

Terrorist killed in operation
F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in Khyber District, on reported presence of terrorists. During the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists, as a result of which four terrorists were sent to hell including Terrorist Ringleader Qari Wajid @Qari Baryal and Terrorist Ringleader Razziq.



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No peace in world sans peace in Gaza: PM

Shehbaz, Anwar reaffirm to broaden bilateral cooperation in diverse fields; Pak-Saudi economic ties enter a new era with trade-boosting steps ahead; Premier meets Bill Gates; urges sustained efforts by partners for polio-free Pakistan

RIYADH (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Monday said permanent peace in Gaza was imperative for peace in the world. He was speaking at the plenary meeting of the special session of World Economic Forum on the theme of "Rejuvenating Growth".

He said, "The world will not be in peace unless there is a permanent peace in Gaza." As he talked about Gaza, the audience in the hall responded with resounding applause. He said the conflict in Ukraine brought to the world skyrocketing commodity prices, and Pakistan could not import and procure vital raw materials for industry and agriculture. "On top of that inflation is breaking the back of developing countries," he said. Coupled with that, Pakistan faced devastation in 2022 due to huge unimagined floods.

The prime minister said, "Pakistan is one of those countries which have nothing to do with the reasons leading to climate change. Our contribution to emissions is not even fraction of one percent." Due to the catastrophic floods in Pakistan, large swathes of land were submerged, millions of houses and animals were washed away, and stagnant water brought water borne diseases all across the country, he continued.

He said his government spent Rs 100 billion from scarce resources for relief and rehabilitation of the flood affectees. "We are grateful to the friendly countries including Saudi Arabia, Gulf countries, the United Kingdom, the United States and many other countries for their support at a difficult time." Pakistan's economy suffered losses of 30 billion dollars because of the floods and then it approached international entities in Geneva and other places and had to borrow loans at expensive



rates due to the natural disaster which was not its fault, he mentioned.

"Our country was hit in a way which I had not seen in my life time," he remarked. He gave the example of his family to express his determination and resolve to put Pakistan on the road to progress and prosperity. He said his father and his brothers were sons of a poor farmer in undivided India and they migrated to Lahore, Pakistan at the time of partition.

With the sheer dint of hard work, in 1965 his father and family raised the largest steel engineering company in Pakistan but it was nationalized on January 2, 1972, he said, adding his family stood up and accepted the challenge and in next 18 months set up six new small factories to avoid further nationalization. He said global north and south were dependent on each other and had to work together to face the present challenges.

The prime minister said after taking over reins of the country

early this year, he was determined to put things in order. Talking about the issues facing Pakistan, he said the power sector was in a shambles due to massive electricity theft and an elitist culture was doling out to those who did not deserve it. He told that for the first time in the country's history after getting credible input from agencies he removed high level officers who were not functioning well and had grey records.

"Our revenue sector is in tatters and what we receive annually in revenue, we lose four times due to leakages in the system. Unless we plug loopholes we will not recover from our problems in revenue collection," he explained. He said there were also problems of inflation and debt trap which was a "death trap". He said, "I acknowledge from the core of my heart the support of Saudi leadership for Pakistan for overcoming economic challenges. A friend in need is a friend indeed."

He appreciated the UK's

Department for International Development for its outstanding support for Pakistan in sectors of health and education in the past. He said his government was going for deep rooted structural reforms and meaningful austerity. Pakistan had a very young population - millions of boys and girls - which was not only a challenge but also a great opportunity, he added. "Youth is our biggest asset and we have to provide them will modern tools and technology including education in information technology and artificial intelligence and vocational training so that they can become self earners and establish small and medium size businesses and contribute in the nation building efforts in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia."

Talking about his goals to achieve economic progress, he said his government would promote agriculture through modern technology and by providing the best seeds and fertilizers to farmers. "A huge task is ahead of us and we have to go for higher exports and incentivize our

exporters and utilize our mineral resources and fertile land," he added. He reiterated that Pakistan could achieve its rightful place in the comity of nations with hard work and untiring efforts.

