

Two children killed
F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: At least two children were killed when a mini loader ran over them during reversing in Kargha area of Maidan tehsil here on Monday. Police said, the driver of the mini loader after unloading cement blocks was reversing the vehicle when two children standing behind the vehicle were crushed to death.

Quake shakes Balochistan
F.P. Report

KHUZDAR: An earthquake of magnitude 4.3 jolted Balochistan's Khuzdar district, causing panic among the people in the region. According to the seismological center, the depth of the earthquake was 27 kilometers and the epicenter was near Khuzdar district. People came out of their houses in fear by reciting Kalma-e-Tayyaba.

The Frontier Post

PM, Iran's President condemn Israel's indiscriminate use of force in Gaza; reiterate call for immediate ceasefire; Islamabad, Tehran for promoting bilateral trade ties, business activities at border areas; agree on joint efforts to eradicate terrorism, promote cooperation in diverse fields; sign eight accords to strengthen bilateral cooperation in multiple sectors

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran on Monday agreed to enhance bilateral trade ties and promote business activities at the border areas to ensure development and prosperity of the people of two countries. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, in a press talk along with President of Iran Dr Ebrahim Raisi after witnessing the signing of bilateral agreements and MoUs at the PM House, said under the leadership of the Iranian President, the two countries could bring development and prosperity in their respective sides by turning their borders into hub of business activities.

He said during their meeting, the two sides held detailed discussions on various fields of mutual interests including economy, trade, investment, diplomacy, security and culture. The Iranian President, who arrived here on Monday on three-day official visit to Pakistan along with a high-powered delegation, said that the trade volume between the two brotherly countries was not below the existing potential and they wanted to increase the volume to US \$10 billion annually. He stressed that steps were needed to enhance border markets to give spur to the business and trade activities at the border areas, besides enhancing security.

He said that the two countries shared common affinities and no one could separate them, adding the two sides in their meetings, decided to further promote the bilateral ties between the two countries in trade and economic sectors. President Dr Raisi said that there were a number of common issues including fight

against terrorism, efforts to curb organized crimes and smuggling, in which the two sides could enhance their cooperation. The president stressed that it was significant to further broaden the bilateral ties for the benefits of the two countries, besides continuity of cooperation at the highest level.

He said that the historic and durable ties between Iran and Pakistan provided them opportunity to fully utilize them for the welfare and prosperity of the two nations. President Raisi said that Iran had achieved immense progress in science and technology and the country was ready to share their experiences and knowledge. President of Iran Dr Ebrahim Raisi, conveying best regards from the people and the Supreme Leader of Iran to the people of Pakistan, said they had always been supporting the oppressed people of various areas of the world, specially the people of Gaza and had always been defending Islam and raising their voice for the freedom of Quds Al-Sharif.

He believed that today people in different parts of the world were in pain due to current situation in Palestine. At the same time, he said the international organization such as United Nations and UN Security Council who claimed to support human rights, could not perform their core responsibility. President Raisi emphasized that the people belonging to all religions across the world including that of Iran and Pakistan, were calling for an end to the oppression and barbarism against the people of Palestine. The Iranian President believed that the position adopted by the people around the world and by the Palestinian resistance would surely be real-



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif shaking hands with Iranian President Dr. Eseyed Ebrahim Raisi prior to a meeting.

Pakistan relations across various sectors, underscoring the significance of fostering stronger ties between the two nations.

Key areas of discussion included strategies to augment trade volumes and bolster communication networks, reflecting a shared commitment to advancing economic collaboration. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif highlighted the historical significance of President Raisi's visit, marking it as the first head of state visit to Pakistan following the February 2024 general elections, a gesture warmly embraced by the Pakistani nation.

President Raisi, upon his arrival at the PM House, was accorded a guard of honor, showcasing the esteemed welcome extended by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and his delegation. President Raisi's three-day official visit, accompanied by a delegation comprising ministers and businessmen, underscores the depth of bilateral engagement between the two countries. During his stay, President Raisi is scheduled to hold meetings with the President, Prime Minister, Chairman of Senate, Speaker of National Assembly, as well as provincial leadership in Lahore and Karachi, emphasizing the comprehensive nature of his engagement with

Pakistan. The agenda for the visit encompasses discussions on regional and global developments, with a particular focus on elevating Pakistan-Iran ties across multiple fronts, including trade, connectivity, energy, agriculture, and fostering people-to-people contacts.

Pakistan and Iran signed a total of eight accords on varying subjects to enhance cooperation in the different fields including trade, science technology, agriculture, health, culture, and judicial matters. The documents were signed between the two countries on the occasion of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's three-day official visit to Pakistan. Prime Minister

Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President Raisi witnessed the ceremony as the representatives from both sides, signed the documents.

The two countries signed an MoU on the Establishment of the Rimdan-Gabdt Joint Free/Special Zone. The memorandum was inked by Secretary Board of Investment Ambreen Iftikhar and Iranian Advisor to President and Secretary of the Supreme Council of Free Trade Industrial and Special Economic Zones Hojjatollah Abdolmaleki. The MoU on Mutual Recognition of the Standard of Iran and Pakistan, was signed by Minister of Science and Technology Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and Iranian Minister of Road and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrash.

An MoU on Cooperation between the Ministry of Cooperative Labour and Social Welfare of Iran and the Ministry of Overseas Pakistani and Human Resources Development of Pakistan was also signed by Minister of Overseas Pakistani Chaudhry Salik Hussain and Iranian Minister of Road and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrash. Minister of Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar and Iranian Minister of Justice Amin Hossein Rahimi inked an agreement on Judicial Assistance in Civil Matters between Iran and Pakistan. Pakistan and Iran also signed an Agreement of Cooperation on Animal Hygiene and Health. The document was signed by Minister of National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain and Iranian Minister of Agriculture Jihad Mohammad Ali Nikhakh.

(Continued on Back Page)

KP CM terms by-polls ‘repetition’ of Feb 8

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur denounced what he termed as the worst rigging in history, repeating the February 8 electoral irregularities in recent by-elections held on April 21.

During a press conference, Chief Minister Gandapur talked about the 'disputed' mandate. He highlighted discrepancies in voting patterns. In certain constituencies of Punjab, candidates received

more votes than in the general elections, raising suspicions of foul play.

He also asserted transparency in KP's electoral process. He welcomed a federal government inquiry into electricity theft but cautioned against unjust accusations against citizens. Regarding financial disparities, Chief Minister Gandapur emphasized Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's entitlement to over Rs 1500 billion owed by the federal government.

Expressing solidarity with his party, he vowed to

stage peaceful protests across provinces over 'fake' cases. Moreover, he demanded the return of reserved seats allegedly assigned to another party by the Chief Election Commissioner.

CM Gandapur urged the federal government to address rising terrorism incidents and provide requested police reinforcements. He pledged to rectify false FIRs filed on May 9. Gandapur concluded by highlighting the sacrifices of the armed forces in the fight against terrorism.

Three PHC judges take oath

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Ishfaq Ibrahim administered oath from three judges including Justice Fazal Subhan, Justice Shahid Khan and Justice Dr. Khursheed Iqbal who were recently permanent by President of Pakistan, on Monday.

According to details, the oath-taking ceremony held at Court Room No. 1 of the Peshawar High Court which was attended by judges, Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shah Faisal Atman Khel, Additional Attorney General Sana Ullah, and legal fraternity.

Their appointment was approved by the President of Pakistan which has increased the total number of judges in the Peshawar High Court to 14. Initially, the three judges were appointed as Additional (ad-hoc) judges, but later the Judicial Commission of Pakistan recommended their confirmation as permanent judges. It is worthy to mention that currently, there are six vacancies for judges in the Peshawar High Court, as only 14 judges are working against the approved strength of 20 positions.

Islamabad IGP assumes office

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: New Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi on Monday took charge of his office, on the 22nd day of his appointment.

The new IG Islamabad visited the Martyrs Memorial and recited Fatiha before assuming the charge of his post. Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi is an officer in grade 20 of the Police Service of Pakistan. His appointment comes after former IGP Police Akbar Nasir Khan stepped down from his position on March 30. Before his new role, Rizvi served as the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Operations in Lahore.

Pakistan on track to secure new loan from IMF

WASHINGTON: With macroeconomic factors shifting in Pakistan's favour, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb has said that Islamabad is on track to secure a new loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) — the Washington-based lender.

In an interview with The National, the finance czar said: "The fund has been very receptive in terms of agreeing to consider a larger, longer programme." Pakistan has made a formal request to the IMF for another bailout package in the range of \$6 to \$8 billion under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with the possibility of augmentation through climate financing.

However, the exact size and time-frame will only be determined after evolving consensus on the major contours of the next programme in May 2024. Aurangzeb told the Abu

Dhabi-based publication that the macroeconomic factors are shifting in its favour as it works to boost its lagging economy.

The rupee has finally stabilised, he said, adding that the inflation is on track to drop to single-digit levels by the end of next year. He further said that the cash-strapped nation would need at least three years of support to carry out a reform agenda across several sectors including taxation and energy. Last week, the global lender's Middle East and Central Asia director said the IMF was ready to support Pakistan and the package of reforms is now more important than the size of the new programme.

"I think what is important at this stage is to accelerate the reforms, double down on the structure of reforms in order to provide Pakistan with its full potential of growth," Jihad Azour

By-polls: PML-N claims victory on most seats

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) workers and supporters celebrated after the party emerged victorious on most National and provincial assembly seats in the April 21 by-elections following the announcement of unofficial results.

The party, according to the unofficial and inconclusive results, claimed at least two out of the five National Assembly seats, while also won 10 out of the 16 seats in the provincial legislatures. Pakistan Peoples Party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed Sunni Itehad Council, Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party, Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid has won one seat each in the provincial assemblies.

Meanwhile, PML-N's Adnan Afzal Chattha secured the PP-36 Wazirabad seat from PTI's Fayyaz Chattha. PTI suffered a major upset, as an independent candidate Mubarak Zeb — brother of slain independent candidate Rehan Zeb, who was killed

before the February 8 general elections — won from the NA-8 Bajaur constituency defeating its nominee Gul Zafar Khan. Zeb also won the provincial PK-22 seat in Bajaur against Jamaat-e-Islami's Abid Khan.

In Sindh's Qamber Shahdaddkot, PPP's Khursheed Junejo won the NA-196 constituency, vacated by party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, by 91,581 defeating Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan's Muhammad Ali who only received 2763 votes.

In Punjab, the NA-119 seat which was vacated by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz remained with the party after PML-N's Ali Pervazi Malik won with 60,918 votes, leaving SIC candidate Shehzad Farooq behind. Farooq could only bag 34,0094 votes. The ruling party also bagged victory in NA-132 Kasur where Malik Rasheed Ahmed Khan emerged victorious defeating SIC candidate Sardar Muhammad Hussain Dogar. The seat was vacated by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Meanwhile in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur's brother Faisal Amin won from the NA-44 constituency in Dera Ismail Khan. Out of 16 seats that were up for grabs in Sunday's by-polls, Nawaz Sharif's party bagged 10 seats, increasing its strength in the provincial legislatures.

PM Shehbaz's vacated PP-164 seat from Lahore was claimed by the PML-N's Rashid Minhas, who defeated SIC's Yousuf Meo. Meanwhile in Gujarat, Chaudhry Parvez Elahi was defeated by his nephew, PML-Q's Musa Elahi on the PP-32 provincial seat. In PP-139 Sheikhupura, PML-N's Rana Afzaal Hussain clinched victory against SIC's Mian Ijaz Hussain Bhatti.

The PP-54 Narowal seat was claimed by federal minister Ahsan Iqbal's son Ahmed Iqbal who defeated SIC's Awais Qasim. In Bhakkar's PP-93, PML-N's Saeed Akbar Nawani defeated an independent candidate Afzal Dhandla.

Modi's anti-Muslim remarks spark outrage

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's latest remarks against Muslims during an election rally in Rajasthan state have sparked outrage amid general elections. The ruling party, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is anticipated to win the general elections for the historic third time consecutively, CNN reported.

Indian PM Modi's Islamophobic statements attracted condemnation from members of the opposition and Muslim leaders. In the hate-infused statement, Modi alleged that the opposition party, the Indian National Congress, would distribute the country's wealth among Muslims. He dubbed Muslims as "infiltrators" and "those who have more children". "When they (INC) were in power, they said Muslims have first right over resources. They will gather all your wealth and distribute it among those who have more children. They will distribute among infiltrators," the PM said amid applause from the supporters.

Modi asked his supporters if they would accept that their hard-earned money was given to the "infiltrators". The opposition party has requested India's election commission to probe if Modi's remarks violated its code of conduct. As per the Election Commission of India (ECI)'s rules, an appeal for a vote should not be made based on caste and communal sentiments as it "may aggravate differences or create mutual hatred or cause tension".

Members of the Muslim community lambasted the PM for his remarks. Muslim journalist Rana Ayyub wrote on the social media platform, X: "This is not a dogwhistle, this is a targeted, direct, brazen hate speech against a community." All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen President Asaduddin Owaisi said: "Modi today called Muslims infiltrators and people with many children. Since 2002 till this day, the only Modi guarantee has been to abuse Muslims and get votes." — CNN

11 more terrorists killed in operation

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Eleven terrorists have been sent to hell in two different operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

An intelligence based operation was conducted in Dera Ismail Khan District on reported presence of terrorists. During conduct of the operation, after an intense fire exchange, ten terrorists were successfully neutralised and sent to hell.

In another encounter in North Waziristan District, own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location as a result of which one more terrorist was sent to hell. The killed terrorists

remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area against security forces as well as the innocent civilians. Arms & ammunition were also recovered from them. Locals of the area appreciated the operations by the Security Forces, who remain determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country.

Meanwhile, two terrorists were killed in an operation by the security forces in Sanzala Pahari area of Pishin district in Balochistan, a top official said on Monday.

As per the statement given by Deputy

Commissioner Pishin Jumma Dad Mandokhel, several terrorists were also wounded in the operation. He further said those killed and injured were wanted by the law-enforcement agencies (LEAs) in connection with the killing of a Levies Risaldar Hameedullah.

It is important to note that the incidents of terrorism are on the rise in the country for more than one year. Three weeks ago, a Levies official was killed and three other personnel of the Force were seriously injured after the militants opened fire at the security forces in Pishin district of Balochistan.

IHC adjourns PTI founder's appeal in cipher case till today

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday adjourned hearing till today (Tuesday) on appeals against the conviction of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI), founder and former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi in cipher case.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Mianqul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the appeals of two accused. During the course of proceeding, on the query of

chief justice FIA's prosecutor Barrister Hamid Ali Shah said that every coded document is secret as per law. He said that cipher was received by foreign office through email on March 7, and a telegram number was allotted to it. The lawyer also produced the book of secret language before the court and said that it was issued on the name of deputy attorney general.

The prosecutor said that this book could be issued only to the certain people and the allottees have to give assurance in every six month

regarding its custody. Justice Hassan Aurangzeb questioned if the coded cipher message was intercepted at any stage. The prosecutor answered in negative and said that the soft copy of the document must be with the foreign office.

He said that a cipher has three forms, adding that not only cipher but also its content should be protected. The prosecutor said that concern department of foreign office was responsible to classify a cipher. Later, the court adjourned further hearing of the case till today.



KARACHI: Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari presetting shiled to Corps Commander Karachi Lieutenant General Babar Iftikhar. —INP Photo

CM approves 1KW solar systems for 50,000 homes

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Monday approved the grant of 1 kilowatt solar systems to 50,000 households in Punjab.

Presiding over a special meeting on "Light without Electricity Bill, Chief Minister's Roshan Punjab Program" here, the CM was briefed on technical issues of the solar system for domestic consumers.

The CM said the Roshan Punjab Program aims to free the poor from expensive electricity. Approving the grant for the solar systems, the CM directed to start the pilot project immediately, in order to evaluate its efficiency.

Protected consumers consuming up to 100 units of electricity will be eligible under the program in the first phase, she mentioned. In the 1 KW system, two solar panels, battery, inverter, and wires will be provided to the consumer, she informed.

Earlier, the CM was briefed that the 1 KW solar system can run fans, lights, small motors etc. Up to 16 hours of charging backup can be achieved through the lithium iron battery.

The CM directed to install the solar system of the latest technology. She emphasized the need to use the best quality solar plates, inverter, batteries and other

accessories. The scope of solar systems for domestic consumers will be extended gradually, she asserted.

Senior Provincial Minister Mariyum Aurangzeb, Information Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari, Senator Pervaiz Rasheed, MPA Sania Ashiq, Chief Secretary, Chairman Planning and Development, Secretaries Energy, Finance, Chief Executive Officer PPDC (Punjab Power Department Company Limited), Managing Director PPDB (Punjab Power Development Board) and other relevant officers attended the meeting.

Wafaqi Mohtasib's team scheduled to visit the Excise & Taxation Office

F.P. Report

KARACHI: An Inspection Team from the Wafaqi Mohtasib's Office is scheduled to visit the Excise & Taxation Office located in Islamabad tomorrow (i.e. Monday, April 22) to look into the growing number of public complaints regarding mal-administration in the said Office.

It may be pointed out that the Wafaqi Mohtasib, Mr. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, responding to a large number of public complaints regarding delay and difficulties in getting vehicular registration, vehicles' tax assessment and examination, constituted an Inspection Team to be headed by its Senior Advisor to conduct a thorough probe into the matter.

These complaints alleged mal-practices in the said office alongwith the undesirable activities of the agent-mafia active there and other irregularities which are causing great inconvenience to the general public.

The team would listen to the public complaints on the spot besides interacting and interviewing the people there before finalizing its recommendations for finding a workable solution in coordination with the administration of the ETO Office.

Sindh govt inaugurated two new routes of the Pink Bus Service

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Department of Transport, Government of Sindh, has inaugurated two new routes of the Pink Bus Service. Ms. Faryal Talpur, Head of the Pakistan People's Party Women's Division and Member of the Sindh Assembly, cut the ribbon and inaugurated the two new routes during a ceremony held at Frere Hall Karachi.

Ms. Faryal Talpur, addressing the audience as the chief guest at the ceremony, extended her congratulations to Senior Minister of Transport Sharjeel Inam Memon and said that the People's Pink Bus Service aims to serve the mothers, sisters, and daughters of Karachi by providing convenient travel facilities. This initiative, considered the latest gift from the Sindh Government of the People's Party, reflects the vision of President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

She said that the provision of safe and comfortable travel is a valuable gift from the Sindh government to women. By offering such facilities and empowering women, we can foster development and prosperity in our society.

On this occasion, the Sindh government also announced two months of free travel for women on the pink bus service. In her address, Ms. Faryal Talpur expressed her wish for the



fares of the pink bus service to remain unchanged.

Addressing the ceremony, Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit, Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Sharjeel Inam Memon welcomed Ms. Faryal Talpur, Ministers, Mayor, Deputy Mayor and distinguished guests and said the two new routes of the pink bus service are designated as R3 and R9. Route R-3 extends from Powerhouse Chowrangi in North Karachi to Nasir Jump in Korangi, while route R-9 spans from Gulshan-e-Hadeed to Tower. A total of 10 new pink buses are being deployed to serve both of these new routes.

He said that the pink

bus service was initiated under the guidance of the leadership of the Pakistan People's Party, particularly Ms. Faryal Talpur. This initiative garnered widespread appreciation globally, with international media commending the project by the Sindh government. The high-quality standards, affordable fares, and commitment to safety of the pink bus service have been praised worldwide. The vision of the Sindh government is centered on empowering women through initiatives like this.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the leadership of the People's Party, including President Asif Ali Zardari, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, and Ms. Faryal Talpur, has priori-

tized affordable, high-quality, and safe travel for the people. Additionally, efforts are underway to train female drivers, conductors and the staff, ensuring efficient and effective service delivery and the Sindh government remains steadfast in its commitment to empower women.

In the ceremony, Ms. Faryal Talpur presented licenses to 4 female drivers of the Pink Bus Service. Provincial Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Murad, Secretary Transport Sindh Asad Zaman, and other government officials, along with officials of the Pakistan People's Party, were also present at the opening ceremony.

Qaiser Sheikh visits PNSC, hold meeting with officers

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh visited PNSC and held media briefing after his visit. He was accompanied by Secretary Maritime Affairs Dr. Iram Anjum Khan, Vice President KCCI and other officers from PNSC.

The Federal Minister emphasized the importance of contribution of blue economy to Pakistan and how marine trade can lead to billions of dollars of exports resulting in surplus on the current account of Pakistan. Further, he mentioned that he has more than 40 years of experience of dealing with business community as he was elected as President

of KCCI in 1987-88.

Moreover, he said that his aim is to increase the efficiency of ports and convert it into high profit making entities. The Federal Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh said, "we have revised our profit estimates for KPT to Rs.5 billion which only earned Rs.2 billion last year."

The Federal Minister cleared the air regarding rumors of privatization of PNSC by clearly saying no such discussion or agenda is under consideration. Speaking on the occasion, he said, "We have decided that PNSC should have CEO from the private sector in order to improve its overall working and international competitiveness. This change will help in

making robust changes in this autonomous organization and will help in avoiding such incidents like the one which has recently happened in Sri Lanka where Pakistani ship is stranded for more than eight months due to repair and maintenance issues and it has caused heavy damage to Pakistan exchequer". On this issue he further added, "complete inquiry will be conducted on this matter and strict action will be taken against concerned officers".

Answering question regarding salaries of daily wagers, the Federal Minister said, "it is our top priority to look into this matter and give relief to the poor workers and mechanism will be in place where equitable distribution will take place".

On the question of KGTL unprecedentedly increased rates of cargo without considering all stakeholders and the business community, the Federal Minister said, "he is visiting KGTL today to consider all stakeholders when it is increasing its rates. The minister informed that cement association has raised issues 15% incremental charges and he will discuss it with KGTL."

The minister said, "I will also look into developing a coherent mechanism of fixing the exorbitant rates of shipping lines which charge different rates at different times". Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh ended his press talk by thanking all media persons for making their presence at PNSC.

CM directs to launch strict action against purchase, sale of stolen goods

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has directed to take measures to monitor the sale of stolen or snatched mobile phones and vehicles as spare parts or in their complete form in the markets of Karachi.

Chairing the 31th Apex Committee meeting here Monday, the chief minister said that police pickets would be established to strengthen the left bank of the River Indus and contain the dacoits within the katcha area. The recovery of ransom from the families of the kidnapped individuals will be considered terror financing and the people involved in facilitating the collection of the ransom amount would be identified through intelligence work to crush them," the CM said.

The meeting was held at CM House and was attended by provincial Minister

Information Sharjeel Memon, Home Minister Zia Lanjar, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Corps Commander Karachi Lt Gen Babar Iftikhar, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, DG Ranger Major General Azhar Waqas, PSCM Agha Wasif, Home Secretary Iqbal Memon, IG Police Ghulam Nabi Memon, Advocate General Hassan Akbar, Commissioner Karachi Hassan Naqvi, Adil IGP Karachi Imran Yakoob, Chief Custom Collector Mohammad Yakoob Mako, Water Board Chief Officers Asadullah Khan and other concerned officers.

The Home Minister Zia Lanjar and IGP Ghulam Nabi Memon briefing the meeting said that street crime particularly mobile snatching and four-wheeler and two-wheeler theft has decreased due to improved policing, however, the

cases of four and two-wheeler snatching has shown slight increase.

