a liaison office in Tokyo that would cover the alliance's relations with Japan and South Korea, but France blocked this initiative. It is contested whether a minuscule group of Hawaiian islands in the middle of the Pacific Ocean should be considered part of the North Atlantic alliance just because it is part of the US' territory. If an armed conflict erupted in Hawaii, very few NATO countries outside of the US would be eager to send troops to this archipelago. The Swiss initiative is the best available option for peace in Ukraine. If it works, some progress may be expected; if not, we will stay where we are.

For a full year, the bodies have piled up in Sudan – and still world looks away

Nesrine Malik

ONE year ago today, Sudan descended into war. The toll so far is catastrophic. Thousands are dead, and millions are displaced, with hunger and disease ravaging all in the absence of aid. The UN has called the situation “one of the worst humanitarian disasters in recent history”, afflicting about 25 million people. The Sudanese people are suffering what has become the largest displacement crisis in the world.

The war was both sudden and a long time coming. The short history is that of a country where, following a promising 2019 revolution that overthrew the dictator Omar al-Bashir, the army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a powerful militia, ejected civilians from a power-sharing agreement between the three parties and then could not come to an agreement themselves. Their partnership broke down in April last year, and the RSF moved quickly, taking over the capital city, Khartoum, in an unprecedented moment in the country's history. It then spread through the rest of the country, looting, assaulting and murdering civilians.

The army – and here is the long history – which established the RSF in the first place from remnants of the infamous Janjaweed troops it partnered with in Darfur to help it savagely suppress rebellion in the region – has so far been unable to prevail against its own creation. The result is a fluid situation, with gains and losses for both parties, no discernible frontline, and millions of Sudanese people caught in the middle.

It's not so much a civil war as it is a war against civilians, whose homes, livelihoods and very lives have been the collateral damage so far. It is two tragedies overlaid. The first is of a country that until last year, although beset with conflict and dictatorship, had managed to maintain its integrity – and with it a sense that there was a way through

its troubles, after which it could achieve its potential.

The war, despite all that led up to it, was not inevitable, was not the foreseeable fate of a country where ethnic differences necessitated conflict. It was the result of an economic model of centralisation where dominant parties in the cen-

development expands the theatre of war and makes a return to peace more remote. Writing these words is a halting, painful process, like stepping on shards of broken glass. Something similar plays out on an almost daily basis, where one tries, and fails, to trace and keep track of all the individual and national tolls.

All, including my family, have left their homes, sometimes grabbing what they could before the RSF stormed in and took over their properties. Even though it has been a year, there is still a sense of whiplash, of disbelief that it has actually happened, is actually happening.

tre preyed on, and extracted from, the periphery. One of the largest countries in Africa, with a sparkling coast along the Red Sea, fertile land across the Nile River, and the sort of cultural and ethnic diversity that could be harnessed into a powerhouse of Arab and African convergence, Sudan was always held back by an entitled few who wouldn't share.

Added to the loss of what could have been are all the personal losses spread now throughout the country. The war unfolded and spread so rapidly that a mass dispossession took place, and with it an odyssey of displacement. Everyone I know in the country of my birth is scattered to different degrees, either within Sudan – sheltering, sometimes for the third or fourth time, with friends or relatives as the war reaches them – or outside of it. All, including my family, have left their homes, sometimes grabbing what they could before the RSF stormed in and took over their properties.

Even though it has been a year, there is still a sense of whiplash, of disbelief that it has actually happened, is actually happening. Every

And more jarring is that the world has gazed with indifference upon this crucible of war. The “forgotten war” is what it's called now, when it's referenced in the international media. Little is offered by way of explanation for why it is forgotten, despite the sharpness of the humanitarian situation, the security risk of the war spreading, and the fact that it has drawn in self-interested mischievous players such as the United Arab Emirates, which is supporting the RSF, and therefore extending the duration of the war.

One of the reasons for this is Gaza and the escalating Middle East conflict, and how they have monopolised global attention and diplomatic bandwidth for the past six months. And another is that for those reporting within Sudan and the few who manage to get in, doing so is difficult and fraught with danger, limiting the output of images and details that can be broadcast consistently to galvanise attention. But the rest, I suspect, is down to what to most will seem unremarkable: this is just another African country succumbing to

intractable conflict.

This is a different war from the one waged in Darfur, which drew in celebrities, politicians and even the international criminal court in previous years. And it is different from the war between the north and south, which also attracted so much advocacy and political pressure that a peace agreement and secession was secured. It is not, as in the past, a conflict resonantly framed as Muslims against Christians, or Arabs against Africans, stirring sympathy and outrage. It is the challenge of a new configuration of political and economic entrepreneurs who wish to displace the old military cluster of ruling parties – but with no experience and even less interest in actually running parts of the state captured in the meantime.

On a political level Sudan falls, and has always done, low on the list of priorities for power brokers in the west, who have few interests in the country. They either crudely isolated it through sanctions or, after the revolution, naively and hastily tried to marshal the two armed parties to agreement and a de-facto return to a militarised, centralised status quo.

This is the point where I would usually suggest some potential way through it all. But one year on there is nothing but mourning. There is comfort though, as infrastructure has collapsed, in how the Sudanese people have pooled their few resources and opened up their homes to each other, in how volunteers have set up community kitchens, and how resistance committees, local civil disobedience units that were set up before and thrived during the 2019 revolution have been repurposed to provide medical aid, food and shelter. In these acts, there is still a reminder that a country is not a place but a spirit. Not only is that very much alive, but it has proved to be, in even the most extreme circumstances, impossible to extinguish.

The Guardian

Can there be impartial jurors when it comes to Trump?

Jeffrey Abramson

ON Monday, jury selection for the first-ever criminal trial of a former US president begins in Manhattan. Former President Donald Trump, who has previously been found liable in civil trials, is now set to face charges that could land him in prison.

Trump is accused of 34 counts of falsifying business records in connection with a hush money payment his former lawyer and fixer, Michael Cohen, made to adult-film actress Stephanie Clifford, also known as Stormy Daniels, to cover up an alleged affair ahead of the 2016 election. (Trump has pleaded not guilty.)

The verdict may well depend on whether the jury of 12 understands the gravity of the matter: Far from being about sex or small-time fraud, it is about Trump's alleged attempt to win the 2016 presidential election by burying a last-minute story that could have cost him votes. The case will require jurors to focus on the actual charges and not become distracted by the tawdry sexual details surrounding the case.

Impartiality is the key to jury justice, but we can hardly expect jurors to approach the case without strong opinions about Trump. Indeed, it would be disturbing to seat jurors whose only qualification was their ignorance about major news events of the day.

Fortunately, an open mind does not require an empty mind. We can find fair jurors who understand the difference between law and politics. The presiding judge, Juan Merchan, managed to seat just such a fair jury in the 2022 trial of the Trump Organization. He can do so here as well, by following standard practice in New York and elsewhere of excusing persons for hardship and then probing the rest for bias during a process known as the voir dire.

The process may take longer than the usual jury selection and the pool of persons questioned will be larger. But otherwise, the process will be familiar. In selecting 18 persons – 12 jurors and six alternates – each side can challenge an unlimited number of jurors for “cause,” namely bias. And even if the judge finds a potential juror impartial, New York law in a felony trial such as this gives Trump and the prosecution 10 peremptory strikes each – the right to excuse a person for any reason at all, so long as the challenge isn't motivated by racial or equivalent forms of group prejudice.

Merchan has already released the questionnaire he will use to vet persons for bias. It consists of 42 questions in which he strikes a sensible balance between questions he will not allow – asking jurors how they vote or what their political party affiliation is – and inquires he will permit; for example, asking

whether a potential juror supports groups such as the Proud Boys on the right or Antifa on the left.

Potential jurors can be asked whether they have ever attended pro- or anti-Trump rallies or followed his social media posts or Cohen's podcasts. Such questions will help detect those with the kind of extreme commitments that harden a juror's mind before trial.

But there will be differences from normal New York practice. One is that the names of jurors will be kept from the public, even though the parties will know them. Another is that Merchan plans to take jurors who self-identify as biased at their word and excuse them without the normal follow-up individual interview. He argues that such individual questioning would be time-consuming and largely a charade that would not change the need to excuse such persons. Of course, a Manhattan trial venue favors the government, since the borough chose Biden over Trump in the 2020 election by a margin of 86% to 12%. There is something to be said for Trump's claim that he faces an uphill battle in jury selection.

But for months now, Trump has tried to tilt the playing field by unleashing his own prejudicial pretrial publicity. In the usual case, the defendant is the one who complains that media coverage has biased jurors. Indeed, Trump lodged this complaint in arguing unsuccessfully for moving the trial from Manhattan or postponing it.

But this is a case where the defendant had as much access to the media as the government did. On social media, Trump called Merchan “a certified Trump hater” and went so far as to accuse the judge's daughter of working to “Get Trump,” in reference to her role in a firm that does digital campaign work for Democrats. As District Attorney Alvin Bragg alleged in a court filing, Trump is the one who sought “to pollute the jury pool by making baseless and inflammatory accusations” about “witnesses, individual prosecutors, and the Court itself.”

Trump's savvy when it comes to creating a media frenzy in his favor explains why the juror questionnaire specifically asks potential jurors whether they have ever “followed Donald Trump on any social media” or “have any feelings or opinions about how Mr. Trump is being treated in this case.”

It is a good guess that the prosecution will argue that frequent followers of Trump's social media posts have been prejudiced beyond repair. It is an equally good surmise that Trump will counter by going after those who check the box next to The New York Times as their major

source of news. Each side plays hunches about what makes a juror more favorable to their side than the other.

One factor likely to complicate jury selection is the expected introduction into evidence of salacious sexual details about Trump's alleged affair with Daniels, which he denies. Indeed, the prosecution is expected to buttress its case by showing Trump had an alleged pattern of paying hush money to cover up sexual peccadillos, including with a former Playboy model. Typically, a defendant, especially a married man running for president, would prefer avoiding the embarrassment and humiliation of airing dirty laundry in public. But Trump may try a “what's all the fuss about” defense and prefer jurors who dismiss the charges as an overblown reaction to just another sex story. Trump has survived previous sex scandals and he may prefer jurors predisposed to view the case as one about his private life rather than about important public matters.

True, another New York jury found Trump liable of defaming and sexually abusing E. Jean Carroll in 2023 and again this year. But there the jury faced evidence that the sex was coerced. The trial that begins today is about paying Daniels to keep quiet about an alleged consensual affair.

During jury selection, both sides will also try to anticipate how prospective jurors might react to the testimony of key prosecution witness, Cohen. He is the onetime Trump loyalist who flipped on his boss and pled guilty to charges stemming from falsifying records to conceal the hush money payments Trump allegedly asked him to make on his behalf to Daniels.

Trump has fiercely attacked the credibility of Cohen, and Cohen has responded. This is why Question 35 on the questionnaire asks what jurors know of their feud, including whether they have read or listened to any of Cohen's books or podcasts. Some jurors might have more trouble than others believing the testimony of a convicted felon. Some might have negative reactions to someone who turned on a former boss. That is why each side might do well to sketch a personality profile of each potential juror. A person who, through military training or otherwise, values loyalty above all else might make a pro-Trump juror, whereas the government might prefer the kind of person who admires whistleblowers and distrusts blind loyalty. There is a famous quip of unknown origin that goes: “In England, the trial starts when jury selection is over. In the US, it is already over.” It remains to be seen whether this proves true in a trial without precedent.