Meanwhile Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim recalled the historical ties between Pakistan and Malaysia, especially in the fields of education, science & technology and trade, and undertook to further enhance the cooperation in the future.

The prime minister invited a trade and business delegation from Malaysia to Pakistan to discuss enhancing trade and investment relations between the two countries. The prime minister met his Malaysian counterpart on the sidelines of the Special Meeting of the World Economic Forum, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

This was the first in person meeting between both leaders since Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was re-elected in March. The two leaders have, however, spoken twice on telephone, i.e. on March 4 when Prime Minister Shehbaz took office as well as on April 10, this year on Eid ul Fitr.

Following up on their warm conversations on telephone, the prime minister appreciated the leadership of Malaysian premier and also commended his knowledge of art and literature - particularly about the National Poet of Pakistan Allama Iqbal. The two sides also agreed to have the next meeting of Joint Ministerial Commission in Islamabad soon. Prime Minister Shehbaz reiterated his invitation to Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim to undertake an official visit to Pakistan later this year.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also said that the economic ties between Pakistan and

Saudi Arabia had entered a new era as both countries were set to take concrete measures to boost the volume of bilateral trade.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Saudi Minister of Commerce Dr. Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qasabi on the sidelines of the Special Meeting of World Economic Forum here, said the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) was playing an active role in promoting and facilitating the foreign investment in the country.

The Saudi minister told the prime minister that on the directives of Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, the Kingdom was prioritising trade and investment in Pakistan. A delegation of Saudi businessmen, traders and investors would soon visit Pakistan, he added. The Saudi minister said that the targets were being set to take the bilateral ties to a new height within one or one-and-half years.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the Pakistani nationals had played a significant role in the progress and prosperity of Saudi Arabia. Saudi Minister Al-Qasabi stressed the need to further promote the sentiments about the Pak-Saudi ties among the youth and new generation.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan, Information and Broadcasting Minister Attaullah Tarar, Petroleum Minister Dr Musaddik Malik and Special Assistant to PM Tariq Fatemi also attended the meeting.

Moreover, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met the founder and co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Bill Gates, wherein he called for a sustained efforts by all the partners to reach the ultimate goal of a polio-free Pakistan. In the meeting held on the sidelines of the WEF Special Meeting here,

the prime minister highlighted that Pakistan was working tirelessly to eradicate polio from the country, a PM Office press release said.

Earlier, both leaders had featured in a WEF's high-level panel discussion titled "Redefining the Global Health Agenda." The prime minister thanked Bill Gates for sending him a warm congratulatory letter upon his re-election. Bill Gates recalled the immunization and polio vaccine program in Punjab province under the leadership of Shehbaz Sharif as chief minister and emphasized replicating the same practice across the country to make the immunization program a success.

While fondly recalling their interactions during his previous tenure, the prime minister reaffirmed his commitment to continue working closely with Bill Gates to ensure a stronger partnership between Pakistan and the Gates Foundation. He thanked the BMGF for its longstanding support for polio eradication in Pakistan.

Bill Gates acknowledged Pakistan's efforts and said polio eradication was vital to protect future generations from this crippling disease. In addition to polio, Prime Minister Shehbaz and Bill Gates also discussed progress on ongoing activities between Pakistan and the Foundation in the areas of immunization, nutrition, and financial inclusion.

The prime minister said that the Gates Foundation was a trusted partner in Pakistan's socio-economic development and sought collaboration in other areas including IT, STEM education and disaster management. Recalling Bill Gates' visit to Pakistan in February 2022, the prime minister extended an invitation to him to visit Pakistan again at a time of his convenience.

IMF okays \$1.1billion loan tranche for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Executive Board has approved a \$1.1 billion loan for Pakistan as the last tranche under the \$3 billion Stand-by Arrangement (SBA), sources told media on Monday.

According to the Ministry of Finance sources, the IMF will soon issue an official statement regarding the approval. They further stated that Pakistan is likely to receive the loan payment this week. The funding will be the third and last tranche of a \$3 billion Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) with the IMF, which it secured last summer to avert a sovereign default and which runs out this month.