Comparative figures for the first three months (January to April) of 2023 and 2024 indicate a decrease in the number of theft cases reported. In 2024, 15,345 two-wheelers were stolen which is 953 cases less than the 16,298 incidents reported in 2023. Similarly, the theft of four-wheelers decreased by 145 cases with 520 vehicles stolen in 2024 as compared to 665 in 2023. The number of mobile phones snatched also showed a decline, with 6,813 cases reported in 2024 as compared to 8,688 in 2023, indicating a decrease of 1,875 cases.

According to the statistics, there has been a significant increase in the snatching of four-wheelers and two-wheelers. In 2023, 60 two-wheelers were snatched, and

this number increased to 80 in 2024. Similarly, 1805 two-wheelers were snatched in 2023, while the number of cases rose to 3094 in 2024. However, the overall figures of street crime have shown a decrease of 1613 cases. In 2023, 27,680 cases of street crime were registered, while the number decreased to 26067 in 2024.

The meeting was told that the police conducted 467 encounters in 2024. In these encounters, 67 criminals were killed, 489 were injured and 1766 were arrested. The weapons recovered from the criminals included one SMG, 2111 pistols, 30 rifles, seven shotguns and 18 grenades.

The Chief Minister instructed the IG Police to reactivate the Shaheen Force with a dedicated motorcycle squad of 386 motorcycles. The squad should patrol the identified hotspots during peak hours, and each SSP should issue and implement a patrolling plan.

Additionally, the police department was directed to revamp Madadgar-15. The Home Minister announced that an additional 168 vehicles, including 120 motorcycles, would be deployed to enhance the police force's capabilities.

The Chief Minister instructed the Inspector General (IG) of police to initiate the E-tagging of repeat offenders. A pilot project should be started with 4,000 devices. The IG police reported that the Rules have been drafted and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are being formulated. The meeting was informed that 67 Investigation Officers have been assigned to cases of robbery with murder, robbery, and injury.

The police have activated the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) to investigate these cases. The Chief Minister also directed the IG police to upgrade the Command and Control Centre at the Central Police Office (CPO). Currently, 2,000 cameras are already installed, 325 new cameras are being installed, and 500 old cameras are being upgraded to enhance security measures.

Home Minister Ziaul Hassan Lanjar informed the meeting that he had visited all the districts of Sukkur and Larkana divisions, where dacoits have been causing problems. He stated that since July 2022, the chief minister has constructed 107 police pickets along the left bank of the River Indus, where 759 police personnel are currently deployed. It was mentioned that 567 people have been saved from kidnappings through honey traps.

The CM emphasized that the left bank of the River Indus has been secured, and now there is a need to strengthen the right bank to secure the Shikarpur and Kashmore districts. The meeting noted that 118 people were kidnapped from January to April 19, 2024, of whom 96 have been recovered, and 22 remain missing. The Minister Home assured the meeting that he has visited the areas and is making all-out efforts for the recovery of the remaining people.

The minister also informed the meeting that there were only about 90 dacoits, and the others were their tribesmen. He added that he has spared 3000 policemen and deployed 1000 each in Ghotki, Kashmore, and Shikarpur.

PESHAWAR INSTITUTE OF CARDIOLOGY
MEDICAL TEACHING INSTITUTION
INVITATION FOR BIDS
REF No. PIC-078

1. Peshawar Institute of Cardiology, Medical Teaching Institute (PIC-MTI) is the project of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Health Department to improve cardiac facilities in the public sector in the areas of research and treatment.

2. Peshawar Institute of Cardiology (PIC-MTI) invites sealed Bids from eligible bidder registered with FBR for Income Tax, Sales Tax, and reflected on Active Tax Payer (ATL) list of FBR for the Below mentioned Item. Detailed of items, specification, submission, Opening and method of evaluation is provided in bidding documents. Bid Security/earnest money is required to be submitted in shape of Call Deposit Receipt (CDR) from schedule bank of Pakistan in favour Hospital Director Peshawar Institute of Cardiology.

S#	Name of item	Tender Process	Bid Security (PKR)
1.	Stationary Items	Single Stage Single Envelope	100,000
2.	Printing For Hospital		300,000
3.	Medical Non-Medical		300,000
4.	Bedding Clothing		100,000
5.	Laundry Consumables		200,000
6.	IT Accessories		300,000
7.	Refilling of Toner		100,000
8.	Medical Gases Accessories		100,000
9.	Hardware, Sanatory & Civil works		200,000
10.	Electrical Items		200,000
11.	Ventilator Parts and Consumable		100,000
12.	CSSD Consumables		100,000
13.	HVAC Parts & Consumables		200,000
14.	CSSD Items and Spare Parts for Boiler		100,000
15.	Office Furniture		200,000

3. Only typed bids on original letter pad, sealed & signed shall be submitted, hand written tender shall not be acceptable. The tenders must be according to hospital specification; alternate rates will not be acceptable.

4. Income Tax, stamp duty, and Professional Tax or any other Government tax will be charged as per rules. (However, PIC-MTI, Peshawar is exempted from the General Sales Tax).

5. A complete set of Standard Bidding Document may be downloaded by interested Bidder from websites of Peshawar Institute of Cardiology (PIC-MTI) (<https://pic.edu.pk/tenders>) after publication of this advertisement in the newspaper till last day for submission of Bid.

6. Procurements will be carried out as per Act and Rules of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (KPPRA).

7. A bid accompanied by Pay Order (PO) shall be rejected.

8. A Pre-Bid Meeting will be held on May 02nd, 2024 at 10:00 AM (PST) at the office of the Manager Material Management, 1st Floor, OPD Building, of Peshawar Institute of Cardiology (PIC-MTI). Prospective Bidder are encouraged to attend the meeting.

9. Bids are to be delivered to the office of the Manager Material Management, 1st Floor, OPD Building, of Peshawar Institute of Cardiology (PIC-MTI) on or before May 16th, 2024 at 11:00 AM (PST).

10. Bids shall be opened on the same day at 11:30 AM (PST) in the presence of bidders who choose to attend.

11. The advertisement is also available both on the websites of Peshawar Institute of Cardiology (PIC-MTI) (<https://pic.edu.pk/tenders>) and KPPRA (<http://kppra.gov.pk>).

13. Peshawar Institute of Cardiology (PIC-MTI) reserves the right to cancel any or all bids by assigning cogent reason under Rule 47 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa public procurement Regulatory Authority.

HOSPITAL DIRECTOR
Peshawar Institute of Cardiology (PIC-MTI)
5-A, Sector B-3, Phase-V, Hayatabad, Peshawar,
Ph: +92 91 9219645.

INF(P)0760/24

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PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur addressing a press conference.

‘Derogatory language’ by minister against doctors YDA says nothing such to be tolerated

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Young Doctors ASSOCIATION (YDA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in its meeting held strongly played the derogatory language used by Health Minister against doctors and said such incident if happens in future will strongly be reacted. Spokesperson of the YDA KP told that after emergency meeting of its General Council and Supreme Council, which

was attended by officials from all hospitals in the province. The YDA KP after issuing a news release warned that any future such incidents would be met with a response. Spokesperson of he YDA KP said the participants also strongly condemned the failure of the Lady Reading Hospital administration to address the issues faced by doctors and patients, and threatened to shut down all hospitals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa if any doctor is harmed.

The association expressed its dissatisfaction with the shortage of medicines in hospitals and the mistreatment of patients. The General Council of YDA KP assigned tasks to all hospital officials for the upcoming Grand Convention, which will be held soon in Peshawar. The YDA KP is a representative organization of doctors across Pakistan and is committed to protecting the rights of doctors and patients, and will not compromise on these issues.

Chitral Lawyer Forum to support ANP, JUIF

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chitral Lawyers Forum has announced its support for the joint presidential candidate of Malgry Wakeelan and Jammiat Lawyer Forum Amin-ur-Rehman Yousafzai along with his nominated cabinet of for Peshawar High Court Bar Association (PHCBA) election for 2024-25 session, on Monday.

The decision was announced during a joint meeting of the Chitral Lawyers Forum with Malgry Wakeelan and Jammiat Lawyers Forum at the Peshawar High Court Bar Room, which was attended by a large number of lawyers.

The Chitral Lawyers Forum announced that it has ended its alliance with the Grand Alliance and will now support the candidates of Malgry Wakeelan and Jammiat Lawyers Forum in the elections scheduled on 27th April.

Toru for provision of adulteration-free food

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food, Zahir Shah Toru presided over a comprehensive review meeting regarding the performance and ongoing projects of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority, on Monday.

The minister emphasized ensuring the supply of quality and adulteration-free food products to citizens in the markets and directed the relevant officials to take necessary steps in this regard. Zahir Shah highlighted that the provincial government is taking priority actions to enhance the capacity of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority. The minister extended that seven mobile food testing laboratories are working in the fields and soon five more mobile food labs along with a state-of-the-art lab soon would be inaugurated.

Pakistani child killed in Qatar: Zahan laid to rest

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A five-year-old child named Zahan who was killed in Qatar has been buried in Peshawar amid mourns and sobs after kidnapping, on Monday. The deceased was grandson of famous jeweler Imran of Peshawar Cantt and buried in his native graveyard.

The deceased Zahan was living in Qatar with his father Engineer Faizan. He went missing, but the

foreign national was arrested after CCTV footage of him abducting the child. However, the arrested foreign national is being declared mentally ill. The dead body of the murdered child was moved to Peshawar.

After the body of the five-year-old child was moved to Khaki Peshawar, there was a great commotion in his house and every eye was tearful. The funeral prayer of the murdered child was attended by per-



sonalities belonging to

every walk of life.

Meanwhile, Former Focal Person for Federal Minister Manpower Overseas Pakistanis Shahid Khan has said that there should be an investigation into the murder of a five-year-old child who is being declared mentally ill. He said that the federal government of this incident should contact the government of Qatar and take practical steps to arrest and punish the accused involved in the incident.

Kashif pledges to tackle crime, terrorism in Peshawar

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In a bid to fortify the security landscape of Peshawar, Kashif Zulfiqar has taken the helm as the new Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Operations. Since stepping into his role, Kashif has wasted no time in initiating a series of strategic measures aimed at curbing street crimes and thwarting terrorism threats looming over the Capital.

With a firm resolve to ensure the safety and well-being of the residents, Kashif Zulfiqar swiftly

mobilized police forces across the district to intensify efforts in preventing street crimes.

Recognizing the pressing need for proactive measures, he embarked on a mission to formulate a comprehensive plan to combat terrorism effectively. His vision encompasses creating a secure environment conducive to peaceful living for all inhabitants of Peshawar.

One of Kashif's paramount objectives is to root out the scourge of corruption within the ranks of the Peshawar Police. Emphasizing a zero-toler-

ance stance towards corruption, he underscored the importance of upholding integrity and transparency within the department.

He emphasized that the police, entrusted with safeguarding the lives and properties of the people, must remain vigilant and free from any corrupt practices. Kashif's appointment comes at a crucial juncture as Peshawar grapples with multifaceted security challenges.

His proactive approach and dedication to fostering a culture of accountability and efficiency within the

police force signal a promising step towards achieving enhanced safety and security for the city's populace.

The newly appointed SSP Operations has articulated a clear vision and outlined a roadmap for transforming law enforcement in Peshawar.

As he assumes the mantle of leadership, the residents of Peshawar look forward to witnessing tangible improvements in crime prevention, counter-terrorism efforts, and the overall integrity of the police force under his stewardship.

Youth Robotec’24 concludes at UET Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: April 22nd: The three-day national level mega event "Youth Robotec'24," organized by the National Center of Robotics and Automation at UET Peshawar, concluded with commendation from the Honorable Minister for the Higher Education Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mr. Meena Khan Afridi.

The closing ceremony, graced by Minister Afridi, distributed prizes and shields among the winners. Also in attendance

were Mr. Sajid Shah, Director General of Science & Technology (Dost), along with other government officials and a large number of faculty members.

During the ceremony, Minister Afridi praised UET Peshawar for organizing such a significant event and emphasized the importance of addressing unemployment through market-oriented subjects.

He stressed the necessity for educational institutions to introduce subjects aligned with the demands of the modern

era, promoting quality education that ensures job prospects in the market.

The Department of Mechatronics, Advanced Robotics and Automation Lab (ARAL) University of Engineering and Technology, Peshawar continues to push the boundaries of technological innovation, with a commitment to addressing real-world challenges and contributing to the advancement of society.

Minister Afridi's appreciation extended beyond

the event itself, as he visited the Department of Mechatronics, Advanced Robotics, and Automation Lab (ARAL).

Impressed by the innovative research, Minister Afridi remarked, "I am truly impressed by the innovative research being conducted at the Department of Mechatronics Advanced Robotics and Automation Lab (ARAL) UET, Peshawar. The research at the lab is focused on precision agriculture and biomedical applications based on latest trends.

Judicial allowance plea PHC directs Registrar to submit reply

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC)'s Registrar along with Finance Department has been asked for submission of reply in a petition seeking judicial allowance for employees of District and Session Courts (District's judiciary), on Monday.

PHC's divisional bench comprising of Justice Kamran Hayat Miankhal and Justice Fahim Wali heard plea of Amjad

Shinwari seeking judicial allowance for the employees of the District Judiciary.

The counsel argued that petitioner (District's judiciary employees) are currently deprived from it while the employees of the Peshawar High Court are receiving the same allowance.

However, Justice Kamran Hayat Miankhal inquired from petitioner's lawyer regarding concerned respondents in the case to be asked for sub-

mission of comments. And the lawyer replied that the Finance Department and the Registrar of the Peshawar High Court should be made respondents.

PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice Kamran Hayat Miankhal and Justice Fahim Wali ordered the Registrar of the Peshawar High Court and the Finance Department for submission of reply in this regard after conclusion of arguments.

WHO representative calls on Qasim

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) for Pakistan, Mr. Lou De Peng, held a meeting with the Minister Health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mr. Syed Qasim Ali Shah, on Monday. During the meeting, Mr. Lou De Peng engaged in bilateral discussions with the Health Minister on various issues.

Dr. Shaukat Ali, Director-General of Health Services, briefed both entities on the current health situation. In a significant gesture, the WHO representative presented two cold chain trucks to the Health Minister for the

efficient distribution of vaccines, ensuring their effectiveness. Additionally, Mr. Lou De Peng donated 1400 Android mobile phones and 840 Android tablets to facilitate data sharing among the frontline workers of the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) in the merged districts of the province.

Furthermore, in response to the recent floods, the WHO representative handed over medicines worth 3.6 million to the Minister Health to aid in emergency response efforts.

Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah expressed gratitude for Mr. Lou De

Peng's visit to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and thanked the WHO for its continuous support during challenging times. He also appreciated the WHO's Pakhtunkhwa office for their consistent assistance and generous support to the Health Department.

During media interactions, the Health Minister acknowledged the technical leadership provided by the WHO in guiding the Ministry of Health. He emphasized the need for WHO's support in developing provincial outbreak response cell and requested technical assistance in various areas.

World Earth Day: Call for conservation of environment

PESHAWAR (APP): Collecting polythene bags at Pabbi bazaar on occasion of International Earth Day, the students of three private schools on Monday joined hands to clear it from raw plastics imperative to protect human, animals and water creatures from its hazards.

The students of Educators, Smart and Khan school systems assembled in front of office of tehsil municipal administration (TMA) Pabbi Nowshera today where they actively participated in polythene bags clearance operation on world earth day marked in Pakistan including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Monday.

Every year, international earth day is observed across the globe including Pakistan to show firm support for environmental and forest conservation besides sustainability viz a viz encouraging people to come together and take action for a healthier planet.

The campaign was aimed to raise awareness among people for fostering a deep connection with the nature.

The world earth day 2024 theme was Planet vs Plastics, which aims to bring attention to the serious issue of plastic pollution and its negative effects on

living creatures.

"We are gathered here to pass a strong message that we are all unite against the scourge of plastic pollution," said Haider Ali, administrator of the educators school Pabbi campus while talking to APP.

During the one hour special drive, he said that 20 kilogram raw plastic bags were collected and properly disposed off.

Professor Dr Muhammad Nafees of the Environmental Sciences Department, University of Peshawar said that the origin of International Earth Day can be traced back to 1970 when its idea was originated from Gaylord Nelson, a US senator, and Denis Hayes, a Harvard student whom were deeply disturbed by the deteriorating environment in their country.

Declaring plastic pollution as a threat to all living creatures, he said it was more injurious than air pollution.

He said black polythene bags are more dangerous for humans because of their repeated usage without proper recycling, thus exposing consumers to serious ailments including intestine infections, vomiting, digestive problems and premature births.

Terming polythene bags major source of plastic pollution,

he said that it takes 100 to 1500 years to fully decompose in soil and have drastic effects" on living creatures mostly in third world countries especially in SAARC region.

He said the large-scale production and an excessive use of plastic products have created enormous environmental challenges to humans, wildlife and aquatic creatures world-wide including Pakistan.

Dr Nafees feared that plastic waste in canals, rivers and oceans would significantly decreased production of fish and other marine species in next few years if its dumping continues at such alarming scale.

Every year, approximately 500 billion plastic bags were used including 50pc one time in world where about eight million tons plastic ends up in canals, rivers and oceans, which is equivalent to a truck filled with garbage every minute world-wide.

Interestingly, 60 million plastic bags was being bought per hour, and only 14pc of the total used was recycled while the rest was disposed into streets, bazaars, oceans, rivers and soils, according to UN Environment Program.

According to reports, about

nine percent plastic waste out of about 30 million tons solid waste generated in the country.

Dr Khaista Gul, senior Analyst Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

KP told APP that about 6,000 plastic factories were operating in the country, mostly located in the Punjab (60%) followed by Sindh (30%), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (7%) and Balochistan (3%) and about 18 registered plastic manufacture companies and dozens others unregistered were operating in Peshawar.

"We have asked plastic companies to use one percent 'D2W' chemical in plastic bags as an ingredient to attract bacteria to ensure its easy biodegradation within few years," he said.

The micro plastic, which can't be seen with naked eye, when comes in contact with heat, it is converted into smaller particles causing air pollution and become part of food cycle of human, fish, wildlife and mammals in land by putting their lives at heightening danger." Dr Aftab Ahmed, Director Livestock Department told APP.

Declaring micro plastic particles are causing serious health risks, he said that developing issues in young children, fatigue,

endocrine disruption, obesity and premature births both in humans and animals through air, water and edible items mostly fish and meat are its adverse effects. He said that animals and wildlife become victims of polythene bags and eventually die due to malnutrition as it badly affects their digestive system.

In addition to polluting grazing lands and tourists sites, he said non-biodegradable bags mostly find their way to open garbage dumps, landfill sites or municipal sewers, making sewage disposal systems less efficient cause flash flooding in urban areas and increase cost of utility operations.

Most of urban waste management companies are focusing on picking waste from communal bins in urban areas but overlook canals, rivers and oceans plastic waste's disposal and once it is burnt hazardous gases like Dioxins and Furanes pollute the air.

He said plastic and water pollution in rivers Kabul and Swat had put populations of Mahshar and Trout fish at high risk.

Dr Khaista Gul said that only bio-degradable bags having 50 microns size had been allowed in the market and polythene bags banned. "The plastic size is

measured through d2 detector machine and all those bags with less than 50 micron size are being seized the province," he said.

Taking cognizance of an increase of plastic pollution, KP Govt has imposed complete ban on use and sale of non-biodegradable plastic bags and asked the manufacturers, wholesale dealers and retailers to deplete their stock.

He said dozens of polythene bags factories including manufactured companies in Dir Lower and Hayatabad Industrial Estate Peshawar sealed under Prohibition of Non-degradable Plastic Products (Manufacturing, Sale and Usage) Rules 2016.

"The cases of companies that are violating Govt orders are being sent to Environmental Tribunal Peshawar having the power to impose fine upto Rs5million, confiscated stock or imposed Rs100,000 fine per day or send the accused behind the bars," he said.

He said huge investment was required for installation of waste to energy units on the pattern of China to convert plastic waste into energy, adding at least Rs50 million would be required for setting up of a plant with a

capacity to generate 5megawatt energy.

He said plastic pollution had a global and far-reaching negative impact on the international, regional and local environment, ecosystems, wildlife, livestock viz a viz marine life and great responsibility rests on the international community to help assist all under developing and developing countries including Pakistan in combating plastic pollution.

He said local industry should be encouraged to produce environment friendly biodegradable plastics bags besides strengthening of waste management companies in terms of finances, manpower, equipments for speedy disposal of all plastic waste.

The experts suggested that urban councils and waste management companies should reach out to communities to sensitize them against plastic pollution.

They said users must be sensitized to understand the gravity of this looming issue for which role of media was key and urged consumers to buy and use biodegradable plastic and clothes bags and ensure its proper disposal to make the planet a peace living abode for upcoming generation.



PESHAWAR: A view of massive traffic jam in front of High Court. — APP photo



In brief

Two killed in Shahdadkot F.P. Report

SHAHDADKOT: One named Nadir Hussain Bhatti killed his wife, 28-year-old Bhatti along with acquaintance friend Sohrab Umrani, at Noorjahan Colony, a suburb of Shahdadkot, on Tuesday. The accused managed to escape, while the police took the dead bodies of the deceased into custody and handed them over to their heirs after necessary action. It is noted that the accused wasn't arrested yet.

Police raid sparks agitation F.P. Report

THATTA: A strong contingent of Sujawal police led by Sajjad Jamali Station House Officer (SHO) Sujawal stormed the office of The Shia Imami Ismaili Council located in Var town of district Thatta late Sunday. A member of staff present at the office at the time of police action said that police barged into the council's office by breaking open the main gate and vandalized CCTV system and windows besides pelting stones at the building to create fear among local Ismaili community dwelling near the office. The staff member further said that they also tried to enter Ismaili Jammat Khana but back tracked upon seeing a large number of community members coming out of their houses. After resistance posed by local residents, SHO Sujawal and two other officials infuriated and threatened them of dire consequences. The police said that they had received information that there is a Gutka factory within the premises of the office and they wanted to destroy it. Later when a large number of local youth agitated outside the office the, SHO who led the unauthorized police action refuted from his earlier statement saying that the local information they received was erroneous and since they were unaware of the locality they entered the wrong premises and they never intended to harm the sentiments of the community. DSP Ghorabari who had reached the spot revealed that they were completely unaware of the police action and no prior information was given to them regarding any raid by the SSP Thatta. When President of Ismaili Council for Thatta and Shabbunnder Dr Nazir Jummani contacted SSP Thatta Dr Imran Khan he did not pick the call, later he contacted and said that he was on leave and had not ordered any police action.

Show cause notices to 30 cops F.P. Report

LARKANA: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Larkana Mir Ruhail Khan khoso took departmental action against 30 policemen involved in public harassment and negligence in duty on multiple complaints, on Tuesday. According to details, show-cause notices were issued to 16 policemen, including constables Asif Ali, Abdul Ghaffar, Mumtaz Ali, Altaf Hussain, Digaf, Faisal Raza, Abdul Rasheed, Abdul Hameed, Naeem Ahmed, Ayaz Ahmed while stopped increments of 04 police constables including Kewal Das, Intiaz Ali and others. Speaking on this occasion, SSP Larkana said that protecting the life and property of the people is our first priority and negligence in the important duty of security will be intolerable if any officer or official is found involved in negligence. Strict legal action will be taken against him because his job should not be terminated.

Transporters demand resolution of monetary dispute

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Residents and transporters of Gorgora area of tehsil Landi Kotal demanded of the police, administration and tribal elders to settle their monetary dispute with a local who owes to pay us seventy thousand two hundred dollars for the last ten years.

Addressing to a press conference in Landi Kotal press club district Khyber Arshad Afridi, Nadeemullah and Riazullah said that in 2010, Akbarullah Afridi Sadu Khel, had collected \$17200 on behalf of them as truck accident expenses in Kabul but did not handover to them so far.