CNN

Iran and Israel ... Questions and fiery messages

Ghassan Charbel

THE night of April 13-14, 2024, has taken up a distinguished position in the memory of the region. It has been a long time since newsrooms were so fervent to learn of the latest developments. Perhaps the night of March 19-20, 2003, when American rockets rained down on Baghdad to oust Saddam Hussein, comes close.

The events of the weekend were more exciting and dangerous because the outcome of the March 2003 night was a foregone conclusion: the American military machine was not going to launch a war it was going to lose.

The new night was exciting, dangerous and open to dire consequences. It exposed the fragility of the Middle East and how vulnerable it is to sliding into the abyss. It closed airspaces and airports. The people of the Middle East witnessed drones and rockets streak across the sky. On the other side, jets and rockets took off to take down the roaming drones and missiles and prevent them from reaching their targets. It was a long night that kept awake the leaders of nations and armies, and “generals” of armed factions and militias.

It was not the night of the “crushing blow” that has been whispered about in the command centers of the so-called resistance forces over the years. Its goal was to rain down rockets on Israel from Iran and countries where it holds sway. The attack did not lead to an all-out war or a major collapse. It was a reminder of Iran's ability to set a precedent that it can launch a direct attack against Israeli territory.

It was not the night of the major conflagration or crushing blow. But the night underscored that a major change has taken place to the

rules of the old game. It has raised questions about the new “rules of engagement.” The truth is, the events of the night began to unfold before darkness fell. You knew something major was taking place when the master of the White House cut short his vacation to meet with top officials. The world sat up to watch and stayed up all night.

The current month started with a fiery message that paved the way for the new night. On that day, an adventurous player called Benjamin Netanyahu made a very dangerous decision. Seven important officers from Iran's Revolutionary Guards were meeting in Damascus. He saw this as an unmissable opportunity. He was not deterred by the sovereignty of the Iranian consulate where they were meeting. He destroyed the consulate. It was a difficult decision that rivaled that of Donald Trump when he ordered the killing of Qassem Soleimani near Baghdad airport.

Netanyahu's decision raised several questions. Had he grown tired of trading blows with proxies, so he decided to summon to the ring the boxer who was controlling them? Had he chosen to lure Iran out of the shadows and into a direct confrontation? Did he want to remind the West that the existential threat to Israel comes from the Revolutionary Guards of the supreme leader, not Yahya Sinwar and his tunnels? Did he choose to take the risk of igniting a major fire instead of preoccupying himself with rockets from Yemen, drones from Iraq and clashes with Lebanon? Had he set up an unavoidable trap for Iran?

It was going to be difficult for

Iran to refrain from retaliating to the consulate attack. Netanyahu challenged its image before the internal Iranian scene and the region. On the other hand, Iran does not want to wage an open war with Israel because the US could not possibly remain on the sidelines if that were to happen. Iranian officials weighed up their options for about two weeks and the response was introducing to the equation Iran's ability to directly attack Israel without sparking a war.

Politicians and military officials will spend a long time explaining the meaning of the messages that were delivered that night. Iran delivered a message to Israel and another to the US, saying it did not want to expand the war.

On the night of rockets and drones, the US delivered a clear message to Israel that it might criticize Netanyahu's approach in Gaza, but that does not mean it will abandon Israel or be lenient with whoever targets its security. The US was not the only Western power that downed the Iranian rockets and drones. Britain and France were also involved that night.

The American message became a Western one. It set clear limits to any Iranian attempt to even think about dealing Israel a direct painful blow. The night of rockets and drones also delivered a military message that underscored the Western and Israeli technological superiority over Iran's military technology. That sort of message must also give Hezbollah in Lebanon something to think about.

On the political and diplomatic levels, the night of rockets and drones showed that Israel enjoys

firm Western protection against challenges that may target it, whether from Gaza or Tehran. It demonstrated that Israel's security was not open to discussion in Western circles, no matter their reservations and disappointments regarding Netanyahu's approach to Gaza, peace and the two-state solution.

The question raised after the consulate attack was clear. Should Iran retaliate and target Israeli territory? How and to what extent? The same questions were raised after the Iranian attack. Will Israel target Iranian territory? How and to what extent? Washington backed Netanyahu unquestioningly in the wake of the Iranian attack, but it was quick to clarify that it does not support an Israeli response and would not take part in it should it happen. The wait will be loaded with questions.

Can Netanyahu sit back and not retaliate? What about the hawks in his government? Should he heed the American advice and what price might he extract from them? Will he ask for military and economic support so that he could run rampant in Rafah or will he ask that the two-state solution be downplayed as a mandatory step going forward? Will he ask that the balances and relationships in the region be reshaped? Will he ask for an approach that would bring an end to the confrontation, which is in its seventh month and has become a costly war of attrition, with reports saying the night of rockets and drones cost Israel about \$1 billion? We must now wait and see what lessons the combatants will derive from the night of questions and fiery messages streaking across the skies of the Middle East.

Arab News

America has just reminded us there is only one world superpower

Richard Dannatt

AS conflicted as our judgments might be about Israel's conduct of its war in Gaza, there should be no ambiguity about our condemnation of Iran's attack on Israel. Our outrage should be as deafening as was our outrage when Vladimir Putin attacked Ukraine on February 24, 2022.

Within our developed world order there is no place for unilateral acts of aggression towards the sovereign territory of one country by another. Such actions sit totally outside the international security structure of the UN created by multilateral agreement after the chaos of the Second World War and invigilated by the UN Security Council. Iran has made a grave error in a direct attack on Israel. It is only through the technical excellence of Israel's air defence systems and the willing cooperation of some of her allies that this attack did not result in mass civilian casualties.

The pressure on Israel from the United States and other western countries, including the United Kingdom, to moderate its behaviour in Gaza has been put on hold while those same countries have

stood with Israel in repelling Iran's illegal attack. Of course, Israel was firmly in the lead in conducting its defensive operations against the Iranian attack, but the role of the US Central Command was pivotal as well.

As much as China, Russia or even Iran might like to believe they have superpower status, there is only one military superpower in the world still, and that is the United States. Even though Donald Trump might like the US to step back from its international policing duties, President Biden was in no doubt over the last few days that the US through Central Command (Centcom) has a vital role to protect the rights of one country when threatened by another. To the credit of other countries such as our own, there was a willingness to contribute to this defensive military operation. Our Prime Minister's confirmation that RAF fighter jets shot down Iranian drones over Syria and Iraq claims justifiable credit for the UK participation in the operation.

The challenge for the next few days is, how does Israel react to

the events of the weekend? Israeli minister Benny Gantz has said that Israel will “exact price” from Iran “in timing that is right for us”. In war, timing is everything, but the right time might not be now. Israel has burnt up much of its international support after the October 7 massacre by its heavy-handed tactics in Gaza – a poorly thought through operational campaign with no deliverable strategic objective – so would be well advised to pause now and make carefully considered decisions. A massive reaction against Iran itself could be counter-productive. Unlike Israel, Iran does not have sophisticated air defence systems and its allies are a polyglot array of terrorist groups scattered around the Middle East. A major strike by Israel on Tehran, Iran's oil fields or putative nuclear sites could result in massive destruction and loss of life. A more nuanced approach would be to pause, reflect and then decide what action to take.

Flipping the coin, there are other factors to consider. Had Iran chosen not to attack Israel directly

The Telegraph

Yellen's visit and Sino-US cooperation

Edward Lehman

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen's second visit to China in nine months marks a significant milestone in the ongoing efforts to foster constructive dialogue and cooperation between the two largest economies of the world. Against the background of a fast-changing international situation and the ups and downs in bilateral relations, Yellen prioritized addressing key trade issues that impact the interests of both the United States and China.

During her discussions with senior Chinese officials, Yellen emphasized the importance of mutual cooperation while acknowledging the existence of major differences between the two countries. Central to her agenda was the issue of China's trade practices, which have been a source of concern for US companies and workers. Yellen's focus on addressing these disparities underscores the importance of creating a level playing field for all stakeholders involved.

One of the key issues highlighted by the Treasury secretary during her visit, which concluded on Tuesday, is the challenge of China's “overcapacity”,

which has significant implications for global trade dynamics. She said China's “overcapacity” can lead to spillover effects that would affect economies across the world. Managing “overcapacity” requires concerted efforts and market-based reforms, ensuring fair competition and sustainable economic growth for both US and Chinese industries.

Besides, Yellen's visit to Guangzhou to meet with Chinese and US business leaders from the American Chamber of Commerce in China holds strategic significance, given Guangzhou's status as a manufacturing hub and home to prominent Chinese companies. The visit underscores the importance of engaging with key stakeholders in regions driving innovation and technological advancement. While addressing concerns about trade restrictions, Yellen emphasized the importance of collaboration on pressing global issues such as climate change.

Despite differences on certain issues, Yellen's visit signifies a strong commitment to open and direct communication between the US and China. Both countries recognize the

importance of maintaining dialogue to address areas of disagreement and foster greater understanding. And her positive remarks on Chinese cuisine during her visit highlight the importance of cultural exchanges in contributing to strengthening of bilateral relations.

The Treasury secretary's message to Beijing regarding the impact of “subsidized” exports on American jobs underscores the need for cooperative solutions to shared challenges. Yellen's visit should serve as a positive step forward in building a new era of US-China relations characterized by mutual respect, cooperation and sincere communication.

The visit signals a significant opportunity to enhance cooperation and address long-standing issues in the bilateral relationship. By fostering open dialogue and seeking common ground, both sides can work toward a future of shared prosperity and stability. As we navigate the complexities of the global economy, constructive engagement between the US and China remains essential for addressing common challenges and building a brighter future for all.

The China Daily

Pakistan’s regional exports increase 20.57% in 8 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan’s exports to the seven regional countries witnessed an increase of 20.57 per cent in the first eight months of the financial year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding months of last year.

The country’s exports to the regional countries including Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and the Maldives account for a small amount of \$2,912.102 million, which is 14.17 per cent of Pakistan’s overall exports of \$20,537.900 million during July-February (2023-24), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

China tops the list of countries in terms of Pakistan’s exports to its neighbouring, leaving behind other countries such as Bangladesh and Afghanistan. Pakistan carried out its border trade with the farther neighbour Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Maldives.

Pakistan’s exports to China witnessed an increase of 42.02 per cent to \$1,895.720 million in eight months of this year from \$1,334.804 million last year while exports to Afghanistan witnessed a nominal decline of 7.68 percent from \$346.522 million to \$319.887 million.

The country’s exports to Bangladesh also decreased by 19.63 percent to \$421.939 million this year from \$525.017 whereas exports to Sri Lanka rose by 32.31 percent to \$266.164 million from \$201.165. The exports to India increased to \$0.230 million from \$0.161 million in the previous year.

Exports to Nepal increased by 5.66 per cent to \$2.164 million from 2.048 million while to Maldives increased by 8.11 per cent to \$5.548 million from 5.998 million, it added.

On the other hand, the imports from seven regional countries were recorded at \$8,289.088 million during the period under review as compared to \$7,293.738 million during last year, showing an increase of 13.64 per cent.

The imports from China during July-February 2023-24 were recorded at \$8,105.831 million against the \$7,065.406 million during July-February 2022-23, showing an increase of 7.66 per cent during the period.