The final tranche was approved after the IMF Executive Board meeting in Washington today that discussed Pakistan's request for the release of funds. The global lender has already granted Pakistan \$1.9 billion under the agreement. — Agencies

Scotland's Humza quits as country's leader

EDINBURGH (BBC): Scotland's First Minister Humza Yousaf stepped down from his position amid facing a no-confidence motion Monday as the leader of the Scottish National Party (SNP) after the collapse of his power-sharing agreement with the country's Green Party, according to BBC.

Media reports earlier claimed that he was set to submit his resignation as legislators decided to move forward to dethrone the 39-year-old. During the resignation speech, he paid an emotional tribute to his family saying: "I am in absolute debt to my wonderful wife, my beautiful children and my wider family for putting up with me over the years." He also joked: "I'm afraid you'll be seeing a lot more of me from now, You are truly everything to me."

Fazl backs PTI's political rights in NA session

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In his first speech on the National Assembly's floor, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman blasted the government, outcomes of the 2024 nationwide elections, parliamentarians, bureaucracy, and the establishment on Monday.

"Neither bureaucracy nor establishment has a role in the creation of the country," Maulana Fazl said while delivering a speech on the assembly's floor today, adding that Pakistan was created through a democratic struggle and sacrifices but it stood nowhere in terms of political and economic stability. He criticised the ruling parties, saying: "Is this parliament of representatives of the nation or a setup arranged by the establishment?"

"How our conscience is satisfied [after the general elections], as the losers are upset, and even the winners are not satisfied [with the poll results]." During his speech, the politician-cum-cleric backed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Asad Qaiser's demand for granting the right to the latter's party to

organise public gatherings, terming it the Imran-founded party's "constitutional right".

The PTI lawmakers in the National Assembly thumped their desks in support of Maulana Fazl's remarks. He went on to say that democracy in the country was weakened after politicians "compromised" on their principles on every occasion and now, the parliament has lost its supremacy as they cannot even pass a law independently.

Fazl also said that back-to-back "full and partial" martial laws have also shaken the democratic foundations of the country by ousting elected governments. He pointed out that the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was a witness to how a law related to an agreement between the federal government and seminaries had not been passed despite being tabled in the assembly with consensus.

The JUI-F supremo said that they raised objections on the 2018 general polls just like they opposed the 2024 nationwide elections, terming it similarly "fraudulent" as the politicians "sold out the democracy"

due to the country coming to a "standstill". He raised questions on the government's tall claims of rooting out terrorism in the country. He criticised that 80 JUI-F workers were killed in a terrorist attack in Bajaur during the election-eering phase.

Fazl also called out the federal government for not raising its voice against Israeli actions that have killed over 340,00 Palestinians in the occupied territory. He asked top leaders of the ruling parties — PML-N's Nawaz Sharif, Shehbaz Sharif and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari — to leave the government and go to the masses.

He added if the people had voted for the PTI then it should be allowed to rule. He further announced that his party planned to organise a "million march" in Karachi and Peshawar on May 2 and 9, respectively. He asked the government to refrain from creating hurdles in the JUI-F's upcoming power shows. Fazl said that his party was ready to start a new public movement against the prevailing governance system which is "unacceptable" to them.

Turkish Commander calls on COAS

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: His Excellency General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu, Commander Turkish Land Forces called on General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), at General Headquarters, on Monday.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest and measures to further enhance bilateral defence cooperation were discussed. Both sides expressed satisfaction over deep-rooted relations between the two countries, based on historic, cultural and religious affinity. COAS emphasized the need to further strengthen existing military to military cooperation between the two Armed Forces.

The visiting dignitary appreciated the role of Pakistan Army in ensuring peace and stability in the region. Earlier on arrival at GHQ, Commander Turkish Land Forces, laid floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada. A smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Army presented the guard of honour to the visiting dignitary.

Kidnapped judge rescued

F.P. Report

D I KHAN: The Dera Ismail Khan Police on Sunday said kidnapped judge Shakirullah Marwat has been rescued from DI Khan.