On approaching the transport contractor Haji Taj Muhammad Afridi, he confirmed that Akbarullah Afridi had received the mentioned sum from his company. They had repeatedly asked for the return of their money but their opponent failed to pay their debt, they remarked.

Scores of applications had been filed with police and administration for resolving of the dispute but to in avail, they added and blamed that brother of their borrower who was police utilized his influence in government offices to decline his application. They requested the concerned authorities to take immediate initiative to settle their dispute with the influential opponent and assist them to get their due right.

Tribesmen protests against custodial death, blocks Pak-Afghan route: Relatives of a late prisoner, who was allegedly died of a cardiac attack, suspended the Pak-Afghan highway in Jamrud by putting body on the road against the incident. The deceased was identified as Noorul Amin resident of Nai Abadi, Jamrud who had been taken in custody by police in the last days of Ramzan from Tedi Bazaar for his alleged involved in narcotics.

As the prisoner was a heart patient, on Saturday

night he felt pain in his chest and after providing first aid, he was rushed to Hayatabad Medical Complex for necessary medical treatment; however, he passed away on Sunday morning, police version stated.

Relatives of the deceased said that two days before Eid-ul-fitr, their innocent kin apprehended and later on charged him in fraudulent case for possessing two kilograms Ice-drug. They blamed Adnan Afridi, Station House Officer, Jamrud police station and District Police Officer (DPO), Khyber Saleem Abbas Kulachvi for conducting what they said the whole drama that was an injustice to them. The demanded the police high-up for immediate actions against SHO Adnan Afridi and DPO Khyber Saleem Abbas Kulachvi otherwise they had no other option but to arrange protest on larger scale to obtain justice. Due to road blockade, export and import was halted.

Minister visits DHQ Kohat on public complaints

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate made a surprise visit to the District Headquarter Hospital KDA on the complaint of a resident of Bahadurkot area where he met the Medical Superintendent (MS) of the Hospital.

The provincial minister directed the MS to take immediate action against the doctor who treated the patient in a private hospital instead of a Government Hospital. It is to be mentioned here that a 7-year-old boy of Bahadurkot vil-

lage in constituency of the Minister was died as a result of aerial firing while his cousin was injured.

The injured was brought to DHQ Hospital for treatment but the doctor on duty instead of treating the patient in government hospital, treat him in private hospital. The Law Minister immediately rushed to the hospital on the Citizen's Complaint and directed the MS to take action against the doctor.

Speaking to the media on this occasion, Aftab Afridi said that he will not allow anyone to do injustice to the people and such elements will be made deterrent example for others.

He said, any where, there will be injustice, the government will be there for granted justice to the affected people. He asked the people, on eve of any happiness, instead of aerial firing, they should prefer to fireworks. He further asked the citizens to submit their complaints in writing to the high-ups so that they have no excuse for their defense.

Aftab Afridi assured that the PTI government will give ideal system of Check and Balance to the people and they will feel it themselves. He also warned the government functionaries to mend their ways otherwise be ready for strict action.



KOHAT: KP Minister for Law, Aftab Alam Afridi visiting District Headquarters Hospital during his surprise visit.

Federal Ombudsman hold 'Kuli Katcheri'

F.P. Report

MARDAN: On behalf of Federal Ombudsman's Deputy Advisor Bakhtiar Gul in the 'Kuli Katcheri' at the Deputy Commissioner's office, traders and the public filed complaints against federal departments, especially WAPDA, Gas, Passport, PESCO and Sui Gas staff especially loud-shedding, unjustified fines and unnecessary delay in issuance of normal passports by the passport office have been raised.

According to the details, Deputy Advisor Bakhtiar Gul visited Mardan on the instructions of Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi held an open court in the conference room of DC office in the presence of Deputy Commissioner Mardan Fayaz Khan Sherpao, in which City Mayor Mardan supported Himayat Ullah Mayar, Additional Deputy Commissioner Sami-ur-Rahman, Additional Assistant Commissioner Headquarters Junaid Khalid, Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Zahir Shah, business leaders and Mardan Press Club President Bashir Adil, media representatives, officials of the Small

Chamber and general public attended.

Among the federal departments, relevant officers of WAPDA (PESCO), Sui Northern, Passport, NADRA, Pakistan Baitul Mal and other departments were present. The Federal Ombudsman assured of his full cooperation. Deputy Advisor of the Federal Ombudsman, said that the Federal Ombudsman is playing an active role in resolving public complaints about federal departments and institutions and on the complaints of citizens across the country, passport, FIA, gas customs are being investigated.

Citizens have been given their rights by processing thousands of complaints about hundreds of federal institutions, including post offices, narcotics. He said that citizens can file complaints about over-billing, illegal fines and other issues in the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat Islamabad and sub-offices, which are processed immediately and also takes immediate action. On this occasion, the Deputy Advisor of the Federal Ombudsman about the complaints of WAPDA such as illegal load shed-

ding, illegal fines and unwarranted electricity shutdowns. Complaints regarding the intervention of touts in the card offices were also brought forward, on which the representative of the Federal Ombudsman assured them of immediate action by taking written complaints from the participants.

City Mayor Himayat Ullah Mayar thanked the federal ombudsman for holding an open meeting with various stakeholders in Mardan and said that the citizens have many complaints against the federal agencies, especially WAPDA, Sui Gas and Passport etc., which need to be resolved and the federal ombudsman can play an important role in resolving such issues.

Meanwhile, in view of the clear orders issued by the District Police Officer Zahoor Babar Afridi against the drug dealers, Police Station City Police under the leadership of SHO Abdul Salam Khan took actions against the drug dealers and arrested 03 drug dealers Irshad resident of Ring Road, Attaullah resident of Bypass Road and Bilal resident of Kacha Sarak was arrested.



LANDI KOTAL: Civil and military officials offering dua after funeral prayers of Shaheed constable.

Dr. Humaira appointed as Associate Professor F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Commission (KPPSC) on Monday appointed Lady Doctor Humaira Bibi, a resident of Khungi as an associate professor gynecology at the Timergara Medical College in BPS 19.

The newly appointed associate professor Humaira Bibi is the daughter-in-law of Muhabat Shah, a Dir based senior journalist. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa health department has directed her to complete verification of her documents and medical board.

Dr Humaira has also served as assistant professor gynecology at the Peshawar Medical College and International Medical College Abbottabad. She has got an MRCOG degree in gynecology from the Royal College in the United Kingdom. Dr Humaira has also served for some time in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

RPO argues policemen to improve moral values: Regional Police Officer Malakand range Muhammad Ali Khan briefly visited the Lower Dir district and checked security arrangements, CCTV cameras, offices and different units in the Jandol subdivision. The Lower Dir acting district police officer Rashid Khan briefed him about the overall law and order situation in the district.

The Jandol circle DSP Ihsanullah Khan and station house officer Samarbagh Shah Faisal Khan were also present on the occasion. The RPO expressed satisfaction on the security situation and directed police officials to behave friendly with all visiting complainants. RPO also directed the officers to provide immediate response to the applicants so that they could feel satisfaction. He said that police officers had to improve their attitude and public relation.

Bread makers held: District food controller Kashif Ihsan along with assistant food controller Riaz Ahmad and food inspector Shabir Ahmad raided different markets at Timergara and checked weight and prices of roti. A total of 8 nanbais were booked under the food act for selling less-weight roti (naan) and overcharging commuters.

The officials also asked commuters to lodge complaint against nanbais if they did not follow government orders and official price list. They asked the shopkeepers to display the official price lists on visible places on their outlets.

Tribesmen need govt's medical, financial aid

F.P. Report

WANA: Crops of wheat, vegetables and special fruits were badly affected in most areas of lower Waziristan due to incessant rains and cold waves hitting the plains. Lower Waziristan is a plain region, the occupation of most of the people here is cultivation of vegetables and different types of fruits.

A delegation of local farmers told this scribe that in lower Waziristan Wana, people have cultivated wheat as well as vegetables on their lands in most areas due to the current inflation, but due to the recent rains, these crops of the farmers have suffered a lot of damage and loss of crores of rupees. Standing crops were destroyed and unfavorable climate change caused no suitable growth of the crops.

Hence, crops cannot reach full maturity and the grain of the crops will be weak due to not reaching at the proper time and the yield of the crops will

decrease. On the other hand, due to heavy rains and floods in the area, the crops standing on many lands were washed away as there are no arrangements to stop the heavy rain water in the rivulets.

In addition, there are more than 20,000 orchards of apples and other fruits in lower Waziristan. In these orchards, apple and other fruit trees open their buds at a naturally fixed time depending on the season, but due to climate change and cold weather, there was a considerable delay in the orchards getting the fruits to mature time of season. So, the poor tribes will not be able to get full harvest from their lands this time due to climate change.

Meanwhile, the relatives of 50 dialysis patients said while addressing press conference Wana press that dialysis patients in Wana district of lower South Waziristan were in great trouble due to non-availability of medical treatment at Sheikhha Fatima hospital and district headquarters

hospital Wana.

They said that lack of facilities for dialysis patients compelled them to meet AC or DC lower Waziristan. But they were not allowed to see responsible at Scout camp Wana, they lamented that two dialysis machines were being used by MRF-run Wana hospital for all 50 patients, which couldn't meet patients' requirements on account of shortage of time given to each patient in the hospital.

On the other hand, political leader Taj Wazir said while talking to the media along with the relatives, demanded from the higher authorities to provide dialysis machines and other facilities to the patients on emergency basis.

Otherwise, Wana political leaders would be forced to give a call for sit-in in front of FC camp. Finally, they have demanded Wana Chairman Muhammad saleh, MPA Ajab Gul Wazir and MNA Zubair Wazir to raise the issue with provincial govt for the sake of these poor patients.

Journalists hold key role in fight against climate change

Anees Takar

MARDAN: The picturesque landscapes of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, nestled between the Hindukush and Himalaya mountain ranges, are not just a source of beauty but also a lifeline for the communities that call this region home. However, the specter of climate change looms large, threatening to disrupt this delicate balance and endangering the livelihoods and well-being of its inhabitants.

In response to these challenges, media voices from the region have banded together to advocate for urgent action to protect the environment and ensure a sustainable future. The Global Neighborhood for Media Innovation (GNMI), in collaboration with the United States Department of State, recently organized a 3-Day Sabz Journalism Environmental Journalism training in Peshawar. Led by senior environmental journalist Afia Salam, the training aimed to equip mid-level journalists, digital content producers, and filmmakers with the necessary tools and skills to effectively report on climate-related issues across various media platforms.

The training program covered a wide range of topics, including understanding the science of the environment, data-driven and investigative story production, digital storytelling techniques, and strategies for content dissemination.



Hands-on learning activities were incorporated to enhance participants' production skills, with a particular focus on integrating environmental perspectives into their routine reporting.

During the training, participants referenced a recent report by UNDP Pakistan, which highlighted alarming trends in glacier melt and the formation of glacial lakes in the region. With a total of 3,044 glacial lakes identified in Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and 33 of these lakes assessed as prone to hazardous glacial lake outburst flooding (GLOF), the urgency of the situation cannot be overstated. Local journalists also underscored the increasing frequency of extreme weather events in northern parts of KP, as well as the pressing environmental challenges faced by communities in urban areas like Peshawar, such as noise and air pollution.

Furthermore, participants brought to light a concerning media report indicating that more than 210 forest fires in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have ravaged 14,430 acres of land, with 55 of these fires deliberately started by locals, accord-

ing to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Forest Department.

At the conclusion of the session, Afia Salam emphasized the importance of amplifying environmental stories to raise public awareness and drive policy interventions. She highlighted that for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the impacts of climate change are not abstract concepts but harsh realities that affect their daily lives. Despite the challenges, there is resilience and determination, and journalists play a crucial role in spotlighting communities' efforts to adapt and mitigate the effects of a changing climate.

The Sabz Journalism Fellowship Program aims to empower journalists with the necessary skills and knowledge to report effectively on environmental issues, fostering awareness and understanding among the public. By promoting data-driven and investigative reporting, the program seeks to contribute to inclusive economic growth and sustainable development by producing and disseminating climate-focused content on digital media platforms.

Eid Millon party for orphan held

F.P. Report

BUNER: Kashmir Orphan Relief Trust held an Eid Milon party/ introductory camp for orphan students at Government Boys College Totalai in Khadukhel, on Monday. The Kashmir Orphan Relief Trust Court representatives, AC Khadukhel Nimra Owais, ASDEO Saeed Jamal, Obaidullah, Sultan Muhammad, Shoaib Ali, Lal Hussain, Saud Khan, Arif Khan, Ashfaq and Sohaib Khan participated in the camp. In the camp provided food for the orphan students and also informed about the established campus of KORT at Swabi (Alamabad) for the students.

They shared the aims and objectives of this camp are to clarify the purpose

of establishing the Kashmir Orphan Relief Trust and to provide a safe shelter to more and more orphans and innocent children rejected by the society, to secure their future through higher education and training and to give them. It is to make a useful and proud person of the society. In this regard, our first priority is the creation of an institution with the capacity to fully support 400 children.

The speakers further shared this institution has the highest residential facilities for children. As each child has an individual bed, study table, study chair and wardrobe for use. They continued that computers are available for modern education and entertainment of children as well. Other facilities like dining there is a highly furnished din-

ing room with freezer, television and other amenities, they shared.

A well-equipped library has been established for children to satisfy their all-round interest in learning. Special attention is paid to the individual and collective training of children. A special program has been formulated to inculcate qualities like compassion, honesty and piety, they claimed. The internal environment of the institution is very pleasant, organized and homely unlike traditional charitable institutions they continued.

After witnessing the interior ambience of KORT, it is not at all difficult to guess that this is a house whose residents are going about their daily affairs smoothly without any confusion or hassle, they pointed.



Wave of narco-violence stuns Argentina city

ROSARIO (AP): The order to kill came from inside a federal prison near Argentina's capital. Unwitting authorities patched a call from drug traffickers tied to one of the country's most notorious gangs to collaborators on the outside. Hiring a 15-year-old hit man, they sealed the fate of a young father they didn't even know.

At a service station on March 9 in Rosario, the picturesque hometown of soccer star Lionel Messi, 25-year-old employee Bruno Bussanich was whistling to himself and checking the day's earnings just before he was shot three times from less than a foot away, surveillance footage shows. The assailant fled without taking a peso. It was the fourth gang-related fatal shooting in Rosario in almost as many days. Authorities called it an unprecedented rampage in Argentina, which had never witnessed the extremes of drug cartel violence afflicting some other Latin American countries.

A handwritten letter was found near Bussanich's body, addressed to officials who want to curb the power drug kingpins wield from behind bars. "We don't want to negotiate anything. We want our rights," it says. "We will kill more innocent people." Shaken residents interviewed by The Associated Press across Rosario described a sense of dread taking hold. "Every time I go to work, I say goodbye to my father as if it were the last time," said 21-year-old Celeste Núñez, who also works at a gas station.

The string of killings offer an early test to the security agenda of populist President Javier Milei, who has tethered his political success to saving Argentina's tanking economy and eradicating narco-trafficking violence. Since taking office Dec. 10, the right-wing leader has promised to prosecute gang members as terrorists and change the law to allow the army into crime-ridden streets for the first time since Argentina's brutal military dictatorship ended in 1983. His law-and-order message has empowered the hardline governor of Santa Fe province, which includes Rosario, to clamp down on incarcerated criminal gangs that authorities say orchestrated 80% of shootings last year. Under the orders of Governor Maximiliano Pullaro, police have ramped up prison raids, seized thousands of smuggled cellphones and restricted visits. "We are facing a group of narco-terrorists desperate to maintain power and impunity," Milei said after Bussanich was killed, announcing the deployment of federal forces in Rosario. "We will lock them up, isolate them, take back the streets."

Milei won 56% of the vote in Rosario, where residents praise his focus on a problem largely neglected by his predecessors.

But some worry the government's combative approach traps them in the line of fire. Gangs started their deadly retaliations just hours after Pullaro's security minister shared photos showing Argentine prisoners crammed together on the floor, heads pressed against each other's bare backs - a scene reminiscent of El Salvador President Nayib Bukele's harsh anti-gang crackdown. "It's a war between the state and the drug traffickers," said Ezequiel, a 30-year-old employee at the gas station where Bussanich was killed. Ezequiel, who gave only his first name for fear of reprisals, said his mother has since begged him to quit. "We're the ones paying the price." Even Milei's supporters have mixed feelings about the crackdown, including Germán Bussanich, the father of the slain gas station worker.

"They're putting on a show and we're facing the consequences," Bussanich told reporters. A leafy city 300 kilometers (180 miles) northwest of Buenos Aires, Rosario is where revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara was born, Messi first kicked a soccer ball and the Argentine flag was first raised in 1812. But it most recently won notoriety because its homicide numbers are five times the national average. Tucked into a bend in the Paraná River, Rosario's port morphed into Argentina's drug trafficking hub as regional crackdowns pushed the narcotics trade south and criminals started squirming away cocaine in shipping containers spirited down the river to markets abroad.

Although Rosario never suffered the car bombs and police assassinations gripping Mexico, Colombia and most recently Ecuador, the splintering of street gangs has fueled bloodshed. "It's not close to the violence in Mexico because we still have the deterrence capacity of the government in Argentina," said Marcelo Bergman, a social scientist at the National University of Tres de Febrero in Argentina. "But we need to keep an eye on Rosario because the major threats come not so much from big cartels but when these groups proliferate and diversify." Drug traffickers keep a tight grip over Rosario's poor neighborhoods full of young men vulnerable to recruitment.

One of them was Víctor Emanuel, a 17-year-old killed two years ago by rival gangsters in an area where street murals pay tribute to slain criminal leaders. No one was arrested. "My neighbors know who's responsible," his mother, Gerónima Benítez, told the AP, her eyes shiny with tears. "I looked for help everywhere. I knocked on the doors of the judiciary, the government. No one answered."

Zelenskyy welcomes US aid to Ukraine

KYIV: Ukraine's president has welcomed the passage of \$60bn in military aid for his country by the US House of Representatives and urged Washington to quickly turn the bill into law and proceed with the transfer of weapons. "I am grateful to the United States House of Representatives, both parties, and personally Speaker Mike Johnson for the decision that keeps history on the right track," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

The president said that the bill "will keep the war from expanding, save thousands and thousands of lives, and help both of our nations to become stronger". In an interview with NBC's Meet the Press programme, Zelenskyy said the passage of the aid bill would send a powerful message to Russia that Washington stands by Kyiv and that it would not be "a second Afghanistan". "I think this support will really strengthen the armed forces of Ukraine and we will have a chance for victory," Zelenskyy said through an interpreter. He repeatedly urged US lawmakers to take swift action to pass the bill in the Senate. He said Ukraine urgently needed US long-range weapons including ATACMS (Army Tactical Missile Systems) and air defence systems to fight off the invasion by Russia that began in February 2022. "This is crucial. These are the priorities now," Zelenskyy said. The US House of Representatives, with broad bipartisan support, passed a \$95bn legislative package providing security assistance to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan. Aid for Ukraine had been held up for months, because of the opposition of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, who urged Republican lawmakers to block it.



DONETSK: A serviceman of the 1148th separate artillery brigade of Air Assault Troops of Ukraine prepares a M777 howitzer to fire towards Russian troops, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine.

Rwanda bill: Govt and Lords face another voting showdown

LONDON (BBC): Rishi Sunak insists his policy to process asylum seekers in Rwanda will become law, even if it means MPs sitting late into the night to pass it. There has been a prolonged stand-off over the bill between the two Houses of Parliament over the past four months.

The Lords have consistently blocked and amended the bill - and the Commons will vote on the amended version later. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak will hold a news conference today where he is expected to talk about his plan. The PM said there would be no more delays, adding: "We will sit there and vote until it's done."

The government's planned legislation would drastically limit the grounds for legal challenges to its scheme to fly asylum seekers out to Rwanda, and make it easier to remove refugees who have arrived in the UK by illegal means - and has already been approved by the House of Commons on several occasions. The most recent was last Wednesday, but the House of Lords blocked its passage into law by demanding changes to the bill, including an amendment that would exempt asy-

lum seekers from Afghanistan, who had previously assisted British troops when the military was stationed there, from being among those forced to fly out to Rwanda. They also said that flights should not take off until a committee of experts set up to monitor the scheme decides Rwanda has fulfilled certain safeguards. The Lords want their two amendments added to the bill before they will ratify it, which is required before the government can pass it into law. MPs will vote on the bill and its amendments from the Lords on Monday afternoon. This ping pong between the two Houses of Parliament could go on until either the government concedes and makes concessions, or peers give up on their suggested amendments.

The Safety of Rwanda Bill is what Mr Sunak called "emergency legislation" and, if implemented, he says it would make it easier to keep his pledge to "stop the boats" - because the government says the prospect would be an effective deterrent for people who cross the English Channel in small boats in the hope of getting a new life in the UK. Effectively, the legislation would drastically limit the grounds for legal

challenges to the Rwanda scheme and it gives ministers the power to disregard some human rights law. The scheme was first introduced on 14 April 2022 by then-prime minister Boris Johnson, but no asylum seeker has yet been sent to Rwanda - a small landlocked country central Africa - 4,000 miles (6,500km) from the UK.

Mr Sunak then took on the scheme when he became prime minister, after Liz Truss' short tenure, in October 2022. The first flight was scheduled to go in June 2022, but was cancelled after legal challenges. Further obstruction came in November 2023, when the UK Supreme Court ruled unanimously that the Rwanda scheme was unlawful. After the Supreme Court ruling, the government introduced then this Safety of Rwanda bill to make clear in UK law that Rwanda is a safe country. Critics say the scheme will put people at risk, and the legislation undermines the independence of the courts. The back-and-forth between the House of Lords and the House of Commons over the past four months prompted Mr Sunak's declaration that he will require the two Houses to keep repeating the process until there is a breakthrough.

UAE will plant 100m mangrove trees by 2030

F.P. Report

DUBAI: Dubai ruler ordered the government to make a plan for sewerage of rain water. Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai, said that guided by the visionary leadership of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, the emirate is always prepared to respond effectively to any challenge.

Highlighting Dubai's robust crisis response mechanisms, he said that Dubai's readiness is further strengthened by the strong support of the government and the community.

The modern city Dubai is criticised by the people after the climate change hit the United Arab Emirates and most of the cities became under the water. Immediately after the rain, the residents came out voluntarily and saved many lives who were stuck in the cars under water. People distributed food among the flood affected. The government took actions immediately and tried to help the people in evacuating and providing them safety.

Sheikh Hamdan announces support for those affected by storm. The Crown Prince said that He would personally monitor and ensure that all those affected by the storm would receive the required help. He Orders Early Salary Payments for Govt Employees.

Dubai and Sharjah are affected more by the unprecedented rain storm ever in the history of United Arab Emirates. UAE got 6 billion cubic meters of rain in a day. Typically, the country receives approximately 6.7 billion cubic rain annually. Geographically, the UAE is a desert area and cities are built on the basis of the climate of the area. The country's sewerage system was not read to handle the flooded situation because, the existing sewerage capacity is 6.7 billion cubic annually.

The UAE has a hot desert climate and vulnerable to be effected by climate change, which contributes to worsening water scarcity, quality and water contamination. The country is struggling to combat climate change and put their efforts in controlling the global warming. Dubai municipality planted 185 thousand

trees in 210 sites, such as agriculture projects, nature reserves, main and secondary roads, in addition to the municipality parks.