Among other countries, imports from India are worth \$138.713 million against the imports of \$125.569 million, an increase of 10.46 per cent while imports from Afghanistan decreased by 59.82 percent from \$13.540 million to \$5.440 million.

Meanwhile, imports from Sri Lanka increased to \$38.733 million from \$35.345 million whereas Pakistan imports from Bangladesh recorded \$ 38.770 million from \$53.260 million during last year. The imports from Nepal into the country witnessed a decrease of 68.85 per cent from \$0.610 million to \$0.190 million, it added.

PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 229 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 229.86 points, a positive change of 0.33 percent, closing at 70,544.58 points against 70,314.72 points the previous trading day.

A total of 555,214,972 shares valuing Rs.21.986 billion were traded during the day as compared to 389,396,548 shares valuing Rs.17.273 billion the last day.

Some 353 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 180 of them recorded gains and 156 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 17 remained unchanged.

In PSX, the three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 88,622,330 shares at Rs.1.39 per share, Fauji Cement with 33,100,985 shares with Rs.20.01 per share and Fauji Foods Limited with 30,022,192 shares at Rs.10.05 per share.

Bata Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.25.00 per share price, closing at Rs.1,725.00, whereas the runner-up was Sugar Engineering Works Limited with a Rs.23.19 rise in its per share price to Rs.493.46.

Mari Petroleum Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.26.36 per share closing at Rs.2,595.35, followed by Nestle Pakistan Limited with Rs.22.89 decline to close at Rs.7,525.00.

Dubai Int’l crowned world’s busiest airport

DUBAI (GULF NEWS): Dubai International Airport (DXB) has, for the 10th consecutive year, taken the crown as the world’s busiest airport for international travel, catering to 86.9 million passengers in 2023.

Airports Council International (ACI) released on Monday its latest list of the busiest aviation hubs in the world, ranking DXB first in the international passenger category. ACI is an organisation of airport authorities aimed at uniting industry practices for airport standards.

However, according to ACI’s rankings for 2023, Dubai also took the number 2 ranking in the ‘passengers’ category for the first time in history.

From January to December 2023, traffic figures at DXB reached more than 86.9 million, up 31.7 per cent from the same period in 2022.

Millions more flyers were passing through the gates at DXB last year than in other popular hubs like London Heathrow and Amsterdam, Netherlands, which recorded 74.9 million and 61.8 million, respectively, in 2023.

The global total passenger forecast for 2023 stands close to 8.5 billion, reflecting a remarkable recovery of 93.8 per cent from pre-pandemic levels, said ACI. Notably, international traffic recovery drew nearer to domestic traffic, emphasizing its essential role in propelling the industry’s resurgence and expansion.

“While this milestone was greatly anticipated, its official confirmation instils us with great pride. DXB is proud to uphold its status as the world’s foremost international airport for an unparalleled ten years,” said Paul Griffiths, CEO of Dubai Airports.

“Throughout this decade, DXB has surpassed many records and attained numerous milestones, from welcoming our billionth passenger to introducing new terminals and facilities, collaborating with numerous airlines to broaden connectivity to diverse global destinations, all the while enhancing every aspect of the airport experience for our guests,” Griffiths added.

He said, “Our success owes much to the collective efforts of all service partners within the airport community and the broader aviation, travel, and tourism sectors. Together, we have bolstered Dubai’s reputation as the premier destination, offering unparalleled travel experiences worldwide.”

ACI also said the influx of passengers at international airports has been central in bolstering the recovery of hubs reliant on this segment, consequently influencing the composition of the top 10 busiest airports for total passengers.

ACI World Director General Luis Felipe de Oliveira said, “Global air travel in 2023 was chiefly fuelled by the international segment, propelled by several factors. Among these were the anticipated benefits from China’s reopening and a growing inclination towards travel despite macroeconomic conditions.”

Oliveria said while perennial leaders from the US continue to dominate the top ten busiest airports for passengers, notably Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport retaining its number one position, there are notable shifts.

“Dubai International Airport jumped to second rank for the first time, while Tokyo Haneda International Airport witnessed a remarkable ascent from 16th position in 2022 to 5th in 2023. Additionally, Oliveria said that the unwavering strength of Istanbul and New Delhi airports keeps them in the top ranks, marking significant progress over 2019.

Notably, cargo continues to play a vital role in world commerce despite the year-over-year decrease. Hong Kong International Airport has maintained the top position, followed by Memphis International Airport and Shanghai Pudong International Airport.

“Doha International Airport rejoins the top 10, jumping to number 8 with a growth of 6.3 per cent over 2019,” he added.



MULTAN: Labourers are busy in spreading sheep wool for drying at their workplace.



LAHORE: Farmers are busy in harvesting wheat crop near Ravi River.

Industry in grip of deep economic crisis amid high marks: SVC FRIA

LAHORE (INP): Senior Vice Chairman (SVC) Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA), Shahbaz Aslam has said that the country is in the middle of a deep economic crisis amid interest rates hikes and soaring inflation with its major debt sustainability indicators witnessing marked deterioration.

In a statement issued here on Monday, he said that amid the crippling economic crisis, the govt will have to return \$77.5 billion as external debt in the next three years. Quoting the media reports, he noted that a major portion of the \$77.5 billion is owed to China, and has to be paid in June when a \$1 billion Chinese SAFE deposit and a roughly \$1.4 billion Chinese commercial loan would mature.

Shahbaz Aslam stated that the total public debt and liabilities of the country has presently been standing at Rs68 trillion in FY22-23, expressing the fear that it would go up further by Rs11.8 trillion in the current fiscal year.

He pointed out that the total public debt and liabilities would go up manifold mainly because of the rising fiscal deficit and it is estimated that fiscal deficit would escalate by Rs8.227 trillion for the current fiscal year, equivalent to 7.8 percent of GDP.

The SVC FRIA said that the government will have to manage budget financing to the tune of Rs7.5 trillion through domestic avenues and only Rs1 trillion would be made available as budgetary support from foreign avenues.

The subsidies amount was kept unchanged at Rs1.39 trillion for the current fiscal year although the government had so far released only Rs2.5 billion during the first quarter of the current fiscal year. The defence spending was also kept unchanged at Rs1.8 trillion for the current fiscal year.

On the fiscal side, the IMF and Pakistani sides agreed to slash the development spending at federal and provincial levels.

At the federal level, the development spending was reduced from Rs843 billion to Rs782 billion for the current fiscal year.

The government had allocated Rs950 billion for PSDP projects in the current fiscal year. For provincial level development programs, the IMF has projected reduction from Rs1,440 billion to Rs1,325 billion for the current fiscal year.

On the revenues side, the FBR’s target was kept unchanged at Rs9.415 trillion for the current fiscal year. On non-tax revenue side, the IMF and Pakistan agreed to jack up collection on petroleum levy from Rs869 billion to Rs918 billion for the current fiscal year.

A report showed that Pakistan’s share of external debt in the total public debt rose from 37% in June to 37.2% by December, heightening the currency risks simultaneously with the rupee sinking and foreign countries shying away from extending loans.

Further problematic is the fact that with a population of nearly 230 million may be unable to meet its external debt obligations - which will trigger a sovereign default, the USIP analysis said.

According to the debt bulletin, in dollar terms, Pakistan’s total public debt stood at USD 233 billion by December, including USD 86.6 billion in external public debt.

Sharp dip in Indian rupee sparks NRI remittance surge

MUMBAI (Khaleej Times): A significant depreciation of the Indian rupee over the past decade has substantially increased the remittance power of non-resident Indians across the world, in particular the GCC and the US, leading to a remarkable jump in inward remittance to the third-largest Asian economy.

The value of the rupee against the US dollar has decreased from nearly Rs60 to around Rs83.31 over the last decade, leading to a corresponding decline in value against the dirham, which is pegged to the greenback.

The 10-year depreciation represents a decline of 27.8 per cent over a ten-year period, which is less than a 3.0 per cent fall on an annualised basis.

The rupee had fallen to its lifetime low of 83.42 against the dollar on November 10, 2023.

On April 5, the Indian currency edged three paise lower to hit its all-time low of 22.727 against the dirham (83.41 against the dollar) in early trade, tracking higher demand for the American currency from importers. Forex traders said investors are awaiting cues from the Reserve Bank of India’s monetary policy outcome.

The sharp consistent dip in the rupee’s value has sparked the highest amount of remittance inflows to India in 2023 at \$125 billion. Other factors driving the surge include India’s agreement with the UAE for promoting the use of dirhams and rupees for bilateral trade, according to the World Bank.

In a report, the World Bank further said growth in remittances in India is expected to halve to 12.4 per cent in 2023 from a historic peak of 24.4 per cent in 2022. In 10 years, India’s foreign exchange reserves increased from \$304 billion to \$645 billion — an increase of 112.2 per cent and an annualised increase of 12 per cent. On April 5, the country’s forex reserves jumped \$2.98 billion to hit a fresh peak of \$648.56 billion. Reserve Bank of India data shows.

The remittance outlook for India for 2024 is strong. With unemployment rates edging up marginally in the United States and the United Kingdom and declining in Singapore, remittance flows from India’s highly skilled migrants should be sustained in 2024, barring further fragmentation of commodity markets and geopolitical tensions spawning new global shocks, according to the World Bank. The use of dirhams and rupees in cross-border transactions would be instrumental in channelling more remittances through formal channels, it added.

Currency analysts said the rupee slide can benefit NRIs in a number of ways, depending on their income and budget. NRIs should pay close attention to the channels through which they execute their investments in order to maximise monetary benefits. The lower income groups of NRIs can invest in bank fixed deposits while higher income groups can invest in many schemes offered by banks and wealth management companies. Such facilities enable them to invest in stocks, mutual funds etc. Real estate is also a profitable option when the rupee is depreciating.

They said causes of the sharp rupee fall include the ongoing global geopolitical tensions, the rise in oil prices, a lack of food imports, and the subsequent rise in inflation.

For an NRI, there are opportunities to capitalise on in his home country while investing in assets or spending in Indian currency value in a foreign land may turn more expensive, experts said. “If you are an NRI investing in India, then with the depreciation in the value of the Indian currency, every dollar repatriated home by you is worth so much more. Historically, a reduction in the value of the rupee has resulted in an increase in NRI remittances from nations such as the United States, the UAE, the UK, and a few Asian coun-

Profits surge at Goldman Sachs on Wall Street revival

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Profits at Goldman Sachs (GS) rose 28% in the first quarter as investment banking revenues surged, giving CEO David Solomon some needed momentum at the start of 2024.

Net income was \$4.1 billion, beating analyst expectations. Its revenues of \$14.2 billion also surged from a year ago, thanks in part to a 32% rise in investment banking fees. Asset and wealth management revenues jumped, as did trading.

The improved results follow a year that was the most challenging for Solomon since 2019, his first full year in charge.

Dealmaking slowed across Wall Street, and Solomon grappled with a costly exit from consumer banking and a series of high-profile departures from the firm.

“I’ve said before that historically depressed levels of activity wouldn’t last forever,” Solomon told analysts Monday, adding that “it’s clear that we’re in the early stages of a reopening of capital markets.”

The pressure on Solomon hasn’t let up in 2024. Two prominent proxy advisory firms are advising stockholders to cast votes this month that would limit the power of Solomon, with results due to be tallied at the company’s annual meeting on April 24.