The senior judge was abducted from DI Khan two days ago. Police sources claimed that the judge has reached his home safely. Armed men had ambushed and kidnapped the senior judge, a police official said Sunday. Around 15 men on motorbikes intercepted Judge Shakirullah Marwat's vehicle as he was traveling towards Dera Ismail Khan district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said police official Faheem Khan. The assailants set the car on fire before fleeing with him. The driver remained unharmed, Khan said. In a video released later, Marwat had assured his family that he was well.



RAWALPINDI: Turkish Land Forces General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu called on Chief of Army Staff, Gen. Asim Munir at GHQ.

CTD arrests 4 TTP men involved in Bisham attack

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Monday claimed to have arrested four key terrorists of Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), involved in a suicide attack on the vehicle of Chinese engineers in Bisham district, last month.

Terming the arrests a 'big headway', the CTD KP spokesperson in a statement identified the suspects as mastermind Adil Shehbaz, and Muhammad Shafiq Qureshi, Zahid Qureshi and Nazeer Hussain. The head of the

arrested terrorists, Adil Shehbaz, was a resident of Jalalabad district of Afghanistan.

The four terrorists including Adil Shebaz, Muhammad Shafiq Qureshi, Zahid Qureshi and Nazir Hussain were residing in district Mansehra of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The spokesperson said that "terrorist Shehbaz has admitted to playing a pivotal role in the execution of the Bisham attack". He has also confessed to having links with Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

On March 26, a vehicle-borne suicide bomber targeted a convoy escorting

Chinese engineers in the remote Bisham area of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, killing six people, including five Chinese engineers and the vehicle's driver.

The Chinese engineers were enroute their camp in Dasu, the district headquarters of the Upper Kohistan district of KP from Islamabad. Their vehicle was hit by an explosive-laden vehicle, coming from the opposite direction, near Lahore Nala on the Karakoram Highway. The Chinese engineers' vehicle was thrown off the mountainous road into a deep ravine by the impact of the blast.

President confers Nishan-i-Imtiaz (M) upon Commander Turkish Land Forces

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari in a special investiture ceremony held at the Aiwan-i-Sadr on Monday conferred Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) upon Commander of the Turkish Land Forces General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu.

Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir, senior military leadership, Turkish ambassador in Pakistan and other senior officials attended the ceremony. The Nishan-i-Imtiaz (M) was conferred upon General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu in recognition of his illustrious services.

The citation read out in the ceremony stated that Turkish commander 'is a sincere and close friend of

Pakistan' and played a prominent role in promoting and strengthening the defence relations between two brotherly countries. General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu is an officer of high intellect and his excellent administrative qualities earned him the reputation of being a courageous and professionally competent officer. He had served on different military posts.

In recognition of his excellent services and outstanding achievements, he was promoted to the rank of General in 2021 and appointed as commander of the Turkish Land Forces in August 2023. Meanwhile, the Minister for Defence and Defence Production, Khawaja Muhammad Asif was called on by

Commander of Turkish Land Forces, General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu here on Monday.

Welcoming the dignity, the Defence Minister expressed satisfaction over common understanding on regional and global geopolitical situation. Both sides acknowledged the strong relationship between their Armed Forces and committed to further expand defence collaboration, said a news release. Khawaja Asif also appreciated Turkiye's strong support for Pakistan on multiple foras. He also stated that enhanced defence cooperation was an important aspect of the bilateral relationship, characterized by Joint Projects, Joint Exercises and Military Training.

42 complainants get relief on orders of Pb ombudsman

LAHORE (APP): As many as 42 complainants got financial relief of Rs 9.3 million from different departments on orders of the ombudsman Punjab.

According to a spokesman for the ombudsman Punjab office, 42 complainants who are performing their duties as sentry workers in the District Headquarters Hospital Jhelum and had been deprived of their salaries for the last five months, filed a complaint in the Office of the Ombudsman Punjab. Accordingly, Ombudsman Punjab Azam Suleman Khan issued orders to the director Project Unit, Department of Primary and Secondary Health Care, Lahore Medical Superintendent, District Headquarters Hospital in view of immediate payment of salaries to the employees to resolve the issue on an urgent basis and report to the Office of the Punjab Ombudsman. According to the orders, 42 complainants whose cases were pending due to various reasons have been provided legal relief of more than 9.3 million rupees.