Dubai Municipality has introduced a variety of trees across its planting initiatives, including local environmental species, such as Ghaf, Sidr, Sumar, Neem, Olive, Samorova palm, Indian jasmine, and have also been included, including Washingtonia, Bismarckia, Pseudobombax, Poinciana, Bougainvillea, Acacia farnesiana, and Darsina.

Similarly, the Abu Dhabi achieved the goal of planting 10,000 mangroves trees in 2023. And now, to support the ecosystem in the UAE, the plan is to plant 100 million mangrove trees by 2030. So, the reason why mangrove has been chosen for the plantation drive is that it's a core part of the ecosystem. At present, there are 60,000 mangroves that form the forest spanning 183 km². These trees capture a whopping 43,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide each year. Once these 100 million mangroves will be planted, the coverage will increase to 483 km².

Conservative Brazilians laud Elon Musk at rally

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP): Conservative Brazilians heaped praise on Elon Musk at a rally in support of far-right former President Jair Bolsonaro, whose legal troubles are mounting in tandem with the billionaire entrepreneur's feud with the South American nation's Supreme Court.

"Brazil Thanks Elon Musk," read one giant sign in English at the rally alongside Copacabana beach in the seaside city of Rio de Janeiro. Thousands of die-hard supporters of Bolsonaro attended. Musk, a self-declared free speech absolutist, is a target in an ongoing investigation over the dissemination of fake news by supporters of Bolsonaro. Musk said the social platform X wouldn't comply with a high court justice's order to remove certain accounts accused of spreading disinformation.

Musk, the CEO of Tesla and SpaceX who took over Twitter - now X - in late 2022, accused Justice Alexandre de Moraes of suppressing free speech and violating Brazil's constitution. He noted on X that users could seek to bypass any shutdown of the social media platform by using VPNs, or virtual private networks. That prompted de Moraes to include Musk in an ongoing investigation into so-called digital militias and open a new investigation into obstruction, incitement and criminal conspiracy. Several speakers lauded Musk at rally.

"What you see here are people who love liberty, who will not give up and will not kneel down to dictators, people who are willing to give their lives for freedom," said Gustavo Gayer, a pro-Bolsonaro congressman. For his part, the former president lauded Musk for demonstrating "courage" in the face of what he called censorship by de Moraes. "He is the man who really preserves true freedom for all of us," said Bolsonaro, who is himself under investigation for a plethora of crimes ranging from aiding an effort to overturn the 2022 election results and plotting a coup against his leftist successor, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Massive river flooding expected in China's Guangdong

BEIJING (Reuters): Major rivers, waterways and reservoirs in China's Guangdong province are threatening to unleash dangerous floods, forcing the government to enact emergency response plans to protect more than 127 million people.

Calling the situation "grim", local weather officials said sections of rivers and tributaries at the Xijiang and Beijiang river basins are hitting water levels in a rare spike that only has a one-in-50 chance of happening in any given year, state broadcaster CCTV news said. China's water resource ministry issued an emergency advisory, CCTV reported.

Guangdong officials urged departments in all localities and municipalities to begin emergency planning to avert natural disasters and promptly disperse disaster relief funds and materials to ensure affected people have food, clothing, water and some-

where to stay. The province, a major exporter and one of China's main commercial and trading centres, has seen major downpours and strong winds for several days, in a weather pattern which has also affected other parts of China. A 12-hour spell of heavy rain, battered the central and northern parts of the province including the cities of Zhaoqing, Shaoguan, Qingyuan and Jiangmen where rescue workers have been dispatched. More than 45,000 people have been evacuated in Qingyuan, according to state media, and some power facilities in Zhaoqing were damaged, cutting power to some places. Overall in Guangdong, 1.16 million households lost power due to the heavy rains, according to state-backed media. About 1,103 schools in Zhaoqing, Shaoguan and Qingyuan will suspend classes on Monday, Chinese state radio said.

"Please look at Zhaoqing's Huaiji county, which has become a water town. The elderly and children at the countryside don't know what to do with power outages and no signal," said one user on the popular social media site Weibo. Raging flood waters swept one vehicle down a narrow street in Zhaoqing, a video released by Hongxing News showed. "It rained like a waterfall for an hour and a half on the highway driving home last night," said another Weibo user. "I couldn't see the road at all." Authorities in Qingyuan and Shaoguan also suspended ships from traveling through several rivers, with maritime departments dispatching forces to be on duty and coordinate emergency tugboats and emergency rescue vessels.

Many hydrological stations in the province are exceeding water levels, weather officials warned, and in the provincial capital Guangzhou, a city of 18

million, reservoirs have reached flood limits, city officials announced. Data showed 2,609 hydrological stations with daily rainfall greater than 50 mm (1.97 inches), accounting for about 59% of all observation stations. At 8 a.m., 27 hydrological stations in Guangdong were on alert. In neighboring Guangxi, west of Guangdong, violent hurricane-like winds whipped the region, destroying buildings state media video footage showed. Some places have also experienced hailstorms and major flooding, CCTV said. In another video, rescuers could be seen trying to save an elderly person clinging to a tree half-submerged in flood waters. As of 10:00 a.m. (0200 GMT), 65 landslides were recorded in the city of Hezhou located in Guangxi, state media reported. Weather forecasters are expecting heavy rain through Monday in Guangxi region, Guangdong, Fujian and Zhejiang provinces.

Jordan's balancing act between Iran and Israel

AMMAN: The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is caught between two regional powers and could face serious social, political and economic repercussions should regional tensions continue to intensify. Jordan's tenuous position means that any regional action - an intensification of hostilities between Iran and Israel or an Israeli invasion of Rafah - can have incendiary repercussions domestically.

"Any imminent Iranian-Israeli war is going to put Jordan on a tightrope," Sean Yom, an expert on Jordan at Temple University and the author of From Resilience to Revolution, told Al Jazeera. "Publicly, it has to stay out of the fray; it cannot side with any combatant." Jordan has pushed for a ceasefire in Israel's war on Gaza and publicised its aid distribution efforts in the besieged enclave. But that has done little to appease the scores of protesters who have rallied outside the US and Israeli embassies. Among their demands are ending relations with Israel and the United States. Since October 7, protests in

Jordan have ebbed and flowed as Israel's campaign in Gaza killed more than 34,000 Palestinians. Analysts say the monarchy has tried to press the US and Israelis for a ceasefire and an increase in aid entering Gaza, but those efforts have had little impact. A more recent incident has enraged people further. Overnight, the Royal Jordanian Air Force took to the skies to intercept and shoot down dozens of Iranian drones as they flew over Jordan's territory on their way to Israel. Iran had fired more than 300 missiles and drones at Israel in retaliation for an alleged Israeli strike on Iran's consular building in Damascus. A senior Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) commander, Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Zahedi, was killed in the attack along with other commanders. The Jordanian government said it was defending its national borders. "There was imminent danger of drones or missiles falling in Jordan, and the Jordanian armed forces dealt with this danger in the appropriate manner," Jordan's Foreign

Minister Ayman Safadi said. "We will not permit anyone to jeopardise the security of Jordan and the Jordanians ... This is a matter of principle and these are steps we have taken in the past. We took them yesterday and we will take them in the future, whether the source of the threat is Israel, Iran or any [other] element." Jordanians have strong sympathy for Palestinians. Including an estimated three million Palestinian refugees, more than half the population in Jordan is of Palestinian origin and native Jordanians have a strong solidarity with Palestine. Some accounts on social media labelled Jordan's King Abdullah "a traitor" for his country's role in shooting down Iran's drones. Jordan's actions also initially brought the ire of Iran. Fars News Agency, which the IRGC manages, said Iran's armed forces threatened that Jordan could be a future target if they interfere with Iran's military operations against Israel. "The Iranians actually went after the Jordanians and the king and his family very aggressively," Vali Nasr,

professor of international affairs and Middle East studies at Johns Hopkins University in the US, told Al Jazeera.

The two parties quickly buried the hatchet, with Iran's Mehr News saying Safadi told Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian by phone that Abdollah would not "abuse its airspace". "The Revolutionary Guard proclaimed Jordan as a potential target as it saw the Hashemite Kingdom as collaborating with Israel, but on Monday [April 15], the Iranian Foreign Ministry smoothed over any ruffled feathers, calling Jordan a diplomatic partner and an ordinary state which had normal relations with Iran," Yom said. In fact, this incident could lead to warmer relations between Jordan and Iran. The two have discussed normalisation in the past and Nasr believes this incident may have acted as an accelerant. "I think the Jordanians, much like the Saudis, will come to the conclusion that ultimately having zero relations with Iran does not really defend their interest," he said. — Aljazeera

Pro-China leader sweeps Maldives polls

MALE, Maldives (AP): Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu's political party has swept parliamentary elections in a strong endorsement of his pro-China foreign policy, according to preliminary results reported Monday by local media.

The People's National Congress won 70 out of 93 seats in vote, and along with three seats secured by its allies has taken absolute control of Parliament, according to the preliminary results. The Maldivian Democratic Party, led by former President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, who is seen as pro-India, held 65 seats in the previous Parliament but won only 15 seats, the news site Mihaaru.com reported.

Official results are expected later Monday. The election was closely watched by

regional powers India and China, which are competing for influence in the archipelago nation, which has a strategic location in the Indian Ocean. Muizzu's election as president last year sharpened the rivalry between India and China as he took a pro-China stand and acted to remove Indian troops stationed on one of Maldives' islets. Election was easier than expected for Muizzu, who had been expected to face a tough fight because some of his allies had fallen out and more parties entered the race. Six political parties and independent groups fielded 368 candidates for the 93 seats in Parliament. The number of seats is six more than in the previous Parliament following adjustments for population growth. Muizzu ran for president on a campaign theme of "India out," accus-

ing his predecessor of compromising national sovereignty by giving India too much influence. At least 75 Indian military personnel were stationed in the Maldives and their known activities were operating two aircraft donated by India and assisting in the rescue of people stranded or faced with calamities at sea. Muizzu has taken steps to have civilians take over those activities. Relations were strained further when Indian social media activists started a boycott of tourism in Maldives. That was in retaliation for three Maldivian deputy ministers making derogatory statements about Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for raising the idea of promoting tourism in Lakshadweep, India's own string of islands similar to the Maldives.

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Navigating the complexities of Afghan repatriation

As we reflect on recent developments between Pakistan and Afghanistan, the imperative of distinguishing political motivations from humanitarian considerations has never been more critical.

The Frontier Post, steadfast in its advocacy for a prosperous Afghanistan and the dignified treatment of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, remains deeply concerned about the emerging scenario coined as "Talibanization" which threatens to complicate an already delicate bilateral relationship. The concept of "Talibanization" expanding beyond Afghanistan's borders carries significant implications for regional stability.

Pakistan, finding itself in a challenging position, must navigate its relationship with Afghanistan with nuanced diplomacy, recognizing the US distinction between the Taliban regime and terrorist entities like the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). This differentiation underscores a strategic approach in dealing with different facets of extremism and governance. The situation with Afghan refugees in Pakistan, particularly in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, brings additional layers of complexity. The recent statements by Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, the KP government spokesperson, underscore the sensitivity required in handling the repatriation of Afghan nationals. His plea for a humane approach towards those legally residing in Pakistan resonates with the need for compassion, underscoring the potential for misunderstanding and mistrust that could arise from harsher measures.

The ongoing repatriation drives, spearheaded by directives to map and potentially repatriate nearly one million documented Afghans, must be handled with utmost care to avoid exacerbating tensions. The distinction between undocumented and documented Afghans is crucial here, as it ties directly into international legal obligations and the moral duty of Pakistan towards these vulnerable populations.

It is worrying when domestic politics intertwine with international humanitarian obligations. The federal government's efforts, led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, must transcend political rivalries, particularly those involving PTI and its leader Imran Khan. The political leveraging of refugee policies not only undermines Pakistan's international standing but also jeopardizes the lives of millions seeking refuge and stability. As we continue to monitor and report on these developments, The Frontier Post advocates for policies that prioritize human dignity and regional stability.

It is through understanding and cooperation, not coercion and expulsion, that we can hope to achieve a peaceful coexistence and a mutually beneficial relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan. In conclusion, the path forward should be tread lightly, with a focus on diplomatic finesse and a steadfast commitment to upholding human rights. The narrative of "Talibanization" and its potential spillover effects demand a strategy that separates political gamesmanship from genuine governance challenges. As always, we remain committed to voicing the concerns of those who cannot speak for themselves and pushing for a future where Afghan refugees can look towards a horizon of hope rather than despair.

US aid bills and Ukraine

ALTHOUGH the two military aid bills regarding Ukraine and Israel caught the attention of the world, the two other bills in the aid package the United States House of Representatives passed on Saturday also deserve attention as they concern the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

The so-called "Indo-Pacific" Security Supplemental Bill includes \$8.1 billion to counter Beijing's "actions" in the "Indo-Pacific" region, \$3.3 billion to develop submarine infrastructure, \$2 billion in military financing for Taiwan and other key allies, and \$1.9 billion to replenish defense items and services provided to Taiwan and regional partners.

The so-called 21st Century Peace through Strength Act, meanwhile, includes a measure that could lead to a nationwide ban in the US on TikTok, a short-form video hosting service owned by Chinese internet company ByteDance. In his speech on the aid package on Saturday shortly after its passing, House Speaker Mike Johnson didn't mince his words in claiming that China is one of the three primary "adversaries" to the US, along with Russia and Iran, that threatens the "free world".

Both the content of the two China-related bills and the remarks of Johnson constitute grave violations of the series of statements the Joe Biden administration has made on Sino-US relations, and threatens to ruin the efforts that are being made to repair the fraught relationship. In their talk by telephone on April 2, US President Joe Biden reiterated to his Chinese counterpart that the US does not seek a new Cold War, its objective is not to change China's system, its alliances are not targeted against China, it does not support "Taiwan independence", it adheres to the one-China policy and it does not seek conflict with China.

Yet, with the Taiwan separatists hailing the US side's "rock solid" commitment to their cause and Chinese companies complaining about politicized and unfair treatment, the onus is on the US side to explain how the two China-related bills conform to Biden's multiple "does not", and how they can help the US manage differences with China "in a responsible way", as President Biden has vowed to. The bills are highly likely to be passed in the US Senate and signed by President Biden into law. If so, almost all aforementioned China-related statements the US leader has kept reiterating since his first exchange with the Chinese leader will prove to be empty talk, and the Sino-US relations will suffer a heavy blow rendering the efforts the two sides have made together to promote communications since the two leaders' meeting in San Francisco in November in vain.

Those in the US holding the view that the US can cooperate with China where they should, keep communication where they can, and confront China where it has no choice should realize that the Taiwan question concerns China's sovereignty and territorial integrity and core interests, and any careless move by Washington would lead to catastrophic consequences. US House Speaker Mike Johnson quoted an old US military adage to conclude his speech on the aid package: "We would rather send bullets to the conflicts overseas than our own boys or troops." That should be a direct reminder to the intended receivers of the aid to Taiwan of what their US ally is asking from them in return.

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The ICC can no longer ignore the genocide in Gaza

Anisha Patel & Hassan Ben Imran

OVER the past few months, the International Criminal Court (ICC) under the leadership of Prosecutor Karim Khan has come under heavy criticism for not taking any concrete steps to prosecute the crime of genocide in Gaza.

In November, six of its state parties led by South Africa referred the situation in Palestine to the court and urged it to act. The same month, three Palestinian rights groups submitted a communication to the ICC, asking it to investigate the crimes of apartheid and genocide in Palestine.

In December, Khan visited Israel and made a short trip to Ramallah, where he briefly met with victims of Israeli crimes. He then issued a general statement about investigating "allegations of crimes" that did not in any way refer to the mounting evidence of genocide being perpetrated in Gaza. In January, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) declared that Israel is "plausibly" committing genocide in Gaza. That also did not spur the ICC into action. The court has not even attempted to justify why it has failed to investigate genocide or issue any arrest warrants.

Last month, our organisation, Law for Palestine, made the first in a series of submissions to the ICC, characterising the crime of genocide committed by Israeli leaders against the Palestinian people. The 200-page document, drafted by 30 lawyers and legal researchers from across the world and reviewed by more than 15 experts, makes a compelling case for the genocidal intent as well as for the prosecutorial policy that the court has followed in other cases. If the ICC fails to act once again, it risks undermining its own authority as an institution of international justice and the international legal regime as a whole. The ICC is obliged to take immediate action on Gaza given the wealth of evidence supporting the accusations of genocide against Israel. Our submission highlights this reality.

In our filing, we focused specifically on the intent to commit genocide since it is considered the most difficult aspect to prove in a case of genocide. We point to the numerous statements, including by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Issac Herzog, Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, and members of the Knesset, as well as members of the public, where the intention to commit genocide is laid bare. We also refer to the database we have put together of more than 500 instances of Israeli incitement to genocide as additional proof.

While the statements form a substantial part of the intent component of the crime of genocide, the submission goes beyond and highlights the various actions and official policies that additionally prove intent. These include a pattern of targeting of medical facilities, deliberate destruction of agricultural land and water systems, and the obstruction of aid in order to cause starvation. We have also highlighted parallels between the well-documented Israeli policies of ethnic cleansing and similar atrocities in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, where international criminal tribunals have ruled on the crime of genocide.

We argue that Israeli attempts to "de-civilianise" Palestinian civilians in Gaza through the systematically and inaccurately employed human shields claim is a genocidal technique. We also outline Israel's destruction of Palestinian culture, heritage, and education systems, ecocidal policies and practices, and domicidal policies and practices in Gaza, which also reflect genocidal intent. Finally, we contend that Israel's practice of apartheid creates an environment conducive to committing the crime of genocide, just like in the cases of Nazi Germany and Rwanda, and that the Israeli laws enacted to protect its leaders from prosecution also point to the intent to commit genocide.

When considered collectively, this evidence constitutes "reasonable grounds" to believe that Israeli leaders have a general genocidal intent. This should be more than enough for the ICC to proceed with necessary legal action. Beyond the availability of extensive and comprehensive evidence, the ICC should be compelled to act also because of previous precedents it has set. Since its inception, the ICC has identified the existence of a reasonable basis for investigating cases of genocide, including ones

with far lesser devastation to civilian lives and infrastructure than currently observed in Gaza. For instance, in the case of the genocide in Darfur, in a July 2010 decision, the court correctly identified that the threshold to issue an arrest warrant against Sudan's then-President Omar al-Bashir for the crime of genocide was that "there are reasonable grounds to believe" that the intent exists.

This decision was a revision of the court's initial decision of March 2009 where the threshold of inferring the intent was "the only reasonable conclusion to be drawn". In its revised decision, the court stated that this threshold is only applicable later in the trial stage, not at the stage of issuing arrest warrants. The spirit to investigate genocide was apparent in the ICC's approach to the situation in Ukraine as well, despite facing greater challenges in establishing both the intent and the acts of genocide by Russia. The ICC, under Prosecutor Karim Khan, dispatched a 42-member investigative team to Ukraine within three months of the full-scale Russian invasion. They collected enough evidence to allow the court to issue four arrest warrants so far.

It is also important to note the evaluation the current ICC prosecutor made in his previous role as special adviser and head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) in 2021. Based on UNITAD's independent criminal investigations, he confirmed that there is "clear and convincing evidence that genocide was committed by ISIL against the Yazidi as a religious group". He drew his conclusion based on the ideology as well as the practices of ISIL. Needless to say, the evidence on Israeli genocidal intent and its connection with ideology are extremely abundant and have been documented extensively, for decades. At the outset, the Zionist movement recognised itself as a settler colonial entity and viewed the elimination of the Indigenous population of Palestine as a necessity. Over the last few months, this link between genocidal intent and ideology has been repeated by several Israeli leaders in reference to the

violence unleashed on Gaza, most prominently by Netanyahu in his call to "remember what Amalek has done to you", referring to the biblical commandment to smite and destroy the Amalekites.

Furthermore, it is important to note that one of Khan's predecessors, former ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo, clearly stated that even the "siege of Gaza itself... is a form of genocide". Additionally, the serious risk of genocide or the plausibility of its commission by Israel, if not full perpetration, has been recognised by top official bodies and experts within the UN system. Besides the ICJ provisional measures and additional provisional measures, which clearly stated that there is a plausible case for genocide, a number of statements and warnings have been voiced out by UN special rapporteurs and working groups, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP), and UN staff members.

Proceeding from all this evidence and recognition, the case for the ICC announcing an investigation into genocide and issuing arrest warrants against Israeli leaders is indisputable, especially given its own standards of "reasonable grounds" as seen in the Bashir case. The case for genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza is as compelling as any previously judicially successful case - if not more. Failure to announce an investigation into the crime of genocide will cause severe and long-lasting damage to the already seriously challenged image and legitimacy of the court.

Some would even argue that the ICC is heading for jurisprudential suicide by undermining the precedents set by the Darfur and Ukraine situations. The question of Palestine is at the heart of the post-World War II international legal order and cannot be ignored. Amid the continuous erosion of the ICC's legitimacy, the court and its prosecutor must urgently investigate the genocide unfolding in Palestine and issue arrest warrants against the Israeli war cabinet, if they are to restore the faith of the global majority in this institution of global justice.

Aljazeera

Developing Africa

Liu Hongwa

THE world has entered a period of volatility with the Russia-Ukraine crisis dragging on and a new round of the Palestine-Israel conflict flaring up. Despite the impact from geopolitical tensions, Africa has been pressing ahead with the African Union's 2063 Agenda. Looking back at 2023, Africa has been walking on its own path of development, affecting global advancement as a whole. The development of Africa has shown several distinctive features.

First, despite the frequent outbreaks of local conflicts, countries such as Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Libya, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Madagascar have seen a peaceful transfer of power after the elections, laying a foundation for the peaceful development of the continent.

Second, despite slower economic growth, the continent still boast huge investment potential. The 36th AU summit set a priority on "accelerating the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Zone", aiming to boost intra-African trade and attract foreign investment. According to the 2023 Africa Financial Markets Index released by Absa Group, South Africa was the region's largest destination for investment, with countries such as Mauritius and Nigeria also having enormous investment potential.

Third, the region was hit hard by climate change in 2023, with droughts, floods, and locust infestations plaguing the Horn of Africa, and extreme weather events exacerbating the food crisis in Somalia. Natural disasters have displaced millions of people, posing a grave threat to life.

In the face of mounting challenges in security, climate and healthcare, Africa has demonstrated the willingness and determination to participate in the global governance through collective action. At the inaugural Africa Climate Summit held in September, leaders of African countries called for enhanced technological and financial assistance to the continent to boost its climate response and green transition.

Fourth, China-Africa cooperation has reached a new level. With the entry of Egypt and Ethiopia, the BRICS grouping now has three members from Africa, which will drive the continent's development in the next decade and boost China-Africa cooperation. Additionally, 10 years after its inception, the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative has greatly facilitated the modernization drive in the Global South, especially African countries.

The new edition of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation to be held this year, as well as the BRI, which has embarked on its second decade, will deepen China-Africa partnership and align the development achievements of China with the huge potential and growth demand of other developing countries, creating vast development opportunities. This is reflected in four aspects.

First, this year will be an election year, with

Algeria, Botswana, Ghana, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa and Tunisia to hold presidential and legislative elections. In other parts of the world, countries such as the US, India and Japan will also have general elections. Amid the turbulent world, it is crucial for African countries to ensure a peaceful transfer of power. It is also important for Africa to proactively participate in global governance, and advance modernization through the China-Africa partnership, South-South cooperation, and the BRICS framework, thus contributing to the creation of a new global political order and safeguarding world peace.