Court Notice

IN the Court of Sami Ullah Khan Civil Judge VI/Alaqa Qazi Buner at Dagar.Suit No.277 /1. Institution 8/3/2024. Date of hearing.19/4/2024. Mst. Zaibun Nissa etc VS Said Rafi Ullah.Declaration Suit. Notice to no 1.Said Rafi Ullah s/o Hazrat Ali resident Pacha Kalay Pir Baba Buner. 6.Shafiq Ur Rehman s/o Ashtar Khan resident Kalpani Gagra Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.30 am dated 19/4/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

Lost and Found

I have lost my original documents for my plot whose address: Plot# 66, Sector 4, KDA Kohat. I have applied for duplicate documents with KDA Office. If anyone finds it, please contact: Qazi Minhaj Uddin CNIC: 14301-4593255-5, Father name: Qazi Shuja Uddin, Cell: 0345-9100084

Court Notice

In the Court of Qurat-ul-Ain Rashid, Senior Civil Judge/Judge Family Court Swabi Muhammad Zaman VS. Sadia Ishfaq Suit number: 37/FC, Institution date: 17-02-2024, Hearing date: 26-04-2024, Subject: Jactitation of Marriage, Notice to : Public at large. The service through ordinary means is difficult , so you are informed to attend the court on 26-04-2024 personally, through counsel or attorney to avoid ex-parte proceeding.



In brief

Brazilian umpire suspended

BRASILIA (Reuters): Brazilian umpire Antonio Casa has been suspended for seven years and six months after admitting to charges of corruption and betting-related violations, the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) said on Monday. The national-level official was also fined \$8,000 and given a suspended penalty of \$17,001 for breaching the Tennis Anti-Corruption Program (TACP), the ITIA added. "Casa admitted to seven breaches of the TACP, including attempting to commit a corruption offense, manipulation of match scoring for betting purposes, and facilitation of betting," the ITIA said. The suspended umpire will be barred from officiating or attending any tennis event authorised or sanctioned by ITIA members until Sept. 27, 2031.

Nasir Jamshed issues apology

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Former Pakistan opening batter Nasir Jamshed expressed regret over his role in the spot-fixing controversy in 2017 and issued an apology for his mistake. Jamshed is currently serving a 10-year cricket ban, slapped by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) in 2018 for his involvement in the spot-fixing in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) as well as the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) in 2017. He later pleaded guilty to his role in the spot-fixing conspiracy in February 2020 and was subsequently sentenced to 17 months in jail in the UK. However, he recently took to his official X (formerly Twitter) account to apologize for his wrongdoings. The left-handed cricketer shared a video of himself bowling to his daughter and expressed regret over his tarnished career. "I won't forgive myself for what I did with my career," Jamshed posted. "I am truly sorry, but I will try to pass my talent on to my daughter and give her the best chance." Nasir Jamshed represented Pakistan in two Test matches, 48 ODIs, and 18 T20Is, since his debut in 2008 against Zimbabwe, scoring a total of 1832 runs across formats. He played a crucial role in Pakistan's 2-1 victory during their last bilateral series against India in 2013. Jamshed emerged as the leading run-scorer in the three-match ODI series, amassing an impressive 241 runs, including two centuries.

Alcaraz hopeful but uncertain

BARCELONA (AFP): Carlos Alcaraz hopes to defend his Madrid Open title but the Spanish world number three said Monday he is uncertain whether he will be fully fit to do so. Alcaraz pulled out of the Barcelona Open on Sunday because of an injury to his right forearm and explained his current fitness situation. The Madrid Open starts on April 22 and Alcaraz said his goal is to play there after withdrawing from the Monte Carlo Masters earlier in April, and then from Barcelona, with the French Open approaching on the horizon. "My intention is (to play at) the Madrid Open, but I am not sure about anything," Alcaraz told reporters. "I don't want to get ahead of myself, I don't want to say that I will be 100 percent at the Madrid Open, but that is my intention. "We will try and do everything that is in our power." Alcaraz has won two Grand Slams and is building towards Roland Garros which starts on May 26, having reached the semi-finals last year in Paris.



KARACHI: West Indies Women's Cricket Team player in action during training session at the National Bank Stadium. —APP Photo

‘Paris Olympics opening ceremony could be moved’

PARIS (Agencies): French President Emmanuel Macron says the Paris Olympics opening ceremony could move from the River Seine if the security risk is too high.

Mr Macron said it could be "limited to the Trocadéro", across the Seine from the Eiffel Tower, instead of covering the planned stretch of the river.

He added that it could even be moved to the Stade de France, reverting to a traditional ceremony.

The opening ceremony is set to be the first to be held outside a stadium. More than 10,000 athletes are expected to sail along a 6km stretch of the Seine on some 160 barges.

The organisers had originally planned to accommodate some 600,000 people to watch the ceremony from riverbanks, but that has now been scaled down to 300,000 people.

It has already been revealed that tourists will not be given free access to watch the ceremony, as was originally planned. Instead, tickets will be by invitation only, not via open registration.

"This opening ceremony... is a world first. We can do it and we are going to do it," Mr Macron said in an interview with French media outlets BFMTV and RMC.

But for the first time, he admitted that there were back up plans in place.

"There are plan Bs and plan Cs", he said, adding: "We are preparing them in parallel, we will analyse this in real time."

Security concerns have been heightened following the threats by the Islamic State group (IS) to Champions League quarter-final football matches in Paris, Madrid and London.

Last week, a post was shared by Al-Azaim Foundation, a media chan-

nel responsible for spreading messages from the IS-K branch of the Islamist militant group.

There are also concerns that the wars in Ukraine and Gaza could increase the security threat, with French authorities mentioning the possibility of a drone attack.

In the same interview, Mr Macron also said he would do "everything possible" to agree an Olympic truce.

The French president was alluding to a historic tradition that peace must prevail during the Olympic games.

"We want to work towards an Olympic truce and I think it is an occasion for me to engage with a lot of our partners," he said, adding that he had asked the Chinese President Xi Jinping to help him achieve it.

The competition is set to run from 26 July until 11 August. The Paralympic Games then follows from 28 August to 8 September.

Pakistan's first training session cancelled due to rain

RAWALPINDI (Monitoring Desk): The first training session of Pakistan cricket team was called off due to rain in Rawalpindi ahead of T20I home series against New Zealand, on Monday.

Pakistani players had gathered at the Rawalpindi cricket stadium for practice for the first time since the completed their training in Kakul under the supervision of the military instructors.

However, rain forced them to halt the practice session. Pakistan's newly appointed head coach Azhar Mahmood also joined the team today in Islamabad. Pakistan will take on New Zealand in the first game of the five match T20I series in Rawalpindi on Thursday.

Rawalpindi will host first three matches of the series while remaining two matches will be played in Lahore. The New Zealand team landed in the capital on Sunday to play the series against Pakistan.

Shaheen Afridi likely to miss two matches of NZ series

RAWALPINDI (Monitoring Desk): Fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi is likely to miss first two games of the five-match T20I series against New Zealand.

Sources said the left-arm pacer wanted to achieve his bowling pace after attending the training session in Kakul. Therefore, his participation in the initial matches is not confirmed.

They added that Afridi did not want to take any risk before the upcoming ICC Men's T20I World Cup 2024. The former T20 skipper is expected to play a match in Rawalpindi and two matches of the series in Lahore.

Pakistan will take on New Zealand in the first game of the five match T20I series in Rawalpindi on Thursday (April 18).

Rawalpindi will host first three matches of the series while remaining two matches will be played in Lahore.

West Indies' Taylor wary of Pakistan's spin bowling "challenge"

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): West Indies all-rounder Stafanie Taylor on Monday, acknowledged that the Pakistan women's cricket team's strength lies in their spin bowling but insisted that the visiting team is "experienced enough" to counter the challenge.

Taylor interacted with the media on the sideline of the West Indies training session ahead of the first ODI of the three-match series, scheduled to be played here at the National Bank Cricket Stadium on April 18.

The all-rounder accepted Pakistan's spin bowling as a challenge but revealed that the touring side is trying not to think too much about it.

"It's definitely a challenge [but] we're not trying to think too much of it and trying to focus on each bowler at a time whenever

we go out there and play. "It's not a case that we're not experienced in playing spin and yes, they're a team that's actually full of spin bowlers."

"We know most of their spin bowlers, we've played against most of their spin bowlers so it's not something that we're not familiar with."

Stafanie Taylor then talked about her previous experience of visiting Pakistan in 2021 when the touring team whitewashed the home team 3-0 in the ODI series.

The all-rounder played a pivotal role in her side's dominant triumph but is unfazed by the previous record, stating that is the past now.

"We were here the last time and we had a very good time. We came out on the better side of things, [but] that's past and this series is a

fresh one for both teams.

"We [are] hoping that we come out as the batter side."

For the unversed, West Indies will play a three-match ODI series, followed by five T20Is against Pakistan from April 18 to May 3.

All eight matches of the white-ball series between Pakistan and West Indies will be played at the National Bank Cricket Stadium here.

West Indies Squad for white-ball series

Hayley Matthews (c), Shemaine Campbelle (vc), Aaliyah Alleyne, Shamilla Connell, Afy Fletcher, Cherry Ann Fraser, Jannillea Glasgow, Chinelle Henry, Zaida James, Qiana Joseph, Chadean Nation, Karishma Ramharack, Stafanie Taylor, Rashada Williams, Kate Wilmott.

England spin great Derek Underwood dead at 78

LONDON (Agencies): Derek Underwood, the most successful spin bowler in England's Test cricket history, has died at the age of 78, his former county Kent announced Monday.

Underwood took 297 wickets in 86 Tests with his distinctive brand of brisk left-arm spin and was noted for being particularly effective on uncovered pitches, which were in use for much of a 24-year first-class career that ran from 1963 to 1987.

He famously bowled England to a Test victory over arch-rivals Australia at The Oval in 1968 on such a surface, taking 7-50 when a draw had seemed inevitable. Underwood made his England debut as a 21-year-old in 1966 and played his last Test in 1982.

Together with outstand-

ing wicketkeeper Alan Knott, he formed a celebrated combination for Kent and England.

Both Underwood, affectionately nicknamed "Deadly", and Knott might have achieved even more success for England had they not each been involved in Kerry Packer's breakaway World Series Cricket of the late 1970s and a rebel tour of South Africa in 1982.

Even so, Underwood's tally of Test wickets is 42 more than the next highest by another England spinner, Graeme Swann.

After his playing career was over, Underwood served as president of Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), the owners of London's Lord's Cricket Ground, for an annual term in 2009.

"Derek was an outstanding contributor to both Kent and England, winning trophies for club and country and etching his name in the history books forevermore," said Kent chair Simon Phillip in a club statement.

"Watching Derek weave his unique magic on a wet wicket was a privilege for all who were able to witness it. His induction into the ICC (International Cricket Council) Hall of Fame shows the esteem in which he was held in world cricket."

"An advocate for growing our game worldwide whilst protecting our sport's rich heritage, Derek also made substantial contributions off the field as well as on it, and he will be sorely missed by everyone at Kent Cricket."

Pollard 'sick and fed up' of Pandya bashing

NEW DELHI (Agencies): It is only a matter of time until Hardik Pandya hits form in the IPL, warned Kieron Pollard, saying he was "sick and fed up" of the flak levelled at the all-rounder.

Pandya has been booed incessantly since replacing veteran Rohit Sharma as captain of five-time champions the Mumbai Indians for the current edition of the Twenty20 tournament.

With the 30-year-old Pandya again failing to fire with bat and ball, Mumbai slumped to their fourth loss in six games this term when they faced Chennai Super Kings on Sunday.