18 held for selling roti, naan at higher prices

LAHORE (APP): The district administration got arrested 18 people for selling 'roti and naan' at Rs 16 and Rs 20, respectively and also got registered 25 cases over price-related violations. In a crackdown, the teams of district administration headed by Assistant Commissioner and Price Control Magistrates inspected 1,190 roti and naan points and found 68 points in price violations in various parts of the city.

The enforcement teams imposed fine of Rs 60,000 on various tandoors for selling roti and naan on high prices. The approved rates have been set at Rs16 for a 100-gram roti and Rs 20 for a 120-gram naan.

The district administration was actively ensuring the implementation of the new pricing across the city.

Citizens are encouraged to report any discrepancies in roti and naan prices by calling the helpline 0800003245.

YCA delegation meets medical superintendents

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of Young Consultants Association (YCA) of Lahore General Hospital/PINS met newly appointed Medical Superintendents Dr. Frayad Hussain and Dr. Umar Ishaq separately.

They congratulated them on assuming responsibilities and assured them of cooperation from the YCA. The delegation included President Dr. Falak Sher, General Secretary Dr. Asad Shah and others.

General Secretary YCA Dr. Asad Shah and others said that both medical superintendents will take necessary steps to run the system of the two hospitals efficiently and increase more facilities for the patients with their administrative skills.

CM inaugurates daycare center at Children's Hospital

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said the Punjab government is committed to provide quality healthcare services to people.

Inaugurating a Kids' Day Care Center at Children's Hospital Lahore on Monday, the CM directed the relevant authorities to build a new ICU unit in Children's Hospital, and directed to ensure timely release of funds for its early completion.

The chief minister said that every penny was a trust of the nation, it would be spent transparently on the improvement of healthcare facilities. "We want to build the best hospital for people in every district" she vowed.

The CM said shortage of doctors in remote area hospitals would be catered too. She also reviewed a proposal to build Children's Hospital at the Divisional Headquarters and link them with the Children's Hospital Lahore. She directed the provincial ministers to visit the hospital on daily basis.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif also witnessed signing of an MoU between Islamic Aid UK and University of Child Health Sciences for the establishment of a college block.

Provincial Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique, VC Dr Masood Sadiq

and Chairman Islamic Aid Mahmoodul Hasan signed the MoU. The CM thanked Islamic Aid for their cooperation and support.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif also visited the day care center and reviewed facilities available there. She loved the children and offered them flowers. She directed the day care center staff to take good care of the children.

Earlier, the Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif was briefed that the education and research facilities related to children's health will be provided to medical students in the new college block.

Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Information and Culture Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari, Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Khawaja Imran Nazir, Minister for Specialized Healthcare Khawaja Salman Rafiq, MPA Sania Ashiq and Dr Anran Khan attended the meeting.

Secretary Health Ali Jan, Secretary Information Ahmed Aziz Tarar, Vice-Chancellor University of Child Health Sciences Professor Dr Masood Sadiq, Chairman Islamic Aid London Mahmood ul Hasan and other relevant officers were also present.

Women officers of Punjab Local Government Department visited District Abbottabad

F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: The purpose of the visit was to discuss information, cooperation and the implementation of Punjab's successful system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa between the Local Government Department of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The visit was organized under the ongoing GIZ program for improving local governance in Punjab. The delegation led by Special Secretary Local Government Punjab Ms. Asia Gul met Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Khalid Iqbal. The Deputy Commissioner welcomed the members of the delegation on their arrival at Abbottabad. District Team Leader Kashif Ali from Sub National Governance (SNG) briefed the meeting regarding Land Use Plan and Building Control. Other members of the delegation included Syed Zahid Aziz MDP MDfC, Mahmood Masood Tamnna General Manager, Sohaib Rafique Deputy Manager and Sanam Irshad Advisor Local Government from GIZ. Punjab Local Government Officers