Second, to deliver on the vision outlined in the AU's 2063 Agenda, the continent needs to double down on infrastructure building to upgrade its economy. It is also imperative for African nations to address food security by scaling up agricultural development and promoting industrial construction. China will continue aligning the BRI with the AU 2063 Agenda and help Africa foster new growth engines in fields such as the digital economy. Some landmark projects, such as the Lagos Rail Mass Transit Blue Line and the Lekki Port in Nigeria, the Kilwa Masoko Fishing Port in Tanzania and the headquarters of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (first phase) will further unleash the development potential of Africa and facilitate intra-African trade and investment.

Third, Africa faces a pressing need to bolster its healthcare system by cultivating local talents, introducing advanced health-related technologies and ramping up investment in disease prevention. In addition, regional countries should promote international cooperation on healthcare and tackle shared health problems by accelerating the construction of cooperation mechanisms in this field.

Fourth, Africa needs to join hands with China to drive continental integration and modernization. Africa holds immense potential for development thanks to its rich natural resources, vast land, young population and huge market. At the China-Africa Leaders' Dialogue held in August, President Xi Jinping announced China's blueprints for supporting Africa's industrialization, agricultural modernization and the training of personnel. The two sides are expected to put forward detailed action plans at this year's Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, and align China-aided infrastructure projects with the three assistance programs to jointly advance their modernization.

China, South Africa, Ethiopia and Egypt, four of the BRICS member states, can lead China-Africa cooperation under the framework of BRICS to transform the blueprint drawn up in the China-Africa Cooperation Vision 2035 into reality, and strengthen political trust, economic and cultural exchanges, and talent cultivation, thereby jointly working for the China-Africa community with a shared future.

The Los Angeles Times

Hapless House Republicans weaponized impeachment

Jackie Calmes

MAYBE I'm going out on a limb here, but the hapless House Republicans have finally achieved something big: an end to tit-for-tat impeachments. Of course, that's the opposite of the achievement they promised two years ago, ahead of the midterm elections that gave them control of the House.

Back then, some chest-beaters were vowing to impeach President Biden as well as members of his Cabinet, starting with Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas, the administration's border security czar, and sweeping up Atty. Gen. Merrick Garland, FBI Director Christopher A. Wray (a Donald Trump holdover, by the way), Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken and Lord knows who else.

They managed, just, to impeach Mayorkas on their second attempt - more on that later. But all in all, they've failed spectacularly.

Fortunately. And though Republicans won't say so, their humiliation has all but exorcised the zeal to abuse one of the House's most solemn powers under the Constitution: its ability to charge executive or judicial branch officials with "high Crimes and Misdemeanors," intending for the Senate to try the alleged offender and boot them from office.

The latest and hopefully final blow to the impeachment follies was delivered Wednesday. Two months after House Republicans made Mayorkas the first Cabinet member to be impeached in nearly 150 years, they finally sent the patently political charges to the Democratic-controlled Senate, which took just three hours to dismiss them. The Senate found that the two charges - that he "willfully and systemically refused to comply with Federal immigration laws" and breached the public trust - didn't clear the Constitution's high bar.

So much for the buildup from the House Republicans' chief impeachment manager, Rep. Mark Green. "Get the popcorn," the Tennessean told party donors last year. "It's going to be fun."

What makes the collapse of the Mayorkas prosecution all the more deflating for House Republicans is the fact that they'd pressed the matter as it became clear that the air was spitting out of their main effort, impeaching Biden. With Mayorkas, at least they gave dear leader Trump and the party's MAGA base something. But now they're essentially 0 for 2.

House Republicans have all but folded the Big Top on the Biden impeachment circus. Many months after opening an inquiry oddly based on nothing more than to-be-determined charges, Republicans have no hard evidence of an impeachable offense by the president.

Their supposed star witness was indicted for lying to the FBI. Other witnesses have undercut any case against the president. And, consequently, they don't have enough Republican support to proceed. The clownish lead investigator,

House Oversight Committee chair and Fox News regular Rep. James Comer of Kentucky, last month told donors in a fundraising letter - notice a pattern here, Republican leaders playing to monied interests? - that instead of seeking Biden's impeachment, he'll send a criminal referral (again, crimes TBD) to the Justice Department. The hope is that the department is about to come under new management - by a reelected Trump, Mr. "I am your retribution" himself - that will welcome the allegations.

Constitutional scholars across the spectrum and even a few Republican lawmakers

had joined Democrats in denigrating the charges against Mayorkas. "It's about as trivial as an impeachment can get," Michael Gerhardt, author of "The Law of Presidential Impeachment," told Politico. The case was "designed to put President Biden's immigration policies on trial," he added. "That's what an election is for." Exactly. But MAGA Sen. J.D. Vance of Ohio said Democrats "will come to regret" dismissing the Mayorkas impeachment articles, when a Republican-run Senate someday does the same to impeachment articles from a Democratic-majority House.

Take, for example, Democrats' most recent impeachment resolution, the one against Trump after Jan. 6, 2021, for "inciting violence against the Government of the United States." If tit-for-tattling Republicans opt in the future to trash impeachment articles covering actions as grave as

that, they can answer to history, as those who voted to acquit Trump back then already are. (And by the way, back then 45 Republican senators also voted to dismiss the Jan. 6 counts against Trump without a Senate trial.) Republicans rely on a false premise when they allege, as Comer has, that Democrats "cheapened impeachment when they impeached Donald Trump twice." Both Trump impeachments, including the first one for pressuring Ukraine to investigate Biden before the 2020 election, easily cover the sort of misconduct the Founders had in mind, I'm confident. Never mind that Senate Republicans let the former president off the hook each time. The two well-deserved Trump impeachments are so different from Mayorkas' and the Biden attempt they shouldn't even be called tit for tat. They're apples and oranges. And sour grapes.

The Los Angeles Times

Ravaged by austerity, chastened by Brexit

DECIDING on what the UK's place in the world should be has been like watching politicians spin a wheel. Then spinning it again when the option they landed on doesn't work out. First, it was the imperial power projections of Brexit, the reassertion of Britain's place in the world unshackled by the limitations of equal partnership with Europe. You don't hear so much about this any more (funny that). Instead, we now find ourselves in an era chastened by the embarrassing bombast of the past few years, but still trying to work out where we "fit", what our role is, in a world where the country's status has taken a beating.

Earlier this month, former diplomats proposed that the Foreign Office be abolished altogether and be replaced by a new Department for International Affairs. As it stands, the Foreign Office works like "a giant private office for the foreign secretary" and should be replaced by a new independent institution, one "less rooted in the past". The new body they propose would be a more modern place. The colonial art would go, and with it, other outdated ways of working and thinking about foreign policy.

There is something in this. A department that is isolated from the rest of the civil service machinery and serves one minister is a hang-over. The paintings don't help. The whole building feels like a movie set (and is actually used as one), a cosplay of past imperial standing. And in keeping with the stubbornness of that view, and how often it is resurrected in particularly rightwing storytelling, it feels like a re-enactment of a former era. The fact that the office has not been repurposed, both in building and in style, is part of something bigger. "The British state," the sociologist Paul Gilroy once told me, "is a machine for running and exploring the world, which doesn't work very well when it comes to the business of the modern nation."

So how is British foreign policy to work, now that its Brexit ambitions have been dashed? The shadow foreign secretary, David Lammy, has a suggestion - "progressive realism", which reads to me like an acceptance of Britain's new place in the world, but with an

vulnerable have access to. Austerity takes apart the very fabric of national identity, removes the spaces in which it can be forged, and eliminates people's dignity. Flags, the royal family, the army - all relentlessly paraded and namechecked by Conservatives

A nation's foreign presence is built on the foundations of its domestic state. And after years of defunding and shrinking of the public domain, that state is a weakened and subdued one, unrecognisable in Lammy's reaches for "optimism".

added dash of divestment from any sort of underlying values. Or as Lammy himself puts it, "the pursuit of ideals without delusions about what is achievable". This new progressive realism recognises that Britain still has some chips to play with. It is a permanent member of the UN security council and the world's sixth largest economy, and "our universities, legal sectors, creatives and businesses continue to be world leaders". These great strengths can be leveraged to make Britain a player once again, but without delusions of grandeur.

This tinkers around the far edges of the problem. It is impossible to carve out a role for Britain in the world without first reckoning with what it has become at home. The country's colonial past is not the only thing that has been resigned to history. This modern, progressively realist nation that policymakers are trying to project into the world is also a fantasy. A nation's foreign presence is built on the foundations of its domestic state. And after years of defunding and shrinking of the public domain, that state is a weakened and subdued one, unrecognisable in Lammy's reaches for "optimism".

Austerity does not only diminish practical things. It doesn't just affect buildings, services and the amount of money those who are

and Labour as symbols of our national pride - are poor substitutes for what brings people together and gives them a sense of optimism about the future.

Even if Britain is the sixth largest economy in the world, too many people within it are brow-beaten and isolated. Nearly a fifth of the population struggles with basic needs - 300,000 children were plunged into a state of absolute poverty in the past year alone. Since 2010, five-year-olds have been displaying signs of reduced growth. As Britain seeks to stand taller in the world, its children are getting shorter.

How then, are politicians and diplomats to face the world with any sense of swagger or idea of what we would like to achieve, both for our own national interests and any progressive goals globally, when a much more basic role, of providing for your citizens, grows increasingly unfulfilled? And how to do so when the sibling of austerity, hostility to immigration, treats the world as some global recruitment pool for the jobs governments do not want to train for or spend on, and then restricts those who do come from bringing their families? Take a peak beneath the hood of our world-leading universities and business, and you will see recruitment crises, underfund-

ing that overseas students plug (but again, without their families), and a property sector increasingly treated as a hedge fund by wealthy global investors.

The very organs of state, the ones that together should form the building blocks of the country as it represents itself abroad, are being defunded, automated, and their roles outsourced to private providers, with little promise of reform or reversal of the damage that has been done. Lammy's own progressively realist goals of countering the climate crisis and tackling inequality are particularly hollow, given the party's slashing of its green investment pledge and refusal to end poverty-triggering policies such as the two-child benefit cap. After Labour failed its biggest foreign policy test so far by fumbling an early question on whether Israel has the right to cut off power and water from the civilian population of Gaza, and only calling for a ceasefire under duress and amid party turmoil, Labour should again look, and start, closer to home.

And so what remains? If there is no moral standing at home, there can be none abroad, only the meaningless language of what is "achievable", which is always a byword for what there is the will to achieve. If there is a fractured, underfunded, uncoordinated public domain, then our role in the world can only be as committed as we are domestically in creating a coherent system of peace and equality. We can remove the paintings of a triumphant Anglo-Saxon empire with an Africa represented by a black child carrying a fruit basket. And we can try to draw a line under a Conservative regime that, particularly under Boris Johnson, was pugnacious and comically out of touch. But these are cosmetic exercises, wrapped in fancy language and good intentions. Behind them lies a truth, still revealing itself in scale and depth, about how changing the economy to the exclusion of many bedraggles the nation as a whole.

The Guardian

Trump followers were asleep at the switch

Richard Galant

‘WE are most deeply asleep at the switch,’ wrote Annie Dillard, "when we fancy we control any switches at all. We sleep to time's hurdy-gurdy; we wake, if we ever wake, to the silence of God." Dillard's line - from her short meditative book titled "Holy the Firm," published in 1977, two years after she won the Pulitzer Prize at the age of 29 - invoked the role of the switchman, whose alertness was crucial in making sure trains got routed on the right track before the advent of automated switches.

If America's political leaders control any switches at all, some have been asleep at the switch for a while. When the Senate voted to send new aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan two months ago, House Speaker Mike Johnson took no action. The House leadership also refused to act on a bipartisan bill to address the surge of migrants across the southern border.

In both cases, Republicans in Congress were partly heeding the wishes of former President Donald Trump, who opposed more aid for Ukraine and wanted to prevent President Joe Biden from scoring any more legislative victories. That was weeks before Trump went on trial in a Manhattan courtroom, where the man who labeled Biden "Sleepy Joe" appeared to doze off several times Monday and Tuesday while the court started the process of selecting jurors.

And it was also well before Iran directly attacked Israel for the first time. Israel responded, and while those strikes appeared to cause only limited damage, it showed the potential for wars to spiral out of control and made it even less politically tenable for the House leadership to be seen stalling on military aid measures. When a defendant nods off, it doesn't stop a trial from going forward. When a nation naps in the middle of international crises, the consequences can be profoundly scary.

Last week, Johnson finally acted, making clear he supports the foreign aid package, though he broke it up into four bills and added a fifth on border security. With the help of Democrats, the House approved aid to Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan on Saturday. "Despite fierce opposition from MAGA Republicans within his caucus, Speaker Johnson has decided that the imperative of the US providing this assistance is more important than pleasing all the members of his caucus," wrote Julian Zelizer. "Without this support, international adversaries, including Russia, Iran and China, would read the failure of the US Congress to pass legislation as a sign that MAGA's America First agenda was triumphant. They might conclude that the age of internationalism, entrenched into American politics since World War II, had come to an end."

"The problem for Johnson is that his decision to move forward might very well cost him his job," added Zelizer, noting Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene's fierce criticism of Johnson and a House rule allowing just one member to bring about a vote to oust the speaker - which led to Kevin McCarthy's downfall six months ago. Biden backed bipartisan legislation on the border, but in the view of Fared Zakaria, he has missed an opportunity to take firm executive action after House Republicans scuttled the bill and launched the doomed effort to impeach and remove Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas.

"Biden must show he can fight. He should declare a national security emergency, send the National Guard to the border, work with Congress to suspend the asylum process and propose a new one that basically makes it impossible to get asylum if you just show up at the border," Zakaria wrote. "Many will scream, and it will all be challenged in court. But it will signal that Biden is taking the problem seriously. Bill Clinton often says that the American people don't always need you to succeed, but they want to catch you trying. Joe Biden needs to be caught trying to solve the immigration crisis."

Donald Trump's campaign denied reports that the former president dozed off several times in court last week. But no one should be surprised at the

sight of a criminal defendant seeming to nod off, noted Elliot Williams, a former prosecutor who has logged countless hours in court. "Courtrooms don't lend themselves to keeping people awake. They are notoriously quiet places where people are required to remain seated almost all of the time. The air is often stagnant and the ever-so-distracting handheld devices that are our lifelines to (and barrier from) the world around us are strictly forbidden ... the gears of justice are not made for the 24-hour news cycle. What might be resolved in an 8-minute final segment of an episode of 'Law and Order' might be drawn out over days of painstaking testimony. It can take months, if not years (even in cases in which a defendant is not deliberately attempting to slow proceedings down) before a matter finally gets to trial."

Still, the selection of the jury that will pronounce a verdict on the hush money trial moved faster than expected last week. There were speed bumps though, as Patrick T. Brown noted. "One potential juror who underwent questioning ... was subsequently struck for cause after Trump's team found social media posts from the juror referencing Trump that say, 'Get him out' and 'Lock him up.'"

"Indeed, it seems unlikely that this case would be being prosecuted with the same vigor and creative legal theorizing if Trump were an everyday citizen. After all, Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg came into office promising to focus on the ongoing investigation of Trump, and would have likely felt political heat from New York Democrats had he decided to close the investigation without bringing charges." "In the end, as The New York Times reported in March 2023, Bragg's office took a 'circutious and sometimes uncertain road' to filing criminal charges, reviving a dying investigation that originally focused on Trump's business practices with a renewed focus on hush money payments."

Will the trial be fair? Jeffrey Abramson, author of a book on the jury system, noted, "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."

"We are approaching the holiday of Passover, which commemorates the freedom of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery and our formation as a free Jewish people in our own land. But this Passover is like no other in recent history, with scores of hostages still held in Gaza and Jews worldwide fearful for our future - including Jews in the US. We are facing the worst global antisemitism since the Holocaust and while it is not state-sanctioned as Nazism was, it is a threat going unchecked in California's East Bay." David Schizer, who co-chairs Columbia University's task force on antisemitism, testified before a congressional committee Wednesday, along with the university's president. Writing for CNN Opinion, he emphasized that there are legal principles that require universities to prohibit expressions of antisemitism.

"Of course, the mission of a university is not merely enforcing rules but providing an education," Schizer noted. "Over time, opening minds with facts and analysis is the best defense against antisemitism and other bigotry. But to allow this educational process to flourish, we need to build it on a foundation of laws that are respected and enforced." Nike came in for sharp criticism due to the design of Team USA's new Olympic track and field uniforms. "Unlike the men's uniform - a standard compression tank top and mid-thigh shorts - the women competitors repping the so-called 'land of the free' will be donning a compression tank top and bikini bottoms with a noticeably high cut up the thigh," wrote Danielle Campoamor.

Interest in women's sports is at an all-time high,

thanks to superstars like Caitlin Clark and Simone Biles, Campoamor noted, "and despite all the excellence of women's sports, Team USA decided to send a resounding message to their athletes, our country and the world: You are viewed as a woman expected to perform for the male gaze, not a medal, way before you are viewed as an athlete. You must be sexy before you can be powerful. You must appear feminine before you can appear athletic." Six people - five of them women - were killed in a stabbing attack at a mall in Sydney. "Multiple people, including a new mother, slaughtered in daylight in an affluent suburb is something Australians read about in the news when it happens in other countries," wrote Latika Bourke.

"Rarely does it occur in their backyard. When it did in 1996 after the Port Arthur Massacre when a lone gunman killed 35 people, then-Prime Minister John Howard, a Conservative leader, acted - with bipartisan support that has remained rock solid ever since." "He enacted strict gun control laws and initiated a massive buyback scheme. He had to stare down political opposition from his own supporters at the time, but his tough stance has been vindicated by the lack of mass shootings ever since."

"But restricting public access to weapons with the capability of mass lethality cannot stop hateful ideologies mixing with other noxious ingredients including radicalization and mental health issues." "This includes misogyny."

As Holly Thomas pointed out, former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is no fan of his successor Rishi Sunak's move to eventually ban all smoking in the nation. "The party of Winston Churchill wants to ban (cigars)?" he moaned. "Donnez-moi un break, as they say in Quebec. It's just mad."

Thomas wrote, "Under the proposed bill, no one born on or after January 1, 2009, would ever be allowed to buy tobacco, effectively raising the legal smoking age every year. This would mean today's 15-year-olds will never legally be able to buy cigarettes." "Despite what Johnson may have led his audience to believe, a potential smoking ban enjoys broad popular support in the UK. A February survey by YouGov for the charity Action on Smoking and Health found that 71% of adults backed the goal of making Britain a country where no one smokes (12% are opposed). Like most people, I'm certain this would save many lives and relieve a massive strain on the National Health Service (NHS). Whether that goodwill proves sufficient to overcome the many obstacles still ahead remains to be seen."

Amy Bass bonds with her teenage daughter over their mutual fascination with Taylor Swift. They're looking forward to attending a concert later this year in Vancouver, perhaps their last mother-daughter trip before college. So they were both on the alert at midnight Friday, when Swift dropped her new album, "The Tortured Poets Department" and again at 2am when she released a surprise second half of what turned out to be a double album. "It's one thing to be a puzzle to your fans - it's entirely another to make a puzzle for your fans," Bass wrote. "Swift has created music's version of 'I Spy' novels for this generation, encoding notes in her lyrics, creating everything from complex numerologies to word searches. The relentless hunt for Easter eggs across social media suddenly took physical form in this exhibit: from the 72 (the number of months Swift was with (Joe) Alwyn) card catalogue drawers, six (the number of years Swift was with Alwyn) of which are open and filled with lace and dead flowers to a bust of the goddess Diana, the original statue crumbled on its way to London in the 6th century because of neglect. 'Even statues crumble,' Swift's TTPD billboard says in New York's Times Square, 'if they're made to wait.'" There's numerology in the Swiftie world, but also history. Swift sings of figures such as silent screen star Clara Bow, Welsh poet Dylan Thomas, singer-songwriter-poet Patti Smith - and of something called a "typewriter."

CNN

Damage limitation

Jiang Fangfei

hensive and offensive alliance involving pragmatic cooperation in various fields targeting China.

The third change is the transformation of their cooperation structure. Since the Cold War, bilateral cooperation between the US and the other two countries has prevailed in the US-Japan-ROK alliance. However, with substantial progress in the Japan-ROK rapprochement and the construction of trilateral cooperation mechanisms, the alliance has transformed into a "strengthened minilateral network" that could be further nested and interact with other US-led minilateral and multilateral mechanisms such as the Quadrilateral Dialogue, Chip 4, G7, Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity, Maritime Security Program and so forth. In this way, the three parties can further expand and deepen their cooperation, while the US still maintains a leadership advantage in the trilateral alliance. Many analysts think the prospects of the trilateral cooperation aren't so rosy, because of deep contradictions in Japan-ROK relations, uncertainties in the 2024 US presidential elections, as well as domestic divisions in the ROK regarding its relations with the US, Japan and China. Still, the Camp David Summit represents a perilous gambit to resurrect the specter of the Cold War and profoundly exert a series of adverse impacts on regional peace, stability and prosperity in East Asia.

First, it might further exacerbate geopolitical tensions in East Asia, especially on the Korean Peninsula. In recent years, both the frequency of the DPRK's missile tests and the heightened tensions on the Taiwan question are directly proportional to the degree of US involvement in East Asian affairs and the tremendous increase of its strategic deployment in Asia-

Pacific. Further strengthening of US-Japan-ROK military cooperation, especially the US deployment of offensive weapons in Japan and the ROK will only make the situation even worse, escalate the regional arms race, and make East Asia a more fiercely contested theater for the major powers, resulting in a spiraling risk of conflict in the region.

Second, it might further impede regional economic integration in East Asia. Since the end of the Cold War, China, Japan and the ROK have been increasingly closer in trade and supply chain cooperation under a series of frameworks such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, 10+3 and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. The three parties also declared they would accelerate negotiations on a trilateral free trade agreement after the RCEP came into effect. However, as the US keeps tying the Taiwan question to the Russia-Ukraine conflict to monger the "China threat", and is wooing its regional allies to build an anti-China economic circle in the "Indo-Pacific", both Japan and the ROK have become less motivated to advance the China-Japan-ROK FTA negotiations and more active in "decoupling" from China, leading to a sharp decline in their trade volume with China, tremendous mutual economic losses, and more fragmented supply chains in the region.

Third, it has caused more difficulty for China's regional diplomacy. The US' reckless call for a coordinated stance with Japan and the ROK against Russia, the DPRK and China is creating opposing camps, and sowing discord between China and its neighboring countries. Consequently, China is not only facing a dilemma of appeasement or counterbalance,

but also suffering from more strategic suspicions from neighboring countries, with pragmatic cooperation in various areas encountering greater challenges.

Therefore, in order to build a peaceful and prosperous East Asia in the right way, all regional stakeholders, especially the US, Japan and the ROK need to abandon the Cold War mentality, jointly develop their security and development concepts based on "equal consultations, constructive dialogues and win-win cooperation", rather than provoke confrontations and impede cooperation via the counterproductive "collective strategic deterrence".

First, all stakeholders need to jointly promote multilateral talks to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula. Especially, the US and its allies need to stop imposing more economic sanctions, political pressure and military deterrence toward the DPRK, and deploying offensive weapons in the region, but cooperate with China in persuading the DPRK back to the negotiation table through alleviating its economic difficulties and security concerns.

Second, Japan and the ROK need to avoid becoming a pawn of the US in containing China, prevent the trend of over-securitization in their China policy, and enhance strategic trust with China through pragmatically promoting the China-Japan-ROK FTA negotiations, implementation and upgrading of the RCEP, and constructive dialogues with the DPRK. Third, China should contribute to regional peace and prosperity by promoting multilateral talks on the Korean Peninsula, improving risk management in its surrounding waters, making every effort to stabilize China-US relations and seek peaceful reunification of Taiwan, and propelling its high-level institutional opening-up.