Mumbai batting coach Pollard gave his full support afterwards to Pandya, who captained Gujarat to the IPL title in 2022 and is

expected to be a key player for India at the T20 World Cup in June.

"I am sick and fed up of (people) looking to pinpoint individuals," Pollard said after Mumbai's 20-run loss at their Wankhede Stadium.

"Cricket is a team game at the end of the day. This is an individual that is going to represent the country in less than six weeks' time, and all are going to cheer him and want him to do well."

Pandya leaked 26 runs in the final over of Chennai's innings including three straight sixes by M.S. Dhoni. The all-rounder then scored just two with the bat in the hosts' unsuccessful chase of 207.

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar was scathing. "Absolutely ordi-

nary bowling, ordinary captaincy," he told Star Sports.

Pandya has been under the cosh ever since returning to Mumbai from Gujarat and taking over the captaincy from the much-loved Rohit. Rohit, 36, who leads India in all formats, is an icon in Mumbai after leading them to five IPL titles.

Pollard said it was "high time we try to encourage and stop nitpicking and see if we can get the best out of one of the great all-rounders India has produced".

"He can bat, bowl and field, and has an X-factor about him," said the former West Indies all-rounder of Pandya. "I hope very well deep down within my heart that when he comes out on top, I'll sit back and watch everyone sing his praises."

Expect another PSG thriller: Barca coach Xavi



BARCELONA (AFP): Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez said Monday his team's Champions League quarter-final second leg clash against Paris Saint-Germain would be similar to the first leg thriller.

The five-time champions edged Luis Enrique's PSG side 3-2 in a Paris blockbuster last week and are aiming to reach the semi-finals for the first time since 2019.

Xavi said the second leg at Barcelona's temporary Olympic Stadium home on the city's Montjuic hill would produce more of the same spectacle.

"We're not a team that will sit on our lead, we want to take the ball off PSG and win the game," Xavi told a

news conference.

"I hope we are at our best, they will test us to the limit - I see a game very similar to the first leg."

"It's the Champions League, it's Paris, and a game in which no one will be holding back."

Xavi said PSG's coach Luis Enrique, who was on the Barcelona bench the last time the Catalans won the Champions League in 2015, would send his team out to harry the hosts.

"Montjuic's (atmosphere) has to seem like the big nights at Camp Nou," continued Xavi.

"Luis Enrique will not hold back, he will come here to press -- we have to show a lot of personality to reach the semi-finals."

Xavi, who announced in January he was leaving at the end of the season, has led a resurgent Barcelona on a 12-game unbeaten run since.

"Me and my players, everyone has been liberated (by my decision)," said the coach. "Everyone has felt more of a sense of belonging towards the club, and I think it has gone phenomenally."

Barcelona midfielder Pedri agreed that his team would have to play to win, and not try only to hold on to their one-goal headstart.

"We have this slender lead but we have to go out there as if we didn't have that advantage," said Pedri.

The Canary Islander returned from injury to brilliantly set up one of Raphinha's goals in Paris.

The Spain international has not been able to find consistent fitness over the past two seasons amid various injury problems.

"When you're back from injury you feel the tiredness, but I'm strong and have a lot of desire," continued Pedri.

"I've always said I prefer to play 80 minutes at 100 percent and when I can't go on, ask to be subbed for someone else."

African players in Europe: Salah foiled as Liverpool shocked

Paris (AFP): Mohamed Salah had a goal-bound shot in added time blocked as Liverpool suffered a shock 1-0 home defeat by Crystal Palace at the weekend that severely dented their Premier League title hopes.

The Reds lie third, behind Arsenal on goal difference and two points below leaders Manchester City, and four of their last six matches are away from Anfield, including a derby at Everton.

Nigerian Victor Boniface converted a penalty to put Bayer Leverkusen on course for a 5-0 win over Werder Bremen, and a first Bundesliga title in their 120-year history.

Here, AFP Sport highlights African headline-makers in the major European leagues:

ENGLAND

MOHAMED SALAH (Liverpool) The Egypt captain endured a frustrating match along with his teammates as the Reds' title hopes were dealt a huge blow. He had one last chance to rescue a point at Anfield in stoppage time, but his shot was brilliantly blocked by Tyrick Mitchell.

FRANK ONYEKA (Brentford) The Nigeria midfielder sealed a 2-0 victory over relegation-threatened

Sheffield United by scoring the second goal in stoppage time, just two minutes after coming off the bench. He slid the ball past goalkeeper Ivo Grbic to secure Brentford's first win in 10 league games.

ALEX IWOB (Fulham)

The 27-year-old was a central figure as the Cottagers won 2-0 at London rivals West Ham, with the Nigeria midfielder helping set up two goals for Andreas Pereira. It was from Iwobi's cross that Pereira opened the scoring in the ninth minute. Iwobi turned provider again 18 minutes from time when, after bursting on to a ball from Rodrigo Muniz, his accurate pass allowed Brazilian Pereira to turn the ball home.

SPAIN

YOUSSEF EN NESYRI (Sevilla) Morocco international En-Nesyri escaped his markers and placed a header past Las Palmas goalkeeper Aaron Escandell to send his team ahead by a single goal just before half-time. The striker's contribution helped Sevilla rise to 13th as they secured a 2-0 victory. It was En-Nesyri's sixth goal in nine games.

GERMANY

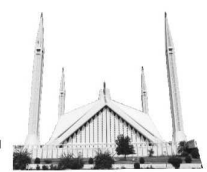
VICTOR BONIFACE (Bayer Leverkusen)

On his first start in the league in 2024 after an injury, Boniface opened the scoring with a first-half penalty to put Leverkusen on track for a 5-0 home win over Werder Bremen and a first Bundesliga title. Boniface stepped up to the spot and coolly dispatched the ball to the right of Michael Zetterer.

SERHOU GUIRASSY (Stuttgart) Another game, another goal for Stuttgart and Guinea striker Guirassy, who opened the scoring in a 3-0 win over Eintracht Frankfurt, which kept his third-placed side on course for Champions League football next season. His 25 goals in 23 matches is the most in a league campaign by a Stuttgart player.

FRANCE

STEVE MOUNIE (Brest) Benin international and former Premier League forward Mounie scored the first Brest goal in a Ligue 1 thriller they lost 4-3 at Lyon. Second-placed Brest trailed 1-0, then scored three times in seven minutes before conceding three goals, with the winner coming from a penalty 16 minutes into added time.



In brief

IRSA releases 152,300 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 152,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 197,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1418.22 feet and was 20.22 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 51,200 cusecs and 15,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1108.20 feet, which was 58.20 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 34,100 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 122,800, 38,100, 35,100 and 7,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 98,500 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 8,900 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

Police conducted search operation

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have conducted a search operation in Naseerabad and adjoining areas here on Monday. According to police spokesman, Police carried out search operation in Kashmir Line whereas local police, lady police, elite force and other law enforcement agencies participated in the operation. During the search operation, 13 houses were searched, collected date of 21 tenants, 15 shops and a total of 185 people were questioned. The spokesman said search operations to nab criminals and proclaimed offenders were regularly being conducted under National Action Plan in different areas of the district particularly to ensure law and order.

SCO countries art exhibition

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Good Neighborhood, Friendship and Cooperation Commission of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), together with the Central Academy of Fine Arts and the SCO Secretariat is organizing the SCO Countries Art Exhibition. Pakistani Children and Young Artists are invited to submit their paintings and artworks, said a press release issued here on Monday. Themed with "The SCO Family in My Eyes", the artworks are supposed to embody the "Shanghai Spirit", telling the fantastic SCO story from the perspective of civilization mutual learning, green development and scientific and technological innovation to embrace a better future of SCO. Pakistani Children aged between 5 to 16 years old and Children from SCO countries are invited to participate in the event. The event is open and deadline for submissions is till June 1, 2024. For relevant detailed information on the event regarding regulations for art work submission, contact details, and other information, please follow the Facebook page of China Cultural Center in Pakistan, facebook account of the Cultural Office of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan as well as the X(former Twitter) account of Cultural Counsellor and Director of China Cultural Center in Pakistan.



RAWALPINDI: Two students on the way back home on bicycles during rain that experienced the Twin Cities.

Capital embraces normalcy after natives return

ISLAMABAD (APP): The capital city has embraced normalcy, with the majority of natives returning after celebrating the religious festival of Eid-ul-Fitr in their inbred towns with relatives to join their daily engagements. After celebrations of Eid-ul-Fitr, following the conclusion of the holy month of Ramzan, the natives as well as the locals are now transitioning back to their routines, as significant attendance was observed in the public and private offices and educational institutions.

Although many of the employees and students have resumed their official and academic engagements, respectively, many still couldn't join their daily activities due to tiredness after traveling back from their inbred towns. The majority of the population of Islamabad, comprised of people belonging to different parts of the country who are settled here for job, education, or business purposes, prefers to celebrate the festivals of Eid with their relatives in their home towns.

The three Eid holidays from Wednesday to Friday announced by the government compelled the officials to take leave of Monday and Tuesday to

club weekends back and forth with Eid holidays to spend more time with their families. Kamran Khan, a resident of G-8/1, said, "Most of the natives prefer to celebrate the religious festival of Eid-ul-Fitr in their home towns. Now, the hustle and bustle of the city is reviving after Eid, with its residents coming back from their native towns."

"I managed to get leave of Monday and Tuesday prior to Eid holidays and left for my hometown on Friday, enjoying around ten days with my parents, making this Eid memorable as I would get an opportunity to visit them on Eid," he said while talking to APP.

Muhammad Yar, who is settled in Islamabad due to a government job and only visits his native town occasionally, said, "It is important to bring children to our home town to spend maximum time with all family members to have a strong bond." "I wish my children to remain connected with our roots, native language, traditions, and culture so that they can adopt those deep-rooted values that are essential to becoming good humans," he said.

The federal capital wears a deserted look during the Eid festivals as most of the

natives move to their home towns to celebrate such festive occasions with their loved ones, while most of the markets and restaurants also remain closed.

The educational institutions in the city have also opened after Eid vacations, and students, after enjoying detailed visits to their home towns, are ready to focus on their academic routine along with sharing details of their Eid celebrations and participating in Eid Milan parties.

"I was excited on the first day of school today after vacations as me and my friends shared stories of our Eid celebrations and had great fun," Sarfaraz, a student in Grade III, said.

"After enjoying vacations, I will be more enthusiastic about my studies with a fresh mind," he said. Contrary to the previous traditions, a number of the food outlets and shopping malls remained open during the Eid days, and the majority visited these due to the rainy weather outside. The public transport plying between the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi was seen as very limited during the Eid holidays, but now the hustle and bustle of the cities has been restored with the culmination of the holidays.

47 premises sealed for violating dengue SOPs

RAWALPINDI (APP): District Health Authority (DHA) had sealed 47 premises and lodged 47 FIRs on violations of anti-dengue SOPs from January 1 to date, said District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control Dr Sajjad Mehmood here Monday. Giving details of the penalty actions, the health officer said that the district administration, in collaboration with allied departments had issued tickets to 112 and a fine of Rs 199,000 was imposed on violations of dengue SOPs in 2024.

Dr Sajjad informed that around four confirmed cases had been reported in the district this year, while the number was two in 2022, and 2023 during the period. The health officer further stated that during indoor vector surveillance, the teams checked 1,177,167 houses and larvae were detected at 2,254 sites while during outdoor surveillance larvae were found at 557 spots while inspecting 305,512 places.