briefed the meeting about Land Use and Building Control Act in Punjab. On this occasion, SNG's Umar Bin Abdul Aziz told the meeting that only 9% of the waste in the province is being collected by TMAs while 89% of the population does not have this facility. Later, the delegation also visited TMA Abbottabad where they were briefed about TMA affairs. District Officers Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance and Planning Abbas Afridi, Additional Assistant Commissioner Sana Fatima, Additional Assistant Commissioner Haveliyan Lubni Iqbal, Additional Assistant Commissioner Galiyat Zarikyar Khan Toru, Vasa Technical Staff and other officers were also present on this occasion.

Special Secretary Local Government Punjab Madam Asia Gul thanked KP SNG and reiterated to do similar projects in future with mutual consultation and said that soon SNG KPK team will be invited to visit Punjab. At the end of the ceremony commemorative shields were presented to the Deputy Commissioner and other officers by Special Secretary Local Government Punjab.

FFC announces first quarterly results for year 2024

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC) has announced its financial results for the first quarter ended March 31, 2024 in its Board of Directors' meeting held on April 29, 2024.

Sona Urea production by the Company stood at 654 thousand tonnes, whereas, sales were recorded at 661 thousand tonnes 5% higher than 2023. The Company also marketed 94 thousand tonnes urea imported by the Government for steady supply of urea to the farmers. Aggregate urea sales of the Company thus stood at 755 thousand tonnes compared to 631 thousand tonnes of same period last year. Higher sales volume besides increase in selling prices due to significant escalation in gas prices towards close of last year resulted in higher sales revenue of Rs 58.4 billion compared to Rs 36.4 billion same period last year.

High cost of imported urea, inflation and higher gas prices caused the cost of sales to increase by 88% to Rs 41.1 billion. Distribution cost also surged by 70% to Rs 5.2 billion mainly due to the implementation of Axle Weight Regulation and impact of inflation. The increase in Super tax levy by Finance Act 2023 led to higher effective tax rate of 42% compared to 35% same period last year.

The highlight of the performance is record return on investments and dividend income aggregating to Rs 10.3 billion. As a result, net profitability of FFC stood at Rs 10.5 billion with earnings per share of Rs 8.27 compared to Rs 6.08 per share same period last year. Profitability in dollar terms at USD 38 million, however, remained static at the level of 2021.

The Board of Directors of FFC has announced first interim dividend of Rs 5.5 per share, for the first quarter of 2024.



ISLAMABAD:Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi inspecting Islamabad Traffic Police Facilitation on Wheels van.

CM Murad launches week-long anti-polio drive

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah inaugurated a week-long anti-polio campaign across 24 districts by administering polio drops to children at the newly established Gulshan-e-Aka Khail in Gadap and urged parents to protect their children from the crippling virus by providing them with oral polio vaccines.

"Together, as a community, let us forge a path towards a polio-free environment, securing a healthier future for our children."

This he said while speaking at the inauguration ceremony of anti-polio camping at Gadap. The ceremony was attended by Health Minister Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, Secretary Health Rehan Baloch, Provincial Coordinator EOC Irshad Sodhar, CEO PPHI Javed Jagirani, National Chair, Rotary International Aziz Memon, Dr Asif Zardari of WHO, Dr Shaikat Chandio of UNICEF and others. The Health Department has launched a Sub-National Immunization Days (NIDs) campaign from April 29th to May 5th, 2024.

This crucial initiative aims at vaccinating approximately eight million children under the age of 5 against poliovirus in 24 districts of Sindh.

Over 62000 front-line workers will work throughout the province, ensuring every eligible child receives this life-saving vaccine. This massive effort will be supported by almost 4000 security personnel. The CM urged all schools, hospitals, and caregivers to welcome vaccinators, as they truly are fighting on the frontline in the last stages of our battle against this debilitating disease.