Forum promotes global concept

Harald Bruning

THE three-day, 10-nation 6th Ministerial Conference of the Forum for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and Portuguese-speaking Countries, or simply Forum Macao, will be held from Sunday. Initiated by the Chinese government in 2003 in conjunction with a number of Portuguese-speaking countries whose membership of the organization now stands at nine, Forum Macao has been helping Macao to strengthen its role as a service platform facilitating economic and cultural relations between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries. Also, it has elevated the Macao Special Administrative Region's global status.

The nine Portuguese-speaking countries taking part in Forum Macao include Brazil, South America's economic powerhouse and a BRICS member. On global governance issues, especially the development of the Global South, China and Brazil see eye to eye with each other. Also taking part in the forum are two of Africa's major emerging economies - Angola and

Mozambique, European Union member state Portugal, and five relatively small in size but rich in natural resources countries: Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, East Timor, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Cape Verde.

The nine Portuguese-speaking countries have a population of 290 million. This means, including China, Forum Macao's 10 member states account for about one-fifth of the world population. Forum Macao is one of two international dialogue and cooperation platforms established with the help of China and involving a group of countries speaking the same language. The other is the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, a formal dialogue platform between China and the Arab League established in 2004. China has started several other forums with the aim of improving international relations, such as the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation and, most importantly, the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. All this shows China has become the world's prime

mover of international forums, which benefit global governance and development, multicultural understanding, and help alleviate poverty.

China's globe-spanning forums can be comprehended only if one understands President Xi Jinping's concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind - which essentially is a blueprint for a better world. Within the framework of the global community concept, the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative have all taken root and borne fruit.

In the 70 years since China, India and Myanmar jointly proposed the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, the world has realized the importance of those principles - mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence - for global governance. As a matter of fact, the concept of a

The China Daily



DUBAI: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb in a Meeting with Senior Officials of Mashreq Bank and First Abu Dhabi Bank.

IT exports increased by 17.44% in nine months of current FY

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's ICT export remittances have seen a remarkable increase, soaring by US\$ 339 million (17.44%) to reach US\$ 2.283 billion during July 2023 to March 2024 of FY2023-24, compared to US\$ 1.944 billion reported for the same period last year.

The Ministry of IT and Telecommunication, along with the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) in close coordination with the Special Investment Council (SIFC), has been instrumental in driving accelerated international business development and improving the ease of doing business environment.

This collaborative effort has significantly enhanced IT & ITeS exports and bolstered confidence within the IT industry, said the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication. In March 2024, ICT services export remittances surged to US\$ 306 million,

marking an impressive increase of 36% compared to US\$ 225 million in March 2023. Moreover, in comparison to the previous month of February 2024, ICT services export remittances have grown by US\$ 49 million, reflecting a robust 19.1% growth in March 2024.

Tesla shares tumble on price cuts in run-up to earnings

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Tesla (TSLA.O), opens new tab tumbled 4% on Monday, as its latest global price cuts fanned Wall Street concerns about dwindling margins at the electric-vehicle maker in the run-up to its earnings report later this week.

The company slashed prices by up to \$2,000 on its vehicles such as the Model 3 and Model Y in several markets including the U.S., China and Germany over the weekend, in its latest effort to boost demand slowed by high interest rates.

The cuts come ahead of its quarterly earnings on Tuesday, with the world's most valuable automaker expected to post its first revenue drop and lowest gross margin in nearly four years, according to LSEG data. Investors are awaiting clarity from CEO Elon Musk on Tesla's strategy after he cut 10% of the company's staff last week and said focusing on autonomous driving was a "blindingly obvious" move.

Musk had earlier this month announced an event in August to unveil its

"Robotaxi", after a Reuters report on April 5 said Tesla had scrapped its plan to develop its long-awaited affordable EV in favor of robotaxis. Musk said after the report that "Reuters is lying", without citing any inaccuracies. Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives wrote in a preview note last week that the earnings would be a "moment of truth" and "one of the most important moments in the company's history".

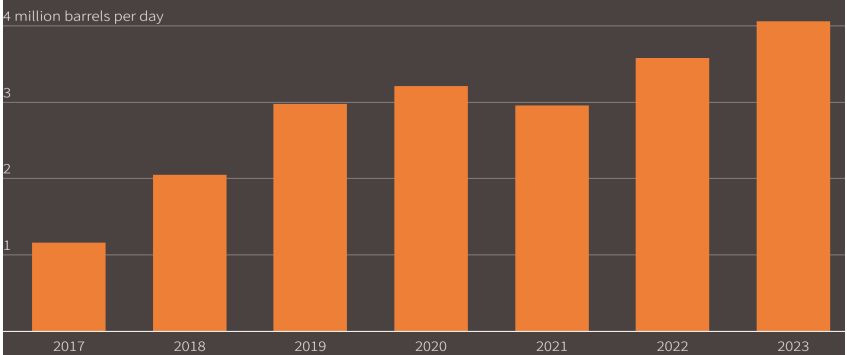
Tesla shares were down at \$141.1 on Monday. The shares have lost about 41% of their value so far

this year with surveys and experts saying Musk's tilt toward right-wing politics and polarizing public statements turned away some prospective buyers of its cars. Monday's drop was set to erase about nearly \$20 billion from its market value of \$468 billion, based on its total outstanding shares. While Tesla remains the world's most valuable automaker, Toyota (7203.T), opens new tab has slowly been narrowing the gap on the back of a boom in demand for its hybrid vehicles.

As shale oil output slows, one deepwater port struggles for customers

U.S. crude oil exports climb as shale keeps flowing

Post-COVID energy recovery pushes exports to 4.1 million barrels per day in 2023



Arathiy Somasekhar | Reuters News
Source: Energy Information Administration

HOUSTON (Reuters) - As U.S. shale oil boomed last decade, an oil pipeline company pitched an ambitious multi-billion-dollar export port off the Texas coast to ship domestic crude to buyers in Europe and Asia.

In April, Enterprise Products Partners' (EPD.N), opens new tab SPOT became the first project to receive a license from the U.S. maritime regulator for a deepwater port that could load two supertankers, each of which can carry up to 2 million barrels of oil at a time.

But multi-year regulatory delays, a loss of commercial backers and slowing U.S. shale production has left SPOT, or Sea Port Oil Terminal, and its three rival projects without any secured customers, energy industry executives say.

"There are a lot of gray areas right now with export projects," said Zack Van Everen, an oil analyst at energy investment banker Tudor Pickering Holt & Co. Enterprise declined to make an executive available for an interview, but said it continues to develop the project.

Shale producers and traders rely on ports to get their oil to market and are balking at the higher-than-expected loading fees for new projects even if they are able to fully load supertankers, executives said.

HIGHER COSTS SPOT, proposed for a

point 30 miles off the Gulf coast in 2019, is the only Texas deepwater project with its government approvals. But its cost has soared to about \$3 billion, two industry experts said, from an original estimate of \$1.85 billion for Enterprise. It has no long-term customer contracts, or joint venture partners, stalling a financial green light from the company, sources said. The project, if approved, is currently expected to start up in 2027.

A customer willing to commit the largest volume is being offered a \$1 per barrel rate by Enterprise to load at SPOT oil transferred from its Houston storage terminal, three people familiar the terms said. Clients with smaller loads have been offered an about \$1.20 a barrel fee.

That compares with the all-in cost of about 75 cents per barrel to load in Corpus Christi, Texas, the top U.S. oil export port, a source familiar with export operations said. To sweeten the deal, Enterprise is offering preferential terms for loading schedules, and may bundle some of its other services to make the price more competitive, two of the people said.

Enterprise disputed the fees, but declined to provide the project's cost and the per barrel terms.

A deepwater port allows customers to load oil directly onto a supertanker, eliminating the additional cost

of loading the oil on smaller ships at shallower ports and then transferring the crude from the smaller vessels to larger ones.

But it has lost Chevron (CVX.N), opens new tab as an early backer because of the regulatory delays to secure a license, and Canadian oil pipeline operator Enbridge has released its option to take a stake in SPOT, Enterprise said.

Chevron declined to comment on commercial matters. An Enbridge spokesman said it views SPOT "as a valuable option for our Canadian heavy crude customers to be able to access the project," but declined further comment.

LESS NEED FOR DEEPWATER PORTS

U.S. exports of crude rose to a peak of 5.6 million bpd in February 2023, and existing facilities can handle as much as another 1.5 million barrels, though port congestion could limit that number, according to RBN Energy. Russia's invasion of Ukraine also has shifted global flows with more U.S. vessels going to Europe instead of Asia, which were primarily geared to using supertankers.

"The short-term dynamic is less need for big ship capacity, which actually fits the current U.S. export capacity a lot better," Colin Parfitt, Chevron's vice president of midstream, said in an interview in March.

Rice exports grew by 83.37%, in 09 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Rice exports from the country during the first three quarters of the current financial year increased by 83.37 percent as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period from July-March 2023-24, over 4.550 million metric tons of rice valuing \$2.930 billion exported as against the exports of 2.939 million metric tons valued at \$1.598 billion in the same period of last year, according to the data of Pakistan Bureau of

Statistics.

The exports of Basmati rice grew by 36.37 percent during the period under review as over 545,220 metric tons of Basmati rice worth \$622.345 million were exported as compared to the exports of 430,543 metric tons valued at \$456.357 million in the same period last year.

In the last 09 months of the current financial year, the country earned \$2.308 billion by exporting over 4.005 metric tons of rice of other varieties, which was recorded at 2.508

million metric tons valued at \$1.114 billion in the same period of last year.

During the first three-quarters of the current financial year, the food group exports from the country grew by 48.17 percent as food commodities worth of \$5.651 billion were exported as compared to the exports of \$3.814 billion in the same period of the last year.

On month on month basis, the food group exports from the country grew by 16.35 percent in month of March 2024 as compared to the exports

of the same month of last year. In March 2024 food commodities valued at 685.025 million were exported as compared to the exports of \$588.759 million of the same month of last year.

On the other hand food group imports into the country during the period under review went down by 14.23 percent as food imports came down from \$7.333 billion in the first three quarters of the last financial year as compared to the \$6.290 billion in the first 09 months of the current financial year.

Pan Asian cuisine set to witness exponential rise

DUBAI (Khaleej Times): In the ever-evolving landscape of culinary delights, diversity emerges as the cornerstone of innovation. Nowhere is this more evident than in the impressive rise of Pan Asian cuisine, captivating the palates and imaginations of food enthusiasts worldwide. From the bustling streets of Bangkok to the tranquil tea houses of Japan, Pan Asian restaurants offer an enticing voyage through a fabric of flavours, textures, and traditions. As we stand at the dawn of a new era, it becomes increasingly clear that these vibrant establishments are poised for exceptional growth in the years ahead.

Reports suggest that the industry is estimated to grow at 192.43 billion \$in 2024 and is expected to reach 349.05 billion \$by 2029, growing at a CAGR of 12.65 per cent during the forecast period (2024-2029).

Once confined primarily to Chinese fare, today, the term 'pan-Asian' encompasses a vast array of culinary traditions, stretching far beyond the boundaries of Chinese cuisine. Malaysian, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai and Japanese influences converge to create a diverse panorama, enriching the culinary landscape of the country. This expansion is not merely a trend but a culinary phenomenon sweeping across demographics, fuelled by a multitude of factors.

One of the driving forces behind the Pan Asian growth is the adventurous spirit of millennials and Gen Z, renowned for their openness to new experiences, especially in gastronomy. Their evolving tastes reflect a broader trend towards embracing diversity in all aspects of life, including culinary exploration. At the heart of the allure of Pan Asian cuisine lies its ability to weave together a rich tapestry of tastes, each dish narrating a story steeped in history and culture. Whether it's the umami-rich broths of Japan's ramen, the fiery complexities of Szechuan stir-fries, the global rise in demand and appreciation for bubble tea that originates from Taiwan or the delicate balance of Thai curries, every bite offers a passport to distant lands, served on a platter.

PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 523 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 523.56 points, a positive change of 0.74 percent, closing at 71,433.46 points against 70,909.90 points the previous trading day.

A total of 655,205,105 shares valuing Rs.31.248 billion were traded during the day as compared to 475,833,699 shares valuing Rs.23.220 billion the last day.

Some 389 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 217 of them recorded gains and 140 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 32 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Habib Bank with 48,145,538 shares at Rs.114.53 per share, Pak Refinery with 30,500,681 shares with Rs.28.70 per share and Pak Elektron with 28,595,505 shares at Rs.23.43 per share. Mari Petroleum

Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.133.51 per share price, closing at Rs.2,755.69, whereas the runner-up was Ismail Industries Limited with a Rs.76.35 rise in its per share price to Rs.1,149.21.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.366.66 per share closing at Rs.20,533.34, followed by Sapphire Fibres Limited with Rs.69.90 decline to close at Rs.1,350.10.

Emaar Properties announces a high dividend of Dh4.4 billion

DUBAI (Khaleej Times): The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Emaar Properties PJSC was held in Dubai on Monday, April 22, 2024, where Shareholders approved the Board of Directors' proposal for a notable dividend of 50 fils per share amounting to Dh4.4 billion (\$ 1.2 billion), underscoring the company's robust profitability and commitment to shareholder returns and reflecting the company's strong financial health.

Both the auditor's report and the board's report on the company's activities and financial position for the year 2023 were approved at the meeting.

At the AGM, the board of directors reported the company's strong performance in 2023 and discussed the rigorous measures taken to ensure continued robust business performance throughout the year.

Emaar's performance in 2023 was marked by robust group real estate sales, amounting to Dh40.3 billion (US\$ 11 billion) with Dh37.4 billion (US\$ 10.2 billion) in domestic market, demonstrating sustained customer trust in the Emaar brand and its management's innovation and quality.



Emaar recorded revenues of Dh26.7 billion (US\$ 7.3 billion) and net profit of Dh11.6 billion (US\$ 3.2 billion) in 2023 achieving growth of 7 per cent and 70 per cent respectively compared to the same period last year. This performance was supported by growth in tourism, a continued upward trend in retail sales, and a consistent increase in real estate demand.

Emaar also achieved 67 per cent growth in earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (Ebitda), reaching Dh17.3 billion during 2023 as compared to 2022.

These achievements are ongoing, as Emaar continues to record very high domestic property sales in 2024.

The year-to-date sales booked are valued at over

Dh19 billion, which is an increase of more than 60 per cent as compared to the same period in the previous year.

Mohamed Alabbbar, Emaar Properties' founder, stated: "In light of the remarkable results we are witnessing in 2024, Emaar is highly optimistic and relentlessly focused on exceeding operational excellence, amplifying investment returns, and improving customer satisfaction.

We are constantly launching groundbreaking projects that significantly contribute to Dubai's economy and increase long-term shareholder value, and through strategic initiatives in digital transformation, product innovation, and market penetration, we are poised to drive robust growth and solidify our foundation for future success."



ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari presenting Chamber's shield to prominent Pakistani American businessman and Chairman Falcon Holding Texas Aslam Khan.



In brief

Marsh on track for T20 World Cup

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Australia's Mitchell Marsh remains on course to play at the T20 World Cup despite being likely ruled out of the rest of the IPL. Delhi Capitals coach Ricky Ponting said Monday, Marsh, who is expected to captain Australia in T20's showpiece event in the West Indies and the United States starting on June 1, returned home after playing just four matches for Delhi in the IPL. "I don't think he would be coming back (to India)," Ponting told reporters. "Cricket Australia were really keen to have Mitchell at home to start his recovery process, so we sent him back as soon as we could." The former Australia captain added: "They have been managing his rehab over the last couple of weeks now. I spoke to him the other day, it seems like it has taken a little bit longer than he first thought, to get over it. 'I don't think the World Cup will be an issue but I think it will be hard to see him coming back here at the back end of this tournament.'" The 32-year-old Marsh suffered a partial tear in his right hamstring after he scored just 61 runs and claimed one wicket from four matches. The all-rounder has played 54 T20 internationals for Australia.

OSA Blues wins tourney

BAHAWALPUR (APP): OSA Blues has won the first edition of the OSA Platinum Jubilee Cricket Tournament after beating OSA Whites in the final match played at Main Cricket ground of Sadiq Public School Bahawalpur. OSA Blues won the toss and elected to field first. OSA Whites managed to score 136 runs in the allotted 20 overs for the loss of 9 wickets. Muhammad Furqan of OSA Whites scored an unbeaten 50. Captain Ali Bukhari, Abdul Moeze, and Ali Hassan shared 2 wickets each for OSA Blues. OSA Blues chased the target in 11.2 overs with 10 wickets in hand. Openers Usama Mustafa and Ali Hassan scored unbeaten 50s. Usama Mustafa was adjudged Man of the Match for batting and exceptional keeping while Ali Hassan shared the Man of the Match award for all-round performance. In the individual prizes, the Best Batsman award was given to Ali Hassan of OSA Blues, the Best Bowler award was given to Muhammad Asim of OSA Whites and Abdullah Aziz of OSA Reds was adjudged Player of the Tournament for his all-round performances. Principal Sadiq Public School David Dowdles was the Chief Guest who gave away trophies and awards. Senior Old Sadiqian and retired civil bureaucrat Maqbul Abbasi was the Guest of Honor of the final match.

Stormont to host Zimbabwe Test

HARARE (Agencies): Stormont will host its first Test match when Ireland host Zimbabwe in July. The Belfast venue will be the 123rd cricket ground to hold a men's Test match as Ireland face Zimbabwe in the format for the first time. However, the proposed men's Twenty20 and one-day international series with Australia in August has been postponed. Cricket Ireland CEO Warren Deutrum said this "difficult decision", external was down to a lack of permanent facilities and the cost of temporary infrastructure to host the series.



SHEFFIELD: Mark Selby plays a shot against Joe O'Connor in their first round match during day three of the Cazoo World Snooker Championship 2024.

Yusra, Tania, Eyman, Saira excel

FAISALABAD (PPI): Top-order batters Yusra Amir of Karachi, and Lahore duo Eyman Fatima and Saira Jabeen, along with wrist spinner Tania Saeed of Rawalpindi, stood out in the third-round action of the National Women's One-Day Tournament in Faisalabad on Monday.

Opener Yusra scored an unbeaten 70 off 88 balls with nine fours, aiding Karachi Women in successfully chasing down a modest 133-run target set by Quetta Women with eight wickets and nearly half of the overs remaining. Partnering with Omaira Sohail, Yusra put on 112 runs for the second wicket. Omaira followed up her

bowling performance of two for 22 in Quetta's 132 all-out in 46.3 overs with a 59-ball 42.

Half-centuries by Eyman Fatima and Saira Jabeen helped Lahore Women post a decent 251 all-out in 50 overs against Multan Women at the Iqbal Stadium. When rain intervened and ended play, Multan Women were 131 for eight in 34 overs. This resulted in Lahore Women securing a comfortable 94-run victory on the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern (DLS) method.

Eyman struck 14 fours and a six in an 87-ball 81, while Saira Jabeen scored 56 off 60 balls with (35) and Noreen Yaqoob (34) provided valuable contribu-

tions to help Lahore Women achieve a highly competitive score. In response, Gull Feroza, following her century against Rawalpindi on Friday, once again top-scored with 50 from 51 balls, including eight fours.

In a low-scoring match at the Jawad Sports Complex, Rawalpindi Women successfully defended 76 runs, bowling Peshawar out for 37 to secure a 39-run victory. Wrist spinner Tania Saeed returned match-winning figures of 6.2-2-10-5 and also won the Player of the Match award. Rawalpindi's No.10 batter, Laiba Mansoor, was the top-scorer of the match with 17 from 36 balls.

Babar opens up on Pakistan's upset defeat against NZ

RAWALPINDI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan captain Babar Azam revealed the reason behind the national men's cricket team's shocking defeat against an inexperienced New Zealand side in the third T20I of the ongoing five-match series.

Speaking at the post-match presentation, Babar debunked the team's slow approach in the middle overs as the reason behind their loss and instead asserted that the Green Shirts were 10 runs short of a defendable total.

"I don't think it [slow run-rate during the middle overs] made much of a difference because we had caught up. You can say we were 10 runs short," said Azam.

"Unfortunately, we had a bit of a setback with Rizwan [injury] because it wasn't easy for new batsmen but I think Shadab recovered well and had an outstanding partnership with Irfan. In Pindi, 180-190 is a par score. In batting, we did well."

For the unversed, Mark Chapman's swashbuckling unbeaten half-century powered New Zealand to a comfortable seven-wicket victory in the third T20I here at Pindi Cricket Stadium on Sunday.

Chapman carried his bat all the way through and guided New Zealand over the line on the second delivery of the penultimate over.

He remained the top-scorer for New Zealand with an unbeaten 87 off 42 deliveries. His match-winning knock featured nine boundaries and four sixes.

With the five-match series squared off at 1-1, both teams will now travel to Lahore where the last two T20Is will be played on April 25 and 27 respectively.

Peshawar upset strong Swat in PM Youth Talent Hunt Table Tennis

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar upset strong Swat in the Boys team event league round match in the Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt Boys and Girls Table Tennis League being played here at Sports Arena, Qayyum Sports Complex on Monday.

Senior Advocate Manzoor Qadir, President KP Table Tennis Association Ahmad Nawaz, Member Executive Council Pakistan Table Tennis Federation Mian Shafat, Vice President Kifayat Ullah, Coaches Directorate General Sports Yasir Aziz, Saira Khan, Miss Amna, international referee Masood Ahmad from Lahore, Nadeem Khan from Rawalpindi, Organizing Secretary Ali Hoti, players, officials and large number of spectators were also present.

In the first match, Peshawar Region defeated Swat Region by 3-0. In the first singles Usman Ahmad of Peshawar defeated

Kashif Bacha of Swat in a thrilling three sets battle 2-1, the score was 14-12, 11-13 and 11-9. Both Usman and Kashif Bacha exhibited classical display of forceful smashes and cross-court smashes and received cheering responses from the sitting spectators.

Usman took the first set after a hotly contested contest wherein both stretched to 14-12, the set was tied at 5-5, 8-8, 9-9, 10-10, 11-11, 12-12 and at the end,

Usman got the set by 14-12. In the second set Usman, after winning the first set, lost the second set, taken by Kashif Bacha by 11-13. Both presented an excellent display of attacking shorts and the set was tied at 8-8, 9-9, 10-10 and 11-11 and Kashif took the set by 11-13. It was the third set in which Usman played well and did not give much time to his strong rival Kashif to strike back. He took the lead right from the start and raced to win the set by 11-9 before taking the lead of 5-1.

In the second singles of the Team event Haroon of Peshawar beat Umar Khan of (Swat) by 2-0, the score was 11-9 and 13-11. Umar Khan did some resistance, especially in the second set but overall Haroon dominated the match. The set was thrice tied at 7-7, 9-9 and 11-11. In the third singles international player Obaid Shah beat Shayan of Swat by 2-0, the score was 11-7 and 11-5 in a one-sided affair.

In the second match Mardan Region beat Bannu Region by 3-1. In the first Mudassir of Mardan lost from Shairan of Bannu by 2-1, the score was 8-11, 11-9 and 11-9. Jawad of Mardan beat Danish of Bannu by 2-0, the score was 11-9, 13-11, Hamza of Mardan beat

Huzafa of Bannu by 2-0, the score was 11-9 and 11-7 and in the last reverse singles Jawad of Mardan beat Shairan by 2-0, the score

was 11-7 and 11-7.