He said the present spell of rains has increased the threat of dengue larvae, which needed to be tackled on urgent basis as Met office has forecast more rain in the next days. Dr Sajjad called upon the residents to keep an eye on junkyards, schools and under construction buildings which lead to spread of dengue larvae and leave no place wet or with stagnant water.

Man arrested for displaying arms on social media

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested a man for displaying arms on social media in the jurisdiction of Jatali police station here on Monday.

According to police spokesman, the arrest of suspect identified as Naqash, came after concerns were raised about the dissemination of weapon-related content, causing fear and panic among the public.

SP Saddam Muhammad Nabil Khokhar said the accused will face strict action adding that this is clear message that those who use social media platforms to spread fear and terror will be held accountable. The recovery of a Kalashnikov and bullets underscores the seriousness of the offense, he concluded.

PNCA to organize paper cutting art exhibition on April 22

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) would organize paper cutting exhibition titled "The Guiding Light" on April 22 at Gallery No 2.

The artwork of famous artist Tufiq Ahmad would be displayed at the exhibition. "One honor that I am particularly proud of is that I am the only paper cutting artist in the world that focuses on Islamic stories," said Tufiq Ahmed told APP. The art of paper cutting involves the artist cutting a whole painting from a single piece of paper resulting in a painstakingly intricate and fragile piece of art. "For the past 12 years, I have created hundreds of art pieces, exhibited in galleries around the world, and won national and international awards", he added.

Pakistan poised for economic growth with strong support from Saudi Arabia: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Monday said that Pakistan was poised to make economic growth with the strong support of the brotherly country of Saudi Arabia.

He attributed the country's positive economic trajectory to the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, particularly in fostering friendly relations with Islamic nations to bolster investment and business opportunities in Pakistan. Talking to the media, Ashrafi said a high-level delegation led by Saudi Foreign Minister was expected to arrive in Pakistan on Monday evening, marking a significant milestone in bilateral ties, adding the visit would underscore the country's appeal as an investment destination among the Muslim states.

The PUC chairman highlighted that both the prime minister and army chief had effectively garnered support and commitments from key stakeholders, including the Saudi leadership and prominent businessmen. He said concerted efforts made during the last two months to strengthen Pak-Saudi relations, culminated in successful meetings of Pakistan's leadership

with top Saudi officials, including Defence Minister Khalid bin Salman and Muslim World League Secretary-General Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa.

Ashrafi said the visit of Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan, accompanied by representatives from vital ministries and business sectors, would reaffirm the growing partnership and commitment to mutual prosperity.

He expressed optimism about Pakistan's future, foreseeing an end to economic hardships and a brighter outlook for its citizens. He said all the credit in that regard went to setting up of the Special Investment Facilitation Council under the vision of General Asim Munir and the government's dedication under Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's leadership in facilitating investments from friendly nations.

All such initiatives were poised to drive economic growth and alleviate the financial burdens faced by the Pakistani people, he added. Ashrafi expressed the hope that with deepening collaborations and partnerships with the Muslim countries would help Pakistan overcome its economic challenges, ushering in an era of sustained growth and development.

CDA establishes helpline to address complains of water accumulation due to rain

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) has established a helpline to address complaints of water accumulation due to heavy rain in the federal capital promptly, aiming to alleviate any inconvenience faced by citizens.

This initiative came about under the direction of Chairman CDA, Capt @ Anwar ul Haq. The teams from the Capital Development Authority (CDA), MCI, and ICT were actively involved during heavy rainfall in Islamabad.

They responded promptly to complaints of standing water in various areas and ensured the clearance of water accumulated on highways.

Furthermore, the special measures were undertaken on the highways, as per the CDA administration's directives, to miti-

gate the impact of heavy rains on traffic flow and prevent issues such as traffic congestion.

The joint teams from Capital Development Authority (CDA), MCI, and ICT were mobilized across CDA's sectorial and non-sectorial areas, including housing societies and other low-lying regions.

The teams provided assistance, including the use of dewatering pumps, to drain water from low-lying areas, including residential properties.

It's worth noting that in light of the rainy conditions, the holidays of relevant staff have been canceled.

Additionally, the duties have been assigned to staff members at various intervals, and stringent monitoring of low-lying areas is being upheld.

IESCO issues power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued a power suspension programme for Tuesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Islamabad Circle, Carriage Factory Feeder, Rawalpindi City Circle, Morgah Feeder, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Fuji Foundation, Mohra Nagyal, Mehboob Shaheed, AOWHS, Wilayat Complex, X Lyr Colony, Pindi Board, Park View, Major Riaz, Jhawara, Dharmyal, Gulshan Saeed, Lalkari, Cantt, UC Lakhana, Shah Jeevan, Quid-e-Azam Colony, Qasim Base Feeders, from 08:00 AM to 05:00 PM, GSO Circle, Tatta Pani, Sehans, City-II, Fatehpur, Cheruhi, City-I, Nar, Khoi Ratta feeders and surrounding areas.

ICT admin tightened surveillance to control fare hikes by transporters

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the commuters are coming back to the Federal Capital from different cities of the country, the district administration has ramped up monitoring efforts across various bus stands in the city to deter any attempts at exploiting passengers during this busy period.

According to the Spokesman of ICT, Dr Abdullah Tabassum, all Assistant Commissioners were present at Faizabad, 26 Number, Karachi Company and other bus stands and actively monitored the transportation process to curb the fare hikes. In a recent operation, Assistant Commissioner Uzair Ali Khan wielded swift action, imposing a hefty fine of Rs 5,000 on a vehicle found overcharging at Karachi Company Bus Stand. This decisive move underscored the administration's commitment to ensuring fair pricing for commuters, Dr Abdullah said.

At the Faizabad bus terminal, Assistant

Commissioner Farwah Batool spearheaded an inspection, uncovering a breach of regulations. An individual was apprehended for violating the fixed fares by the government. Such proactive measures demonstrate a zero-tolerance stance against violations, the spokesperson said.

He said that on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, the constant presence of assistant commissioners and magistrates at all bus stands. This hands-on approach aimed to deter any attempts at exploiting passengers during this busy period.

Furthermore, the administration prioritized the dignified return journeys of foreigners, emphasizing the importance of upholding standards of hospitality and fairness. Additionally, citizens were urged not to exceed the fixed fare by even a single rupee, underscoring the administration's commitment to protecting consumer rights.

NUST stands out in QS World University Rankings by Subject 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Building upon its global standing as a quality higher education institution, the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) has ascended 16 positions in the discipline of Engineering and Technology to stand at #144 in the world, retaining the number one position in the discipline in Pakistan for the eighth consecutive year, as per Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by Subject 2024.

As per the latest rankings, NUST proudly stands among the top 200 world universities in the subjects of Computer Science, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, and Civil and

Structural Engineering.

Meanwhile, the university is positioned among the top 300 world universities in the subjects of Mechanical, Aeronautical, Manufacturing Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Material Science, and Mathematics. NUST has also made its first-ever appearance in the subjects of Accounting and Finance, Economics and Econometrics, and Medicine. A noteworthy aspect is the university's consistent improvement in the QS World University Rankings by Subject. NUST's recognition in 15 out of 55 subjects this year surpasses its previous year's standing, where it was ranked in 12 out of 54 subjects.

AIOU extends admissions

ISLAMABAD (APP): Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has extended the date of admissions for the second phase of Semester Spring 2024 till April 25 without late fee. Director Admissions, while giving a briefing to the Vice Chancellor on the ongoing admissions, said that due to the holidays of Eid-ul-Fitr, the students have requested to extend the date. Vice-Chancellor, said that the AIOU is taking all the necessary measures to facilitate the students. Earlier, the last date for admission was April 15. Now students can take admission in Associate Degree in Arts (BA), Associate Degree in Commerce (BCom), BBA, B.Ed, BS, Post Graduate Diplomas and Certificate courses till April 25 without late fee charges.

Chamber of commerce opens

HERAT (Ariana News): The Ministry of Interior said the governor of Herat province Islam Jar met with Alim Khan Yasin Gildaye, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Afghanistan, to discuss various issues around trade. According to the ministry, the two sides discussed the expansion of trade facilities, increasing the volume of trade exchanges between traders of the two countries, reducing customs tariffs, solving the challenges of traders and issuing visas to them.

Kabir meets Anas Haqani

KABUL (BNA): The Deputy PM for Political Affairs met with Anas Haqani, a member of the political commission of the Islamic Emirate, along with several other dignitaries. The ARG statement highlighted a significant meeting where Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the Deputy PM for Political Affairs, convened with Anas Haqani, a prominent member of the political commission of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, alongside several other distinguished figures.

Karzai, Abdullah defend legitimacy of Iran’s attack on Israel



KABUKL (TOLONews): Former President Hamid Karzai and the former chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, Abdullah Abdullah, described Tehran's action against Israel as a legitimate exercise of Iran's right to defend its national sovereignty. Former President Hamid Karzai said: "Global peace has recently been severely threatened by the increase in wars, crises, and violations of international laws and principles. Israel's attack on the Iranian consulate in Damascus was a recent instance, which was met with a legitimate self-

defense response from the Islamic Republic of Iran." Abdullah Abdullah, the former chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, referring to the presence of Afghan migrants in Iran, said that escalating tensions between Tehran and Jerusalem directly affect the situation in Afghanistan. "The Islamic Republic of Iran, with its shared religious, historical, and cultural ties, is our neighbor and currently hosts millions of Afghan citizens. Any action by Israel against Iran and the escalation of tensions has a direct impact on the situation in

Afghanistan and could have unpredictable and dire consequences for the region and global peace and security," he said. These two former officials also criticized the Gaza war and called for a permanent ceasefire in Palestine. Political Analyst Shahzada Masoud told TOLONews: "This was a legitimate right of the Islamic Republic of Iran and it has proven itself in the Islamic world. At the same time, the international community, especially the United States and its allies, should apply pressure on Israel to stop the

injustices occurring in Palestine and Gaza." Najib Rahman Shamal, an analyst, said: "If the tensions and conflicts between the Islamic Republic and Israel continue, it will not only have negative outcomes for Middle Eastern countries but will also impact the expansion of relations, peace, and stability in regional countries including between Iran and Afghanistan." On Sunday night, Iran responded to Israel's attack on its consulate building in Damascus by targeting military sites in Israel with over 300 missiles and drones.

Pakistani police warn Afghan migrants to leave Balochistan in a day



KABUL (Khaama Press): According to a media report, authorities in the Balochistan province have issued a warning for Afghan migrants, indicating that they should voluntarily leave villages in the province by Tuesday. Police stated that Afghan migrants with Afghan citizenship cards and registration cards are subject to this warning, as reported by the Afghanistan international. Afghan migrants said on Monday that police have warned if they don't leave Baluchistan's villages by 8 a.m. local time on Tuesday, April 16th,

they will be forcibly expelled. According to the report, police have warned villages such as Kraz, Nav Bazar, and Pishin in Balochistan to evacuate and return to Afghanistan voluntarily. Earlier, the Pakistani government announced that Afghan migrants with Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC) and Proof of Registration (PoR) cards would not be expelled from Pakistan, but now provincial authorities in Balochistan say even legal migrants will be expelled. Proof of Registration

and Afghan Citizenship Cards are identity documents for Afghan migrants, allowing them to live legally in Pakistan. These cards are valid throughout Pakistan. Since November last year, Pakistani authorities have forcibly deported over 700,000 Afghan migrants from the country, exacerbating the dire humanitarian crisis unfolding in Afghanistan. These migrants now face numerous challenges, including shortages of food, shelter, and employment opportunities. The Afghan migrants deported from Pakistan in recent months

find themselves confronting a multitude of difficulties. With limited access to basic necessities such as food, shelter, and employment opportunities, they struggle to rebuild their lives amidst the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. While the Pakistani government had announced it would soon begin the second phase of expelling Afghan migrants from Pakistan. The current Taliban regime has remained silent on the issue, refraining from making any comments or statements regarding the situation.