The Minister Health & Population Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho said that the campaign was aimed at stopping the alarming trend of positive environmental samples in Sindh and all over Pakistan, threatening the health of our children. In recent reports, 11 positive environmental samples have been isolated from various sites in Sindh. This situation underscores the urgency of this vaccination drive. Pakistan and Afghanistan are the two remaining endemic countries, and interrupting virus transmission in this

epidemiological block is critical to eradicating polio. The Polio Programmes of both countries are united in a single mission to protect children from lifelong disability and end polio in the region.

Mr Shah said that despite security challenges and persistent virus clusters, efforts were ongoing to ensure the vaccination of every child. "To ensure no child is left unprotected, we encourage parents whose children are missed to contact the Emergency Operations Centre's Sehat Tahaffuz Helpline 1166," he said.

The media plays a pivotal role in disseminating critical information. The CM urged journalists and community leaders to rally support for the ongoing anti-polio campaign, echoing the endorsement of medical experts and religious scholars who advocate for the safety and efficacy of the oral polio vaccine. Minister Health & Population Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho said that the campaign was aimed at stopping the alarming trend of positive environmental samples in Sindh and all over Pakistan, threatening the health of our children.

LESCO issues feeders' shutdown schedule

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has issued feeders' shutdown schedule for tomorrow (Tuesday) as the company has to complete necessary maintenance and repair work on transmission lines.

According to the company's spokesman here Monday, the electricity supply would remain suspended tomorrow (April 30) from 8 am to 2pm from Basirpur Grid's feeders of Gehlan, Chorsta, Bank Road, Thokar; Bhogewal Grid's feeders of Gujarpura, Hilal Park, Shad Bagh underpass, Yasrab Colony, Asif Steel; Bakhiki Grid's feeders of F1,2,3,4, Bashir Cotton, Granada Textile; Chah

Meeran Grid's feeders of: Amir Road, Wasanpura; Chunian Grid's feeder of Jamsheer 2; Defense Grid's feeders of D-5 & 6; Ghazi Grid's feeders of Altaf Colony, Ghaziabad, Hussain Road, Pepsi Road; Kasur New Grid's feeders of Chant, Ferozepur Road, Hospital, Jabu Mail, Jinnah Road, Majid City, Peruwala, Qadri, Sutlej, Sheikhnam; Narang Grid's feeder of Muslim Park; Okara Cantt Grid's feeders of Baba Farid, Malgoda; Ravi Grid's feeder of New Shad Bagh; Sabzazar Grid's feeder of Jafria Colony; Saidpur Grid's feeder of Chabbarji Park, Nawankot; Shalamar Grid's feeders Riyaz Ahmad Road,

Barkat Steel 1, 2, Data Flour Mill, Javed Furnace, Malik Imtiaz Furnace, Model Steel, Pakistan Mint, Shalamar Town, Suhrwardi Street; Shalamar 2 Grid's feeders of Bilal Colony, GT Road, Malik Steel, Rafiq Steel, SJ Steel, Zaitoon Colony; Wan Radha Ram Grid's feeders Chochak, E Plot, Press Club Grid Feeders; Sahafi Colony 1, Canal Forts, CTD, Khyber Colony, Afzal Park, Asif

Town, Qalandpura, Madani Road, Fisheries; Jubilee Town Grid feeders Defense Road, Bhutian Chowk, Mannu Textiles, Shams Bin Ikram, Dawood Residency, A&B, F&D, C&E Block, Mohlinwal Scheme, Army Welfare Trust, Indus Hospital, Spring Apartments, US Apparel, MSTH; Shamke Grid's feeders of New Muslim International, YAT, Ali Park.

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER DIR IRRIGATION DIVISION DIR LOWER
Ph: 0945-9250068, E-mail: dirirrigation2@hotmail.com

Corrigendum/Cancellation Of Tenders

It is published for the information of all concerneds that Tenders already published in the National Daily Mashriq vide INF NO. (P) 632/24 Dated 04-04-2024 and others for the works "District Development Plan for Lower Dir Buner, Upper Dir, Malakand, Upper Chitral, Lower Chitral in Malakand Division under ADP No. 1169/210553" and the date fix for opening 25-04- 2024, due to recent floods in the vicinity of the sites there have been significant variations in the BOQ items and quantities, therefore the tenders from SI No. 1 to SI No. 05 is hereby cancelled and will be tender later on please.