In the Girls Team event Mardan Region defeated Bannu Region by 3-0. In the first singles International player Hiba Iqbal of Mardan defeated Wajeha of Bannu by 2-0, the score was 13-11 and 11-9. Hooria of Mardan beat Maryam of Bannu by 2-0, the score was 11-9 and 11-9. Another international player Hiya Noor beat Insha of Bannu by 2-1, the score was 11-13, 11-9 and 14-12. Insha of Bannu played well against strong Hiya Noor wherein both stretched to three sets battle.

In the second match Peshawar Region recorded victory against Swat Region by 3-0. In the first singles top seeded Alishba of Peshawar beat Khadija of Swat by 2-0, the score was 11-9, 13-11, former national junior champion Zainab of Peshawar beat Atika of Swat by 2-0, the score was 14-12 and 13-11 and in the third singles promising national ranking player Safina of Peshawar recorded victory against Sumaya of Swat by 2-0, the score was 13-11 and 11-7.

The final and prize distribution ceremony of the League of Boys and Girls will be played on Tuesday at 11.00 a.m. Representatives of the HEC would also grace the occasion at the final and prize distribution ceremony.

China calls swimmer doping reports 'fake news'

BEIJING (AFP): Beijing on Monday called reports about 23 Chinese swimmers testing positive for a banned substance ahead of the Tokyo Olympics in 2021 "fake news".

The sport was rocked at the weekend by revelations that the swimmers tested positive for trimetazidine (TMZ) — a prescription heart drug that is banned in athletes because it can enhance performance — before the Games three years ago.

The swimmers were allowed to compete in Tokyo after world governing bodies accepted China's findings that they had ingested it unwittingly

from food during a competition in late 2020 and early 2021. Several went on to win medals, including gold, and many are in line to compete at the Paris Olympics this summer.

China's foreign ministry on Monday hit back at the widespread reports, which first emerged in the New York Times and German broadcaster ARD on Saturday and cited a review of confidential documents and emails. "The relevant reports are fake news and not factual," said foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin.

World anti-doping agency WADA has said there was "a lack of any

credible evidence" to challenge China's version of events. "I believe you will also have noted that the World Anti-Doping Agency has put out a very clear response," Wang said.

However, the United States Anti-Doping Agency called news of the failed tests "crushing" and has blasted WADA's response as "a devastating stab in the back of clean athletes".

"Detailed" probe — Wang said China's anti-doping centre conducted an "in-depth and detailed" probe into the incident, which found the athletes had ingested contaminated drugs "without their knowledge".

Sabir, Mujahid win as first South Punjab Chess Fair concludes



MULTAN (APP): Karachi-based National Master Sabir Hussain emerged as super mind in the Masters category of first South Punjab Chess Fair while Mujahid Hussain from Dera Ghazi Khan emerged superior in the South category as the mega chess competition showcasing prizes worth Rs 1.7 million concluded in the city of saints.

Over 250 Chess players from across Pakistan spent hours in brainstorming sessions during the two-day event concluded last Sunday night when Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Fuad Hashim Rabbani and Additional IG South Kamran Khan distributed prizes among the winners, says an official release issued here Monday.

Multan teenager Hamza Masood topped the U-14 category and took home Rs 51000 cash prize while another boy from Quetta Rehan Khan won Rs 10,000 for second position.

National Master Sabir Hussain remained unbeaten with his master class strate-

gy on the 64-square board and won top prize of Rs 50,000 with 6.5 points in Masters Category. Sabir excelled on position of pieces with an excellent combination of Pawns and Knight that made his journey to the top slot easy.

Another Karachi-based FIDE Master Muhammad Waqar grabbed six points to occupy the second slot in Masters Category and took home Rs 25000 cash prize. Yunus Malkani from Quetta stood third and won Rs 15000 cash prize. Muhammad Younus, Asadullah Khan Ram Puri, Aziz Farooqui, Dr. Ayub, Wajid Hussain, Sibte-Ali and International Master Tanweer Gilani secured fourth to 10th position respectively in Masters Category.

Fareeha Siddiqui from Bahawalpur stood out from among women to claim top prize of Rs 15000.

Speaking on the occasion, Fuad Hashim Rabbani hailed the organizers for arranging marvelous Chess tournament hosted by the city of saints and promised all

out support to such events in future in any part of South Punjab.

Additional IG Kamran Khan said, he was surprised to see Chess tournament, seemingly a rarity on Pakistan's national sports landscape, in Multan adding: "We used to hear such events happening abroad." "Had never thought someone would be working for the mind game but now I believe there is no dearth of people who can work for Pakistan." Kamran Khan also promised support for any Chess event planned in future in South Punjab.

Earlier, Chess Association Secretary General Raja Gohar described Chess as the oldest game on earth and heaped praise on inhabitants of one of the oldest living cities on earth, Multan, for hosting the event graciously and with open heart. Chess Association president Dr. Naeem Rauf described the competition as the return of the golden era of the game of Chess.

Global Sports Mentorship Program 2024 kicks off in Houston, Texas

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Global Sports Mentorship Program 2024 kicked off with an impactful first week in Houston, Texas, where 16 sports leaders from 12 countries converged under the guidance of the UT Center of Sports, Peace, and Society. Dedicated to empowering individuals with disabilities through sports, the program focused on intensive training, strategic planning, and immersive experiences.

Throughout the week, participants engaged in dynamic workshops on storytelling and began crafting actionable plans tailored to their communities. The program's emphasis is on practicality and innovation to set the stage for meaningful contributions to the sports empowerment landscape.

The week was not only about classroom learning but also hands-on experiences. Visits to renowned sports venues such as Minute Maid Park for an Astros Major League Baseball game and the world's first Softball Accessible Field provided invaluable insights into accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

Participants also had the opportunity to immerse themselves in a range of adaptive sports, including Wheelchair Rugby, Wheelchair Basketball, Wheelchair Softball, outdoor table tennis and Para Cycling.

These experiences were not just about sport but about understanding



and implementing inclusive practices and para sport regulations. Participants visited the TIRR Memorial Hermann hospital, a renowned institution for treating various disabilities.

They met Mr. Lex Frieden, a distinguished Disability Activist, and learned firsthand about his pivotal role in the American with Disabilities Act.

The program's next phase will take participants to Chicago, where they will work closely with mentors at the Shirley Ryan Ability Lab to further refine their action plans. The journey will culminate in

Washington DC, where they will present their meticulously crafted plans to a prestigious jury comprising representatives from the University of Tennessee, the US State Department, and esteemed mentors from diverse organizations. He also introduced different mentors to Pakistan's diverse culture and distributed Chitralli hats to them. The Global Sports Mentorship Program 2024 is not just a program; it's a catalyst for change, fostering a global network of leaders committed to driving inclusivity and empowerment through sports.

Djokovic skips Madrid Open, Nadal to face teen Blanch

MADRID (AFP): World number one and record 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic will not play at the Madrid Open this week.

Media reports said the 36-year-old Serbian star had pulled out of the tournament and he was not included in the draw on Monday.

The 36-year-old is yet to win a title this season and has only played in four tournaments this year, having decided to lighten his schedule.

Veteran tennis great Rafael Nadal will continue his comeback from injury in Madrid and has been pitted against 16-year-old American Darwin Blanch in the first round. Djokovic has now pulled out of the Madrid Open three times in four years.

The Serbian could still appear in Rome at the Italian Open before defending his French Open title from May 26. Djokovic is a three-time champion at the two-week clay court event in the Spanish capital. It is his second Masters 1000 withdrawal this year after skipping the Miami Open in March. Djokovic attended Real Madrid's 3-2 win over Barcelona at the Santiago Bernabeu on Sunday and is expected to appear at the Laureus Awards in Madrid on Monday, where he is in contention to win the Sportsman of the Year trophy.

Veteran tennis great Nadal, 37, played at the Barcelona Open but was defeated in the second round by Alex de Minaur in straight sets.

If he defeats teenager Blanch then he will face Australian world number 11 De Minaur in the second round for the second week in a row. Reigning champion and second seed Carlos Alcaraz said he was hoping to be fully fit to play in Madrid after a forearm problem and will face either Alexander Shevchenko or Arthur Rinderknech in the second round.

Jannik Sinner, second in the world rankings and top seed in Djokovic's absence, will face either Italian compatriot Lorenzo Sonego or a qualifier in the second round.

Nadal signs up for 2024 Laver Cup in Berlin: Rafael Nadal will represent Team Europe at the Laver Cup in Berlin this September in what could be one of the final events of the 22-time Grand Slam champion's career, organisers announced on Monday.

Nadal, who turns 38 in June, has said he expects this to be his final year on tour after struggling with a hip injury that sidelined him for virtually all of 2023 as well as the start of this season. The Spaniard played doubles with Roger Federer at the 2022 Laver Cup as the Swiss star made a tearful farewell to the sport

at the team competition.

Nadal will join compatriot Carlos Alcaraz, Daniil Medvedev and Alexander Zverev as Europe attempt to win back the Laver Cup under coach Bjorn Borg from September 20-22. "I am very happy to be playing Laver Cup in Berlin for Team Europe," Nadal said in a statement.

"I have some really special memories from my Laver Cup experiences, including all the emotions from London two years ago playing alongside Roger for the last time. "At this stage in my career I really want to go out there and make the most of every opportunity I am given."

Nadal made a brief comeback in Brisbane in early January but missed the Australian Open and spent another three months out after he felt a hip problem resurface. He returned to action at the Barcelona Open last week but lost in the second round of a tournament he has won 12 times.

The former world number one, whose ranking has tumbled to 512, has not won a title since claiming the last of his record 14 French Open crowns two years ago. Team World at this year's Laver Cup will again be coached by John McEnroe, with Australian Alex de Minaur so far joined by US duo Taylor Fritz and Tommy Paul in the line-up.



In brief

IRSA releases 165,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 165,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 244,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1441.48 feet and was 43.48 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 40,500 cusecs and 5,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1134.60 feet, which was 84.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 63,500 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 100,500, 56,000, 97,800 and 33,300 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 116,000 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 16,600 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala.

Nine drug peddlers, bootleggers netted

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi police in an action against suspected drug peddlers, bootleggers and other law-breakers here on Monday arrested nine accused besides recovering over two kg charas, 40 liters liquor, two liquor bottles and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Pirwadhai police held Sajid Sohail for having 1860 grams charras while Patriata police netted Khizer Mehmood for possessing 600 grams charras. Taxila police netted Rafique with 20 liters liquor and another accused namely Adeel for having a liquor bottle. Civil Lines police arrested Tehrab and recovered five liters liquor, Abid, Faizan and Rizwan for having 10 liters and a liquor bottle. Sadiqabad police in their operation managed to net an accused namely Muhammad Abid and recovered five liters liquor. Separate cases have been registered against all accused while further investigations are underway. City Police Officer, Rawalpindi had directed the police officers to accelerate ongoing operations against drug peddlers, bootleggers and other law-breakers, he added.

600 liters juices destroyed: PFA

RAWALPINDI (APP): In a recent move aimed at ensuring food safety, the Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has intensified its operations against substandard juices and food items in Ganjmandi. On the direction of DG Punjab Food Authority Asim Javed, food safety teams have been conducting inspections to curb the sale of counterfeit products. During these operations, the food safety teams made a significant discovery - fake juices bearing the name of a renowned brand and 600 liters of adulterated juices was destroyed. The packaging of these counterfeit products was found to be misleading, with improper labeling and misrepresentation of the brand. Such deceptive practices not only jeopardize consumer health but also undermine the trust in reputable brands. Acting on confidential information, the PFA swiftly took action against the vendors involved in selling these fake juices. A fine of Rs 15,000 was imposed on the violators as a penalty for their infringement of food safety regulations. PFA warned those engaged in the production and sale of counterfeit goods will have to face strict action without any discrimination.



ISLAMABAD: Students throwing caps in the air in traditional way during 22nd convocation of Model College G-10/4.

Palwasha criticizes SIC's behaviour during President's address to Parliament

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Information Secretary Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Senator Palwasha Khan on Monday criticized the behavior of the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) during the President's address to the Parliament.

Addressing a press conference along with Senator Shahadat Awan, she condemned the disrespectful remarks towards the PPP leadership, asserting that such language would not be tolerated at any cost.

"We will respond to the

disrespectful remarks about our leadership in the same language," she firmly added. Palwasha Khan alleged that the opposition parties were aiming to sabotage the visit of the Iranian President to Pakistan, who had expressed support for the Palestinian cause.

"They are also sending a message to global financial institutions about the political instability," she remarked. She reiterated the Pakistan PPP unwavering solidarity with their Palestinian brethren and extended a

warm welcome to the Iranian President for his support. Palwasha Khan emphasized that the right to protest is acknowledged, hooliganism and disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated.

Speaking on the occasion, Senator Shahadat Awan also highlighting President Asif Ali Zardari's positive message delivered at the beginning of the parliamentary year. He underscored the significance of the media as a pillar of democracy and expressed optimism for the country's future.

Death anniversary of Moin Akhtar observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Death anniversary of legendary artist, comedian, actor and host Moin Akhtar was observed on Monday.

Born on December 24, 1950 in Karachi, Moin Akhtar made his television debut in 1966. He performed several roles in television stage shows, dramas, films and talk shows. His best dramas were Eid Train, Studio Dhai, Bakra Qistoon Per, Fifty-Fifty, Loose Talk and many others.

He was fluent in several languages, including English, Bengali, Sindhi, Punjabi, Memon, Pashto, Gujarati and Urdu.

Moin Akhtar was awarded the Pride of Performance in 1996 and Sitara-e-Imtiaz in 2011 on his outstanding performance.

He passed away on April 22, 2011 in Karachi after suffering a heart attack.

Amir Maqam congratulates PML-N members

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) and Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engr Amir Muqam on Monday felicitated Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) newly elected members of National and Provincial Assemblies in the by elections.

Engr Amir Muqam, who is also the president of Pakistan Muslim League-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said that the victory of the newly elected members of PML-N was reflection of trust of people, said a statement issued here.

The minister said that this victory was also an expression of the people's confidence in party leader Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz and the entire party leadership.

He said that PML-N will work for the welfare of the people and provide maximum relief.

The minister said that PML-N had proved in the past that our leadership has always played crucial role in the development of the country. He thanked the people for voting for PML-N candidates in the by elections.

Pakistani nation warmly welcomes Iranian President to Pakistan: Mohsin

ISLAMABAD (APP): The entire Pakistani nation warmly welcomes the Iranian President and his delegation to Pakistan, Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi said on Monday in a meeting with Iranian Interior Minister Dr. Ahmad Vahidi and Iranian Law Minister Amin Hussain Rahimi.

During the meeting, various issues including security cooperation, anti-terrorism, smuggling, border management, facilities for Pakistani visitors and exchange of prisoners were discussed.

The Iranian President's visit to Pakistan is very important in terms of bilateral relations, the interior minister said.

'Rs 2735.80 mln recovered, 1093 power pilferers arrested'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has recovered a sum of Rs 2735.80 million from 107,435 running and dead defaulters besides registering FIRs against 1479 power pilferers since September 7, 2023 during the ongoing anti power theft and recovery campaign.

IESCO Chief Dr Muhammad Amjad said on Monday that the company

had kicked off a comprehensive campaign against the power thieves and defaulters in all six circles on the directives of the government and ministry of Power Division.

Sharing the details, he said that the IESCO detection teams along FIA and police checked 1.62 million meters of different tariffs. On account of using direct power supply, slow and tempered meter etc, the teams imposed fine of Rs

576.751 million on the power pilferers while some 1479 FIRs were registered against them. Out of total 1093 electricity thieves have been arrested by the police, he said.

"With the same passion and devotion IESCO recovery teams recovered an amount of Rs 2735.80 million from 107,435 running and dead defaulters besides disconnecting transformers and meters of defaulters," Dr Amjad said.

Sikh Yatrees bid farewell to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): A group of Sikh Yatrees (pilgrims) bid farewell to Pakistan on Monday, departing via the Wagah border for India after attending the Baisakhi festival ceremonies.

The Provincial Minister for Minorities, Ramesh Singh Arora, and officials from the Evacuee Trust

Property Board were present to see them off.

Before their departure, the Sikh Yatrees expressed their heartfelt appreciation for the love and warmth they received during their visit to Pakistan, which they fondly referred to as their second home, PTV reported. They commended the

government of Pakistan for making excellent arrangements to facilitate their visit, ensuring a comfortable and peaceful stay. The Sikh Yatrees' departure marked the end of a successful and spiritually enriching visit, strengthening the bonds of friendship and mutual respect between the two nations.

Crackdowns by ICT admin to ensure Naan/Roti reduced prices

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the directions of the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, all the Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates have intensified their efforts for enforcement of government rates of Roti/Naan at Rs 16 and Rs 20 for a standard serving size of 120 grams in the Federal Capital.

In line with these directives, Assistant Commissioner Nellore has checked the notified rates of Tandoors in the Sohan and surroundings and imposed a fine of Rs 3000 for violation of the rates, said the ICT's spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabassum here on Monday.

Similarly, Assistant Commissioner Sadder has visited the area's Tandoors and imposed fines of Rs 10,000 to three Tandoors for flouting the government pre-

scribed rates. Meanwhile, a citizen namely Muhammad Amir, a resident of the Sohan area lamented the lack of reduction in prices at local Tandoors and Nan-bais, where Roti was still being sold at Rs 20 and Naan at Rs 25.

Furthermore, Shahid Ali from the G-8 area, highlighted that despite the government's intervention, Tandoors and Nan-bais in the Federal Capital were selling Roti at Rs 25 and Naan at Rs 30, placing a financial burden on the residents.

On the occasion, Dr Abdullah assured that strict action would be taken against those violating the price regulations. He emphasized that Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates have been assigned specific tasks to ensure compliance with the new Roti and Naan prices in Islamabad.

Murree admin forms three teams to conduct operation against illegal constructions

RAWALPINDI (APP): Murree administration on the directives of Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamer Khattak had issued instructions to the district administration to form three teams to accelerate the operations against illegal constructions.

According to a Commissioner's Office spokesman, Murree district administration had launched a crackdown against illegal constructions in the light of the orders of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz.

Deputy Commissioner, Murree, Agha Zaheer

Abbas Shirazi was supervising the operation, he added. Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamer Khattak had issued instructions to the district administration to form three teams to accelerate the operations against illegal constructions, he said.

The administration had formed three teams that were taking strict action in accordance with the law against the rules violators, he added.

Teams were conducting raids and demolishing illegal constructions under the supervision of Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue, Murree Capt. (R) Qasim Ijaz, Assistant Commissioner Murree, Capt. (R) Abdul Wahab Khan, and DFO Murree.

These teams include officials from various departments who were briefed about their responsibilities. The objective of this initiative is to effectively complete the operation against illegal constructions, the spokesman informed.

ANF recovers 252 kg drugs in seven operations; arrests eight

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting seven operations across the country managed to recover 252 kg drugs and arrested eight accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed that 470 intoxicated tablets were recovered from a parcel booked for UK at a courier office in Rawalpindi.

78 kg opium and 73.2 kg hashish were recovered

from an accused arrested with the help of the Motorway Police from Pindi Bhattian.

56.4 kg hashish and 15.6 kg opium were recovered from two suspects netted near Ring Road Peshawar.

1.2 kg opium and 10.8 kg hashish were recovered from the possession of a woman arrested near Sangjani Toll Plaza Islamabad.

7.2 kg hashish was recovered from three suspects on

IJP Road Islamabad.

3.6 kg hashish, 1.2 kg opium and 1.4 kg heroin were recovered from the possession of an accused netted near Kala Shah Kako Motorway Toll Plaza Lahore.

4.8 kg hashish was recovered from a parcel sent to Islamabad at a courier office on Ring Road Peshawar. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused while further investigations are under process.

ICT admin arrests over 900 alms-seekers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory Administration in coordination with the police has arrested more than 900 alms-seekers in a month under its campaign against the professional begging. Out of the total arrested beggars, 45 per cent of them were male, 38 per cent female, 7 per cent of minors and 10 per cent of trans genders, an official told APP on Monday.

He said the teams were constituted which was led by the relevant Assistant Commissioners and Magistrates to run the anti-begging campaign across the capital.

In a recent update provided by the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Spokesman, Dr Abdullah Tabassum, it was revealed that a staggering 921 individuals engaged in begging were apprehended over the last one month, spanning from

March to April.

He said that beggars mafias became more active during the holy month of Ramadan. Upon arrest, professional beggars were promptly escorted to the nearest police station for further processing, while minors found amongst them were compassionately directed to the Edhi Center for proper care and support.

To a query, he said District administration caught minor beggars and handed over to shelter homes and Edhi centers but later they gave affidavit or fine to authorities and went Scot-free. On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, he said that crack down against the professional begging would be continued by the ICT administration in the Federal Capital till the elimination of alms-seekers from our society.



ISLAMABAD: People travelling on the top of a passenger bus at Khanna Pul may cause any mishap and needs the attention of concerned authorities.

Traffic accident kills 22

KABUL (Khaama Press): Local officials in Badakhshan province say that during the last month, 50 people, including women and children, have lost their lives in 20 traffic accidents in this province. According to local media, reported Sunday, April 21st, citing Ehsanullah Kamgar, a spokesperson for the Badakhshan police, 22 people, including women and children, have lost their lives, and 28 others have been injured as a result of traffic accidents.

Afghanistan starts exporting

HERAT (Ariana News): The Ministry of Interior says that Afghanistan has started exporting goods to Turkey via the Herat-Khaf railway line. In a post on X, the ministry said: "Afghanistan's exports to Turkey started in a calm atmosphere through the Herat-Khaf railway line." The ministry added that one train will run daily for a month and then two trains will run daily. According to the ministry, the security of Khaf-Herat railway line is provided by the guards of the National Public Protection Agency.

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

Afghan migrants in Pakistan face multifaceted challenges amid forced deportation



KABUL (Khaama Press): Pakistan stands as a primary destination for migrants seeking to depart from Afghanistan. While many migrants temporarily reside in Pakistan, they pursue their migration cases in other countries, though there's no guarantee they won't be targeted during their stay. In the months following Afghanistan's fall to the Taliban regime, over 600,000 individuals legally or illegally crossed into Pakistan.

Over the past nearly three years, Afghan migrants have encountered nightly police raids, temporary housing issues, neglect of their migration cases, and the threat of forced deportation in Pakistan. Moreover, in many instances, they have

become victims of armed attacks and abductions, as evidenced by the recent disappearance of three Afghan migrants who remain missing after three days.

Mir Ahmad Roofi, head of the Afghan Migrant Council in Islamabad, expressed concerns to the media, highlighting the arrival of three individuals on Thursday, with their families approaching the police and relevant authorities without receiving any positive or negative responses. Another individual, newly arrived in Pakistan, met a tragic fate, underscoring growing concerns.

While precise statistics on the targeting of Afghan migrants in Pakistan are unavailable, reports suggest that Afghan migrants face

complex and multifaceted challenges, exposing them to serious harm and exploitation by various groups, in addition to the risk of forced deportation.

The head of the Afghan Migrant Council in Pakistan, while expressing concern about this situation to the media, has warned of what is referred to as the occurrence of "a humanitarian catastrophe."

The findings of Khaama Press, obtained from examining reports in the media of Afghanistan and Pakistan, indicate that Afghan citizens have been targeted in various parts of Pakistan for multiple reasons. This targeting, predominantly by Pakistani police, emerges as the most prominent pattern in this trend, which has been

repeated in several instances. Another pattern observed from the reports is abduction by armed thieves or encountering armed robbers, with the latest case being a kidnapping on Thursday. These two patterns indicate that a significant portion of migrants targeted in Pakistan over the past two years have fallen victim to extortion by government entities or armed groups.