Chamtal residents face severe infrastructure, service shortages



KABUKL (TOLONews): Residents of Chamtal district in Balkh expressed concern over lack of access to basic life services. The lack of standard roads, access to health services, clean drinking water, and electricity are among the serious challenges facing the inhabitants of this district. They said that due to the lack of a proper market, they are forced to go to the city of Mazar-e Sharif

to buy anything they need. "The road is very bad; it takes us two hours. We neither have a proper city nor a proper life here, and I myself go to the city to bring goods here for sale," said Najmuddin, a shopkeeper in Chamtal. "We suffer a lot from the lack of a market. We go to the city spending too much to buy very minor needs," said Mohammad Aref, a resident of Chamtal.

"If we had a market, we would definitely get what we need from here and not have to set up a home and come to Mazar-e-Sharif," said Hafizullah, another resident of Chamtal. Chamtal district, located 43 kilometers from the city of Mazar-e Sharif, has been isolated from developmental projects due to conflicts in recent years. Meanwhile, the district governor of Chamtal

assures attention to these challenges. Noorullah Homam, the district governor of Chamtal, said: "We have shared this challenge with all authorities, whether it is the command or intelligence, and we have designed the market plan, but it takes some time." Chamtal district is home to nearly 90 villages and over 200,000 people, most of whom are engaged in agriculture and livestock.

Afghanistan’s coal exports decline by 65pc

KABUL (TOLONews): Afghanistan's coal exports declined by 65 percent last year, says the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Coal worth \$174 million was exported to India, Pakistan, Iran,

Turkey and other countries in the solar year 1402, down from \$497 million in 1401, a spokesman for the ministry said. TOLONews quoted Akhundzada Abdul Salam Javad as saying: "In 1402,

coal valued at \$174 million was exported to Pakistan, Turkey, Iran, and India." Trader Omid Haidari told the private broadcaster: "Since Afghanistan's mines are a good source of revenue ... for our gov-

ernment, we need to meet the demands of foreign countries through trade agreements." Lately, he noted, Afghanistan's exports had dwindled. "We must find alternative markets for our exports," the businessman stressed.



Iran’s exports to Afghanistan reach \$1.8 billion with 13% increase

KABUL (Khaama Press): Iranian media has reported that Iran's non-oil exports to Afghanistan reached \$1.871 billion in the past solar year, indicating a 13.6% increase compared to the previous year. Hossein Roustaei, Iran's commercial attaché in Afghanistan, stated on Sunday, April 14th, that Iran's non-oil exports to Afghanistan in the last solar year 1402 reached \$1.871 billion, showing a 13.6% increase compared to the same period in the previous year. Iran's commercial attaché in Afghanistan stated, "The value of Iran's non-oil exports to

Afghanistan increased by \$224 million in the past twelve months and by 963,000 tons in weight, reaching a total value of \$1.871 billion in the year 1402 and a weight of 3,414 tons, showing a 28% increase in weight compared to the previous year." The Iranian official said that after a four-year decline, Iran's non-oil exports to Afghanistan have shown an upward trend in the past year, with 1,000 new items added to Iran's export items to Afghanistan. Iran's commercial attaché in Afghanistan also said that Afghanistan's

exports to Iran increased by \$13 million last year to \$43 million, indicating a 45% growth in value and a 104% increase in weight. According to Iranian media reports citing the Iranian Trade Development Organization, the increase in the exchange of trade delegations, facilitation at borders, extension of working hours at customs, holding a joint economic commission meeting in Tehran, organizing trade conferences in Kabul, Herat, Tehran, and Mashhad, holding an exclusive exhibition of Iranian export capabilities in Herat, and exchanging over 50 exhibi-

tion delegations, along with the good quality of Iranian export goods, have been among the most important factors in increasing Iran's non-oil exports to Afghanistan. Iranian media, citing the Iranian Customs Administration, wrote that Afghanistan is the seventh destination for Iranian export goods, and according to official statistics from the Iranian Customs, Iran's highest positive trade balance among export target countries was recorded with Afghanistan in the twelve months of the year 1402.



Over 50 people dead in traffic accidents over Eid

KABUL (Ariana News): More than 50 people died in traffic accidents around the country over Eid, officials confirmed Monday. According to officials from the General Directorate of Traffic Police, there were a total of 102 traffic accidents in the country over Eid, which claimed the lives of more than 50 people. In addition, over 180 more were injured. Hasibullah Mukhtar, the head of the traffic police, said 102 traffic accidents happened over the three days of Eid-ul-Fitr, most of which took place in Herat, Ghazni and Paktia provinces. According to Mukhtar, fewer car crashes were recorded this year, compared to the past. He said non-observance of traffic rules, damaged roads and highways, unroadworthy vehicles, use of motorcycles by minors, and reckless driving were the main causes of the accidents.



Iran to free Pakistanis stranded on ship seized by IRGC, says envoy

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Iran on Monday said that they would release Pakistanis, stranded on a ship seized by the Iranian forces, after confirmation of their nationalities and completing legal formalities due to brotherly ties between the two countries. Iranian envoy to Pakistan, Reza Amiri Moghadam, told media that they were waiting for the confirmation of the presence of Pakistani nationals on the ship.

He confirmed that the Iran Embassy has shared the details with higher officials in Tehran. "If there's a Pakistani on the ship, we will free the national after completing legal formalities considering brotherly ties," the diplomat said.

The Foreign Office had taken up the matter with Iranian authorities in Islamabad and shared details with them, sources told the media. The development came after the family of the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the Israel-linked container ship seized by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) asked the government of Pakistan for help.

Family sources told media that there are two Pakistanis who were on the ship seized by the Iranian forces and one of them is Muhammad Adnan Aziz —the COO of the

Portugal-flagged MSC Aries. His family lives in Karachi and Azad Kashmir and some of his relatives live in London who shared their worries with the media.

They confirmed that Aziz, along with another Pakistani, was on the ship seized by Iran's forces. "We approached the Foreign Office seeking help for the safe return of Muhammad Adnan Aziz as soon as possible. The FO has assured us of all help. We understand that the matter has been taken up with the Iranian authorities already." The family members said they were shocked after learning that Iran had seized the ship near the Strait of Hormuz amid rising tensions across the region after a deadly Israeli attack on Iran's consulate in Syria.

They clarified that Aziz had nothing to do with the ownership of the ship or the regional issues. "He was just doing his job as a professional and was seized. We want his release and return," shared the family members. The ship was commandeered by the IRGC, the elite force that lost seven members, including two generals, in the Syria strike.

"The ship has now been guided towards the territorial waters of our country," state-run IRNA reported. The vessel — identified as the Portugal-flagged MSC Aries — had

departed from a port in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) en route to India. It is associated with the London-based Zodiac Maritime, a part of the Zodiac Group run by Israeli billionaire Eyal Ofer and his family.

White House National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said the ship's crew comprised of Indian, Filipino, Pakistani, Russian, and Estonian nationals, and pushed back against the vessel's seizure. Footage from the deck of the vessel showed soldiers rappelling down from a helicopter. The helicopter appeared to be a Soviet-designed Mil Mi-17, which is operated by the naval forces of the IRGC.

Zodiac Maritime said in a statement that MSC, an Italian-Swiss shipping group, was responsible for all vessel activities. MSC confirmed there were 25 crew members on board the ship, adding in a statement that it is "working closely with the relevant authorities to ensure their wellbeing, and safe return of the vessel". The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) had said a vessel was seized by "regional authorities" 50 nautical miles (92km) northeast of the UAE's Fujairah in a watery vital to world trade.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a high level review meeting regarding power sector.

Bushra Bibi moves IHC for medical examination

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Bushra Bibi, wife of incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan, on Monday moved Islamabad High Court (IHC) for a medical examination in Shaukat Khanum hospital.

As per details, the plea was filed in IHC by Shoaib Shaheen on behalf of Bushra Bibi, seeking her medical examination in Shaukat Khanum Hospital. The plea stated that the wife of former prime minister was poisoned in sub-jail Banigala hereby her medical examination should be conducted in Shaukat Khanum Hospital.

On April 6, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) demanded the authorities conduct a medical examination of Bushra Bibi, wife of incarcerated party founder Imran Khan, from Shaukat Khanum Hospital. PTI leader Barrister Gohar Ali Khan — in a statement — said they will only accept the medical reports — issued by a personal physician, demanding to conduct examination from Shaukat Khanum Hospital.

The demand came two days after a medical report — released by the Pakistan Institute of Medical Science (Pims) — found no evidence of any poisonous substance being given to Bushra Bibi at the Bani Gala sub-jail. The medical report was released after four senior doctors performed a medical examination of Imran.

Khan's wife. The report said that Bushra Bibi's appetite was not normal and she was suffering from stomach pain. PTI founder Imran Khan's personal physician, Dr Asim Yousuf, also performed a medical examination of the former first lady and found no evidence of any poisonous substance. It is worth mentioning here that the incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan alleged that his wife was poisoned at the Bani Gala sub-jail. The former prime minister made the startling revelations during a hearing of the £190 million settlement case in Rawalpindi's Adiala jail.

During the hearing, Imran Khan informed the accountability court judge that the former first lady had marks on her skin and tongue after "being poisoned". "The court should pass an order for the medical examination of Bushra Bibi," he said.

ATC bars police from arresting Fawad

F.P. Report

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Monday barred police from arresting ex-Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Fawad Chaudhry in May 9 cases. The orders were passed by the ATC judge after granting interim bail to Fawad Chaudhry in four cases related to May 9 violence until April 20. The court also ordered police to present the record of cases registered against Chaudhry at the next hearing.

Talking to newsmen outside the court, Fawad Chaudhry said he remained in jail for four times and hoped for good in the future. Chaudhry is facing several cases including alleged corruption cases.

On April 6, the former PTI leader was released from Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi. A division bench of the Islamabad High Court comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri granted bail to Fawad Chaudhry on April 1 in a NAB case concerning land in Jhelum.

Drones fired from Iran, Yemen destroyed: US

WASHINGTON: The United States has destroyed dozens of drones and at least six ballistic missiles aimed at Israel from Iran and Yemen, its military has said. US forces hit more than 80 one-way attack drones, including seven UAVs targeted on the ground prior to launch, US Central Command (CENTCOM) said on Monday.

"Iran's continued unprecedented, malign, and reckless behaviour endangers regional stability and the safety of U.S. and coalition forces," CENTCOM said in a post on X "CENTCOM remains postured to support Israel's defense against these dangerous actions by Iran. We will continue to work with all our regional partners to increase regional security." CENTCOM made the announcement after Iran late on Saturday launched its first-ever attack on Israeli territory in retaliation for a suspected Israeli attack on its embassy in Syria.

The attack involving more than 300 drones and missiles caused only modest damage as most were shot down by Israel's Iron Dome missile defence system or the US and its partners. US President Joe Biden earlier praised US forces for their "extraordinary skill" in helping Israel take down "nearly all of the incoming drones and missiles."

Biden described US support for Israel's self-defence as "ironclad" but warned that Washington would not join any retaliatory action taken by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin

Several Israeli troops wounded in Lebanon attack

BEIRUT: Several Israeli soldiers have been wounded in a blast in Lebanon near the Israeli border, according to the Israeli military and the Lebanese armed group Hezbollah, which claimed responsibility for the attack. Iran-backed Hezbollah said on Monday that it had detonated "explosive devices" targeting Israeli soldiers who crossed into Lebanese territory. In a statement, the group said its fighters planted explosive devices in the Tel Ismail area in southern Lebanon, near the border with Israel.

It said its fighters detonated the devices when a patrol of Israeli soldiers crossed into Lebanon and arrived at the area where the devices were planted. The group said the blasts led to "deaths and injuries" although it did not provide any evidence. An Israeli military official told the Reuters news agency that four Israeli troops were wounded in the overnight blast, which occurred hundreds of metres inside Lebanese territory.

"We confirm that the incident occurred inside Lebanon," an Israeli army spokesperson told the Agence France-Presse news agency. It is the first time Hezbollah has claimed such an attack in more than six months of near daily cross-border fire between the group and Israel since the start of Israel's war on Gaza. Reporting from Naqoura in southern Lebanon, Al Jazeera's Ali Hashem said the attack was "an indication that the situation here is very sensitive". "This is not the first time that a bomb or a roadside bomb is being detonated, ... but this time [the blast] was really strong," he said. The incident comes amid soaring tensions after Iran launched missile and drone attacks against Israel on Saturday in retaliation for a deadly strike on Tehran's consulate in Damascus early this month. The violence flaring between Israel and Hezbollah has largely been contained to the border area. — Aljazeera

Netanyahu's government against Tehran. US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin said US forces "remain postured to protect US troops and partners in the region, provide further support for Israel's defence, and enhance regional stability." The threat of all-out war between Israel and Iran has put the region on tenterhooks, prompting calls for restraint from Middle Eastern neighbours and major powers.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Sunday warned that the Middle East was on "the brink". "The people of the region are confronting a real danger of a devastating full-scale conflict. Now is the time to defuse and de-escalate," Guterres told a UN Security Council meeting convened in response to the Iranian attack. — Aljazeera

Ex-US president Trump faces criminal trial

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Donald Trump became the first former US president to stand trial in a criminal case on Monday when he appeared in a Manhattan court to face charges stemming from a hush-money payment to an adult star that could complicate his bid to win back the White House.

Wearing his signature blue suit and red tie, Trump, 77, sat expressionless at the defence table with his attorneys while photographers snapped his picture. Justice Juan Merchan, who is overseeing the trial, entered about half an hour later.

Trump is required to attend the trial, which is expected to last through May. The selection of 12 jurors and six alternates from a pool of Manhattan residents is expected to take about a week, followed by witness testimony.

Within minutes, Merchan denied Trump's second bid to have the judge recuse himself from the case, on the basis that his daughter's work for a political consulting firm with Democratic clients poses a conflict of interest.

New York state prosecutors accuse the former president of falsifying records to cover up a \$130,000 payment in the waning days of the 2016 presidential campaign to buy the silence of adult film star Stormy Daniels about a 2006 sexual encounter she has said they had. Trump has denied any such relationship.

He pleaded not guilty to 34 counts of falsification of business records in the case

brought by Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg, a Democrat, in New York state court last year.

Police stood guard in front of the courthouse amid a maze of barricades, and helicopters shadowed the motorcade of black SUVs that ferried Trump, the Republican candidate in the 2024 White House race, from his Trump Tower apartment. A handful of protesters, gathered in the plaza across the street, carried hand-painted signs reading "loser" and "convict Trump already".

Though this case is regarded as the least consequential of the four criminal prosecutions he faces, some legal experts say it is the only one guaranteed to go to trial before the November 5 election.

regarding problems faced by the people of the area and called for their resolution. Governor Haji Ghulam Ali said that the development of all backward districts including merged districts is the joint responsibility of all stakeholders and they would have to play their due role in this regard.

The Governor assured the delegation that he would take up the matter relating to problems in the tribal districts with the concerned authorities to ensure the availability of medical staff in hospitals and teachers in schools.

However, he also told the delegation to raise complaints of their respective areas in written with the concerned departments, so their problems could be resolved in short

period of time. Haji Ghulam Ali said that all elected representatives including councilors, Members of National and Provincial Assembly are responsible to monitor health and education and local problems and bring the issue of the absent doctors and students in the notice of their respective departments.

Meanwhile, a representative delegation from district Malakand headed by Sajid Khan, Farhan and Maulana Islam also called on the Governor at the Governor's House and informed the Governor about the problems and difficulties faced by the people of the area. The Governor assured the delegation of his full cooperation to solve the problems.

Woman tortured by cop in train found dead

F.P. Report

BAHAWALPUR: The woman, who was subjected to torture by policeman Mir Hasan on a moving train, was found dead near Chani Goth Railway Station in Bahawalpur, police said Monday.

The incident came to light after a video of the policeman went viral on social media, in which he could be seen holding the woman by her hair and hitting her multiple times while other passengers watched silently. Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Railways Abdullah Sheikh had said that the incident took place on April 7 on Karachi to Lala Musa-bound Millat Express.

The woman, who belonged to Jaranwala, Faisalabad, was identified as Maryam Bibi. The victim's brother, Afzal, said that his sister used to work at a beauty parlour in Karachi and she was coming to Jaranwala to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr. Afzal said that Maryam left Karachi on April 7 by Millat Express. He said that the Bahawalpur police informed his family of Maryam's death, saying she fell from train.

"We buried her on April 9 in the village thinking it was a train accident. When the video went viral, the truth behind the incident and the violence on my sister came to the fore," he added. Afzal alleged that the policeman tortured and killed his sister and threw her body on a railway track, adding that they requested the police to register a case but no action was taken.

Meanwhile, the woman's nephew who was travelling with her, said that his aunt was reciting loudly to which the policeman objected and started torturing her. "The policeman took our aunt with him and dropped us at the next station," said the nephew. Meanwhile, police said that Maryam Bibi's post-mortem was conducted at Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Ahmedpur and they are waiting for the report.

Delhi court extends detention of Opp leader

NEW DELHI (Reuters): A Delhi court extended on Monday the detention of Indian opposition leader Arvind Kejriwal in a graft case until April 23, legal news website Live Law reported, a setback to the opposition which needs him to campaign in general elections that begin this week.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), India's financial crime-fighting agency, arrested Kejriwal, the chief minister of Delhi, in a corruption case related to the city's liquor policy and he had been remanded to custody until April 15. Kejriwal has challenged his arrest saying it is unlawful and in a separate hearing on Monday, the supreme court of India asked the ED to respond to the challenge in the week of April 29, after which it will hear the case.

MQM-P warns of taking to streets if crimes not stopped

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has warned of taking to the streets if the government fails to curb the rampant scourge of street crimes in Karachi.

"We would raise our voice [on the issue] in the Sindh Assembly and in the National Assembly [...] and would protest on the streets if our concerns are not addressed," MQM-P's Ali Khurshidi said while addressing a press conference in Karachi. His remarks come as Karachi has witnessed a significant surge in street crimes in recent months which have resulted in dozens of injuries and fatalities.

Since January 1, at least 59 people have lost their lives while 200 were injured due to resisting robbery this year so far in the metropolis. According to media, as many as 6,780 crimes were committed in Karachi in the holy month of Ramadan alone in which 20 vehicles were snatched and more than 130 others stolen.

Moreover, 830 motorcycles were also snatched with 4,200 others stolen in the same month. Meanwhile, 19 people lost their lives in Ramadan while 55 were injured. The two parties, both of whom are key allies of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) government in the Centre, have been engaged in a verbal spat in recent weeks over the issue of street crimes in the city.

Last month, Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hasan Lanjar termed crime a "part of a daily life" saying that the issue of the law-and-order situation in Karachi was being "exaggerated". The remarks drew ire from various sections of society and political parties, most notably the MQM-P which has even called for the country's financial hub to be handed over to the Pakistan Army for three months.

Flanked by Nasreen Jalil and others, Khurshidi lamented police's failure saying that no street in Karachi was safe. Claiming that more than 1,000 mobile phones are snatched

daily in Karachi, the member of the Sindh Assembly called out the Pakistan Peoples Party-led provincial government for blaming the law-and-order situation on the caretaker government despite its 15-year rule in Sindh.

"Mobile phones worth more than Rs10 billion are snatched every year [...] If crimes are not stopped, then we [are forced to] question whether the criminals are being supported by the police. "We have held two press conferences so that the government machinery may come into action [...] This is not a political issue, it is about people's lives," the MQM-P leader said.

Expressing her concerns over the city's deteriorating law-and-order situation, Jalil said that the metropolis has been "stormed" by criminals. "We are tired of carrying dead bodies. It is not in our power to stop the anger of the people," she said. "The government should announce compensation for those who have been killed in street crime-related incidents," she added.



ISLAMABAD: Ms Aseefa Bhutto Zardari addressing National Assembly session after taking oath as MNA.

Baisakhi festival ends

F.P. Report

HASSANBDAL: The three-day vibrant and joyous celebrations of Baisakhi, the religious festival of Sikhs, have concluded in Hasan Abdal. Over the course of three days, approximately 35,000 pilgrims from various corners of the globe, including about 2,700 Sikh yatrees from India, converged at Gurdwara Panja Sahib to partake in sacred rituals and festivities.

The Sikh pilgrims engaged in prayers and communal meals (langar) at Gurdwara Panja Sahib. They also performed the ashtan ritual, in which several pilgrims take a dip in the sacred water pool within the gurdwara complex. A palanquin procession, symbolizing the rich cultural heritage of the Sikh community, was also part of the spiritual fervour of the occasion.

Expressing satisfaction with the arrangements made

by the government, the yatrees lauded the hospitality and warmth extended to them during their visit. One of them remarked, "We are having a lot of fun at the Baisakhi festival. We feel very good to be here." Another expressed a desire for reciprocal visits, stating, "It is desired that the people of Pakistan also come to India to visit their religious places and continue to have such love."

In a gesture of goodwill and solidarity, Federal Defence Minister Khawaja Asif graced the main event of Baisakhi festival as a special guest. Addressing the gathering, he emphasized the significance of hosting foreign pilgrims and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to ensuring the rights and protection of minorities. He stated, "It is a matter of pride for us that we are hosting more than 35,000 foreign pilgrims. We are trying to provide maximum protec-

tion and facilities to Sikhs." Highlighting Pakistan's reputation as a peaceful and inclusive nation, Asif cited the presence of Sikh pilgrims from India as a testament to the country's commitment to religious freedom.

He affirmed, "Pakistan is a peaceful country. And the rights of minorities are guaranteed. A clear example of which is this. That Sikh pilgrims came from all over the world, including India. They performed their religious rituals with complete freedom in Pakistan." As the three-day Baisakhi festival concluded, arrangements were made for the departure of around 2,700 Indian Sikh pilgrims from Hasan Abdal to Lahore via special trains. The event served as a poignant reminder of the bonds of faith and fraternity that transcend borders, uniting devotees in a shared celebration of spirituality and cultural heritage.