A credible source, unwilling to be named in the report, informed Khaama Press that Pakistani police, when extorting migrants, falsely record deviations in the victims' confessions to make it appear as if they were targeted by thieves, which is not the case. Additionally, another report on migrants, notable for its comprehensive nature and earning Afghanistan's Journalist of the Year award, demonstrates that police harassment of Afghan migrants is the most common form of persecution they face in Pakistan.

Samiullah Azizi, head of the International Federation of Human Rights Defenders in Exile, informed the media that a significant portion of Afghan migrants in Pakistan comprises society's elite and intellectuals who fled after the country's collapse. He stated, "Here in Pakistan, most are human rights defenders, experts, university professors, judges, journalists, poets, and all individuals at risk."

UN Women: Focus on women affected by Herat earthquake

Hakim Bigzaad

The United Nations Women's Section has released a report stating that the majority of the victims of the Herat earthquake were women and children, with a focus on women in their aid efforts.

This institution, which recently elaborated on its assistance to earthquake victims in Herat, emphasized that 58% of the youth casualties in the October 7, 2023 earthquake in Herat were women. According to the report, 60% of the wounded and 61% of the missing persons are also women.

It is noteworthy that on October 7, 2023, an earthquake measuring 6.3 on the Richter scale shook Herat province in western Afghanistan, mainly affecting women and children. The epicentre of this earthquake was in Zindajan district of Herat. The report mentions that



cash assistance has been provided to 500 female heads of households in affected areas, but details of the assistance provided are not available.

Furthermore, the report states that 600 women have received non-food

aid such as blankets, clothes, shoes, and tents, while an additional 370 women have received psychosocial support and social assistance.

The deadly Herat earthquake on October 7, 2023, destroyed about 400 vil-

lages to varying degrees. 10% of women in these affected villages were entrepreneurs. According to the United Nations Women's Section, 178 of the 400 affected villages have received assistance.

Khaama Press

Afghanistan sees 20% increase in dried fruit exports in 1402

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce reported a 20% increase in the export of dried fruits in the year 1402 (solar year). According to Akhundzada Abdul Salam Jawad, the Commerce and Industry spokesman, last year dried fruits worth \$466 million dollars were exported to India, China, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Germany, and Turkey.

The Commerce and Industry spokesman, added: "The total export of Afghanistan's dried fruits in the year 1402 has increased by about 20% compared to the year 1401, which amounts to about \$78 mil-

lion dollars."

The Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Investment (ACCI) considered the increase in flights through the country's air corridors as important in boosting the export of dried fruits.

ACCI spokesman Jan Agha Nawid, said: "Part of the air corridor should be financed by the government or supporting institutions of Afghanistan, and subsidies should be provided so that they can offer their items in the

market and compete in those markets." A number of traders in the country mentioned banking restrictions, existing challenges in obtaining business visas, and transit and trade challenges at the country's passageways as the main challenges to the export of dried fruits in 1402 (solar year). "This year the government should reduce the bureaucracy in export programs and the documents that we need for export, which take at least two to three days to process, and we also face problems in customs to a sufficient extent," said M a h b o o b u l l a h Mohammadi, a trader.



Khost historic fort teetering on the brink of collapse

KHOST CITY (Pajhwok): Residents of southeastern Khost province say the historic Ghazi Babrak Khan Zadrar fort is on the verge of collapse.

Ghazi Babark Qala (castle) is located in Nader Shahkot district and has a history of 150 years.

The fort was built by a number of huge tribes of the time during the rule of Amir Abdul Rahman Khan and had a military status.

Only the surrounding walls of this historic Qala remain and other parts of it have been destroyed.

Azim Jan Babrakzai, a member of Ghazni Babrak Khan Zadrar's family, told Pajhwok that the two-storey military fort had two parts, one was for members of the house and the other for guests.

According to him, the Afghan forces of the time



used this fort as an important military centre against the British armies.

"This is a historical fort, our grandfather,

Babrak Khan, has built this, under the guidance of Amir Abdul Rahman."

Another member of this family Qazi Ahmad

Babrakzai, told Pajhwok that the remaining parts of the fort were on the verge of collapse and needed attention.

ARCS prioritizes employment opportunities for widows over cash aid

KABUL (BNA) In an effort to empower widows and alleviate their financial struggles, the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) has taken a proactive step by emphasizing employment opportunities over cash aid.

Mawlawi Mati-ul-Haq Khalis, the Acting President of ARCS, made this announcement during a distribution ceremony of work tools for widows who had undergone vocational training provided by the organization.

The ARCS is committed to expanding its efforts beyond creating small businesses for the disabled and has pledged to provide vocational training opportunities for 219 widows across two locations: Dasht-e-Barchi and Karta-e-Naw. These



training programs will focus on equipping widows with skills in animal husbandry, poultry farm-

ing, and tailoring.

As part of the initiative, each trained widow will receive materials and work

tools worth 22,000 Afghanis to aid them in starting their entrepreneurial ventures.

Acting Health Minister urges Azerbaijan collaboration with healthcare sector

KABUL (BNA) In a recent meeting between Dr. Qalandar Ebad, the Acting Minister of Public Health in Afghanistan, and Ilham Mamadov, the Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Kabul, the importance of cooperation between the two nations in the health sector was highlighted.

The Acting Minister called for Azerbaijan's sup-

port and collaboration in various aspects of healthcare, aiming to enhance the capacity of Afghan health workers and address pressing health-related issues.

During the meeting, both sides engaged in discussions regarding mutual collaboration in the health sector, with a focus on capacity building initiatives for Afghan health workers.

Dr. Qalandar Ebad

emphasized that increasing the capacity of Afghan health workers is of utmost priority, and he expressed his commitment to creating opportunities for capacity building through various means.

The Ambassador of Azerbaijan, Ilham Mamadov, expressed satisfaction with the ongoing collaborative work and enduring cooperation in the

healthcare sector. He affirmed Azerbaijan's dedication to supporting Afghanistan in the field of health and pledged to continue their assistance.

The Ministry of Public Health's office released a statement highlighting the significance of this meeting and the potential for fruitful cooperation between Azerbaijan and Afghanistan in healthcare.

Azerbaijan urged to help improve capacity of Afghan health workers

KABUL (Ariana News): Acting Minister of Public Health Qalandar Ebad, in a meeting with Azerbaijan's ambassador, Ilham Mohammadov, called for the country's assistance in improving the capacity of Afghanistan's health workers.

The two sides also discussed cooperation in the health sector, capacity building of Afghan health workers, and Azerbaijan's role in the health sector and other issues, according to a statement released by the Public Health Ministry.

Azerbaijan's envoy said that his country seeks to cooperate with Afghanistan in a sustainable manner in

the field of health.

In other news, the foundation stone for the construction of oxygen production facility was laid at the Indira Gandhi children hos-

pital in Kabul. Officials of the Ministry of Public Health said that the facility will be built with the financial and technical assistance of the World Health

Organization, and with the capacity to produce 200 cylinders of oxygen daily to meet not only the needs of the hospital, but also other health facilities.



India and Israel funnelled money to support Imran

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport, Mass Transit, Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control Sharjeel Inam Memon has stated that a very serious and profound conspiracy is underway against Pakistan. Imran Khan plays a significant role in this conspiracy, and his struggle is not against the People's Party or the establishment, but against the interests of Pakistan itself.

Addressing a press conference at the Karachi Press Club, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that during the 2018 elections, India and Israel funnelled money to support Imran Khan, leading to his imposition on the country through unprecedented rigging. Despite his questionable record, he was appointed Prime Minister of Pakistan. The founder of PTI spent a billion rupees in just one year commuting between Bani Gala and the Prime Minister's House.

He said that Imran Khan offered General Bajwa a lifetime extension, urging him to prevent the success of the no-confidence motion. The term "neutral" was misused during campaigning, with foreign individuals whose role involves campaigning against Pakistani institutions supporting Imran Khan. Foreign lobbyists were reportedly hired to campaign against institutions. Imran Khan was constitutionally and legally ousted from power through a motion of no confidence.

Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that PTI's social media team engages in trolling individuals and attacking their personal lives, branding PTI as the current terrorist organization of Pakistan's social media. He said that false propaganda was spread, and disloyal YouTubers were influenced to depict an inaccurate face of Pakistan to the global audience, leading to the poisoning of the minds of the youth.

He said that the conduct of PTI miscreants during President Asif Ali Zardari's address at the Parliament House and Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari's swearing-in was reprehensible. While such occasions should be honored with dignity, Bibi Aseefa was unfortunately subjected to noise during her swearing-in. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that Imran Khan has initiated the politics of division within society, pitting brother against brother. The PTI founder is resorting to blackmail tactics to seize power, levying false accusations against institutions. Through prop-



aganda, Imran Khan endeavors to portray himself as a champion of righteousness.

He said that Imran Khan conspired against Pakistan and attempted to undermine its interests, even after relinquishing power. He sought to obstruct aid to Pakistan upon leaving office, as evidenced by letters addressed to F. If an ordinary individual had engaged in such actions, severe repercussions would have ensued. Despite not even six months passing, he is being accorded VIP treatment in jail. Imran Khan orchestrates political maneuvers from behind bars, convening government and cabinet meetings, distributing tickets, and engaging with various stakeholders.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that Imran Khan arrested Ms. Faryal Talpur on the night of Eid. We never wished for any sister, daughter, or wife to be arrested. The new generation should heed the prophecies of Dr. Israr, as highlighted by the media to the youth. Additionally, Abdul Sattar Edhi's thoughts on Imran Khan should be shared with the younger generation. PTI has made no sacrifices and cannot be considered a political party.

Senior Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that this is my first visit to the Karachi Press Club since reassuming the position as Minister for Information. I held a comprehensive meeting with the President of the Karachi Press Club. The Sindh government has consistently made concerted efforts to support journalists. He reiterated that the efforts of the People's Party will persist in meeting the longstanding demands of media houses, ensuring journalists' salaries, and resolving all their issues, including access to free medical facilities.

People love resistance and votes go to resistance: Sana

F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Ex Interior Minister and central leader of PML-N Rana Sanaullah has said that the votes go to resistance, and one should confess that the PTI founder did resistance.

"The people love resistance, we did resistance for entire life but this time it goes to the opposite," Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's Punjab President Rana Sanaullah said in an interview. He said, he has been associated with Nawaz Sharif for last 32 years. He did the politics of resistance. "We have to confess that the PTI's founder also did resistance.

PML-N leader said, "We assumed that the PTI's founder could not resist but he did so." "We have to see, if the PTI's resistance harmed us or our compromise," he said. "It seems there is something between their resistance and our compromise," he added. "I had opposed formation of coalition government in the party meeting," Rana Sana said. "I can give so many reasons against my defeat, but I consented."

"What Javed Latif is saying about election is wrong. I am believing as much about defeat also believe with that certainty that Javed Latif was also defeated," he said. "Javed Latif has grudge, when he has been defeated in the election, how Rana Tanvir won it," Rana Sana said. "I

know his pain that could only be relieved with denotification of Rana Tanvir". "It is a peculiar demand to open votes of Mian Sahib's constituency," he said. "No selection made in the election, neither someone was targeted, these all are conspiracy theories," PML-N leader said. "I exchanged harsh words with Qamar Javed Bajwa over booking me in the heroin case during a parliament function," Rana Sana said.

"The God will do justice over the case you booked me in, I told him." He denied doing so but I told him you did it. "It was the PTI's founder who want it, but it was materialized by Qamar Javed Bajwa," Sanaullah said. "We failed to dispel the impression that the PML-N has nothing to do with the caretaker government, which was resulted in political consequences," he said.

"Mohsin Naqvi was not given the ministry only for PML-N but there were some other reasons too," he said. "Some amendments should be introduced that a member of the caretaker set-up should not become the part of the elected government".

Now every caretaker government will take steps to keep their political clout intact," he said. He said, "Faizabad sit-in was the Tehreek-e-Labbaik's decision, it is misperception that someone had ask them

to stage sit-in", former interior minister said. "I had talk with them as Punjab's law minister before their leaving Lahore," PML-N leader said. "They demanded resignation of Zahid Hamid.

We said the decision will be taken after inquiry of the matter by Raja Zafarul Haq". "When the inquiry report could not complete after four days, they promised to remain peaceful asking us to let us go". "Federal government and the agencies decided not to stop the protest, which was feared to be resulted in loss of lives," PML-N leader said.

3 killed as pickup falls in gorge

F.P. Report

BALAKOT: At least three people were killed and nine others injured when a pickup skidded off road and plunged into a gorge here on Monday.

According to details, a pickup heading from Pamhara to Balakot got out of control of driver and fell into a ravine near Patlang-Jalora bridge. As a result of accident three people including Ghulam Nabbi, Muhammad Munshi and another person was killed on the spot in the accident while nine others were injured.

Rain, floods claim 16 lives in Balochistan

F.P. Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Balochistan on Monday revealed that 16 people died during the recent torrential rains in the province.

In a report, the PDMA said that the casualties were reported since April 12 as the heavy rainfall also damaged the infrastructure. It added that the rain wreaked havoc in 11 districts of the province. The PDMA maintained that 12 roads and two bridges have been damaged in different districts. The report read that 220 houses were damaged, out of which 60 were completely destroyed and 160 partially affected. The PDMA said relief work in the affected areas of Chaman was underway.

The report further said that a survey is being conducted to ascertain the damages caused to houses and crops. The troops of the Pakistan Army are taking part in draining out the rainwater from Gwadar, Pasni and Jiwani, the PDMA said.

It is pertinent to mention here that the rainfall played havoc with various parts of Balochistan submerging the port city of Gwadar. The disruption of a railway track resulted in the suspension of train services between Quetta and Chaman. Train service between Sibi and Harnai was interrupted due to damage to another track at the Spintangi area in the Sibi-Harnai segment.

Nawaz to undergo health checkup in China

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif will embark on a five-day "personal visit" to China on Monday, sources told media.

According to sources within the party, Nawaz's visit is of a personal nature during which he will undergo a medical checkup. The sources revealed that the former premier would also hold meetings related to the development works of Punjab.

The former premier, the sources shared, is also scheduled to meet the owners of Chinese companies. Nawaz, on his five-day visit, will be accompanied by Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar. No more details are available regarding the visit of PML-N leaders.

This will be the first international visit of Nawaz Sharif since he came back to Pakistan in 2023 after ending four years of self-imposed exile in London. The PML-N leader was allowed by the Lahore High Court in November 2019 to go abroad on health grounds after his medical reports revealed that he needed urgent treatment. The LHC granted him permission for medical treatment after which he proceeded to the UK and stayed in London.

Katcha dacoits loot passenger van

JACOBABAD (INP): Katcha dacoits looted a passenger van in the limits of B-Section police station Thul, Jacobabad on Monday, police sources said.

As per details, the Katcha dacoits stopped a passenger van in Jacobabad and looted valuables including cash, gold and mobile phones, and others from passengers. The dacoits after looting the passenger easily escaped the crime scene.

Meanwhile, the affected passengers have staged a sit-in protest at the Jongal-Karampur Road, resulting in massive traffic jams. They are demanding the return of their valuables and action against the Katcha dacoits. On April 19, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, after consultation with all stakeholders, decided to conduct a joint operation in the Katcha area of Sindh, with full force to clear the area from dacoits.

An important meeting of the National Action Plan Implementation Review Committee was held at NACTA headquarters here on Friday under the chairmanship of the Interior Minister which was attended by Interior Secretary, Head NACTA, DG FIA, Punjab, Sindh, KP, Balochistan, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari welcoming Iranian President Dr. Seyed Ebrahim Raisi upon his arrival at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Israeli military intell chief quits over failure to prevent attack

TEL AVIV (AP): The head of Israel's military intelligence directorate resigned on Monday over the failures surrounding Hamas' unprecedented Oct. 7 attack, the military said, becoming the first senior figure to step down over his role in the deadliest assault in Israel's history.

Maj. Gen. Aharon Haliva's resignation sets the stage for what's expected to be more fallout from Israel's top security brass over Hamas' attack, when militants blasted through Israel's border defenses, rampaged through Israeli communities unchallenged for hours and killed 1,200 people, most civilians, while taking roughly 250 hostages into Gaza. That attack set off the war against Hamas in Gaza, now in its seventh month.

The military said in a statement that Haliva had asked to end his service "following his leadership responsibility." Shortly after the war, Haliva had publicly said that he shouldered blame for not preventing the assault at the head of the military department responsible for providing the government and the military with intelligence warnings and daily alerts. The military said in the statement that the military chief of staff accepted Haliva's request to resign and thanked him for his service.

Haliva, as well as other military and security leaders, were widely expected to resign in response to the glaring failures that led up to Oct. 7 and those that made it such a devastating attack.

But the timing of the resignations is unclear, because Israel is still fighting Hamas in Gaza and battling the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah in the north. Tensions with Iran are also at a high following attacks between the two enemies. While Haliva and others have accepted blame for failing to stop the attack, others have stopped short, most notably Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has said he

will answer tough questions about his role but has not outright acknowledged any responsibility for allowing the attack to unfold.

Meanwhile, Israel has not provided evidence to support claims that staff members of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, participated in the Oct. 7 attacks, an independent review led by the former French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna revealed.

The Colonna review, drafted with the assistance of three Nordic research institutes, underscores the lack of substantiation for broader allegations made by Israel in March, accusing numerous UNRWA employees of affiliating with Hamas or Islamic Jihad. Major donors cut their funding to the agency in January, which is the primary source of humanitarian aid not only to Gaza but also to Palestinian refugees throughout the region, following Israel's allegations.

This was despite the critical circumstances of Gaza's 2.3 million people, the majority of whom have been displaced by Israel's war since Oct. 7 and are struggling to access water, food, shelter, or medical care. The report found that UNRWA has consistently supplied employee lists to Israel for vetting and that "the Israeli government has not informed Unrwa of any concerns relating to any Unrwa staff based on these staff lists since 2011."

A more detailed assessment was sent to the UN by the three Nordic research bodies — the Swedish-based Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, the Norwegian Chr Michelsen Institute, and the Danish Institute for Human Rights. "Israeli authorities have to date not provided any supporting evidence nor responded to letters from Unrwa in March, and again in April, requesting the names and supporting evidence that would enable Unrwa to open an investigation," the report stat-

ed.

The Colonna report deemed UNRWA indispensable for providing essential humanitarian aid and services, the Guardian reported. "In the absence of a political solution between Israel and the Palestinians, Unrwa remains pivotal in providing life-saving humanitarian aid and essential social services, particularly in health and education, to Palestinian refugees in Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the West Bank," it said.

"As such, Unrwa is irreplaceable and indispensable to Palestinians' human and economic development. In addition, many view Unrwa as a humanitarian lifeline." The Colonna review proposes several enhancements to neutrality safeguards for UNRWA's staff of over 32,000, including expanding the internal oversight service, increasing in-person training, and boosting support from donor countries. However, it acknowledges that UNRWA's current measures are already more stringent than those of many similar organizations.

"The review revealed that Unrwa has established a significant number of mechanisms and procedures to ensure compliance with the humanitarian principles, with emphasis on the principle of neutrality and that it possesses a more developed approach to neutrality than other similar UN or NGO entities," it said One common criticism from Israel is that UNRWA schools throughout the region use Palestinian Authority textbooks containing antisemitic content, the Guardian reported. However, the technical report by the Nordic institutions found little evidence to support these allegations. "Three international assessments of PA textbooks in recent years have provided a nuanced picture," the report said. "Two identified presence of bias and antagonistic content, but did not provide evidence of antisemitic content.

Pak-Iran trade volume

(Continued from Page 1)

Similarly, the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) in the Field of Quarantine and Phytosanitary was also inked by Minister of National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain and Iran's Minister of Agriculture Jihad Mohammad Ali Nikbakht.

The two sides also signed an MoU for Legal Cooperation between the Ministry of Justice of Iran and the Ministry of Law and Justice of Pakistan. Minister of Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar and his Iranian counterpart Amin Hossein Rahimi signed the memorandum. An MoU between the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of Pakistan and Organization of Cinema and Audiovisual Affairs of Iran was inked to promote film exchange and cinema cooperation between the two countries. The document was signed by Minister of Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar and Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad Mehdi Esmaili. The signing ceremony also marked the ratification of a security cooperation agreement between the governments of two countries.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Iranian President Dr. Seyed Ebrahim Raisi expressed strong and unequivocal condemnation of the indiscriminate use of force by Israeli occupation authorities in Gaza for over seven months.

They reiterated the call for international efforts to an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, lifting the siege and provision of humanitarian relief to the people of Gaza. The two leaders, in a meeting, discussed the entire range of bilateral relations and exchanged views on important regional and global developments, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. Underscoring the rich history of relations between Pakistan and Iran, they also reaffirmed commitment to expand wide-ranging bilateral cooperation, particularly in the areas of trade, energy, connectivity, culture and people-to-people contacts. Ministers and senior officials from both sides were present in the meeting. Both sides agreed to increase the volume of bilateral trade to US \$10 billions in the next five years. They also agreed to cooperate in developing joint approaches to confront common challenges including the threat of terrorism. The prime minister lauded the Iranian leadership, especially Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, for Iran's unequivocal and principled support for the Kashmiri people and their legitimate rights.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif welcomed Iranian President Dr Seyed Ebrahim Raisi in the Persian language. During their joint press stakeout, the prime minister recited Allama Taqi Bahar's Persian verses about Pakistan, in which the poet had invoked divine blessings for the country, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The prime minister, on the occasion, read out a Persian couplet for the visiting President which warmly welcomed his arrival in Pakistan. The prime minister's eloquence in the Persian language brought smiles on the faces of the Iranian President and other participants who were pleased to hear such remarks. They also applauded the prime minister's gesture.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and visiting Iranian President Syed Ebrahim Raisi planted a sapling at the lawn of the Prime Minister's House to mark the annual Earth Day. Accompanied by his spouse and a high-powered delegation of ministers and businessmen, the Iranian president arrived here on a three-day official visit. Both the dignitaries planted the sapling of Chir pine, also known as Pinus roxburghii - a hardy species native to the Himalayas. Prime Minister Shehbaz, earlier in a message to the nation on Earth Day, urged the countrymen to reaffirm their commitment to using plastic responsibly and embrace recycling and eco-friendly alternatives to achieve a plastic-free society. Earlier, as the visiting dignitary arrived at the PM House, he was given a guard of honour before the tete-a-tete between the prime minister and Iranian president.

Sikh Yatrees leave for India as festival concludes

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Sikh Yatrees left Pakistan via Wagah border for India today after attending ceremonies related to Baisakhi festival.

They were seen off by the Provincial Minister for Minorities, Ramesh Singh Arora and officials of Evacuee Trust Property Board. Before departure, the Sikh Yatrees said that they received a lot of love during their visit to Pakistan which they consider as their second home. They appreciated the arrangements made by the government of Pakistan to facilitate them during the visit. Speaking on the occasion, Punjab Minister for Minorities Affairs, Ramesh Singh Arora said that the government made the best possible arrangements to facilitate Sikh Yatrees during their visit, for which Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz had issued special directions.

Visiting Sikh pilgrims from India have expressed gratitude to Pakistan for providing the best security, accommodation and medical facilities during their ten-day pilgrimage. Sikh pilgrims said that they got respect and love and Pakistanis have won their hearts. Sikh pilgrims said their Gurdwaras are beautifully decorated and Sikh community living in Pakistan is enjoying all rights. They will leave for India via Wagah border tomorrow.



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Jamileh Alamolhoda, wife of Iranian President paid a visit to Pakistan Sweet Home, MNA Aseefa Bhutto Zardari also present.