Executive Engineer Dir Irrigation Division Dir Lower.

INF/P/814/2024

Rangers, ANF capture drug traffickers in joint operation

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Rangers Sindh and Anti-Narcotics Force conducted a joint snap checking at Nishtar Road, resulting in the apprehension of two individuals, Shamsuddin and Abdul Ghafoor, who are on the most-wanted list for drug trafficking. A spokesperson for the Sindh Rangers reported on Monday that in addition to the arrests, 2 kg of methamphetamine, commonly known as "ice," was seized from the suspects.

Documents lost

I Hassan Mubarak Khan have lost my F.Sc original certificate of Mardan Board at Pabbi Bazaar. If anyone found, please dispatched on my address, Hassan Mubarak Khan son of Muhammad Ayub Khan, resident of Azakhel Payan, Nowshera district.

UNIVERSITY OF PESHAWAR

Invitation to Bid for Procurement of Furniture (ITB No. 34/UoP/MP-IV/Furniture)

1. Sealed bids on prescribed Tender Forms are invited from well-reputed firms registered with the Federal Board of Revenue for Income Tax (Active Taxpayers) and Sales Tax purposes for the procurement of Furniture for the University of Peshawar as per the following schedule:

Activity	Date and Time
Pre-Bid Meeting	07.05.2024 at 10:00 AM
Last date for submission of Bid Documents along with Separately Sealed Technical and Financial Proposals	15.05.2024 up to 10:00 AM
Opening of Technical Proposals	15.05.2024 at 10:30 AM

- The bidding documents including Contract Conditions and Item Specification can be obtained from Project Directorate – Strengthening of Academic and Professional Facilities at the University of Peshawar Project, Office at First Floor, Quaid-e-Azam College of Commerce, University of Peshawar, during office hours (08:00 AM to 04:00 PM) on any working day (Monday-Friday) against a Fee of Rs.1000/-.
- Selection would be made under the 'Single Stage – Two Envelope Procedure'.
- The bidders shall clearly and boldly mark the Tender description and date/time of opening at the face of the sealed bid/envelope.
- The Sealed bids, complete in all respects, must reach the office of the Project Director, Strengthening of Academic and Professional Facilities at the University of Peshawar, as per the schedule above.
- The bid shall invariably be accompanied by Bid Security @ 2% of bid cost (Refundable) in the form of CDR drawn in the name of The Treasurer, University of Peshawar.
- Bids submitted without prescribed Bid Security shall be liable for rejection at the time of Tender opening.
- Pre-bid and tender opening meetings will be held in the Office of the Project Director, Strengthening of Academic & Professional Facilities at the University of Peshawar in the presence of the bidders.
- The University of Peshawar reserves the right to reject any or all bids under the rules in vogue.

Project Director

Strengthening of Academic and Professional Facilities at University of Peshawar; Email: mp4@uop.edu.pk Project Assistant: +92-91-334-9143744



LAHORE: Visitors keenly viewing Painting & Calligraphy Exhibition organized by the The Formanite School System in collaboration with Walled City of Lahore Authority.

CM felicitates newly elected local bodies representatives

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur on Monday congratulated the newly elected six local bodies representatives in byelections.

The Chief Minister in a statement said that in unofficial and inconclusive results, PTI-backed candidates have won five out of six seats of Tehsil Chairman which is a manifestation of the trust of the people of the province on his party.

I thank the people of these constituencies for showing full confidence in the candidates supporting PTI-backed, said Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur.

"I also congratulate the party leadership and workers for the excellent success of the candidates supported by the party in the by-elections",

The nation has rejected looters in the 2024 general elections, said Ali Amin Gandapur.

The chief minister said that in these elections, the nation has given a huge mandate to his party across the country.

Ali Amin said that production of Form 47 Government does not have the ability to bring the country out of crisis. He said that those who have brought the country to this point are leading the country to further destruction.

Party's founder can be put in jail but cannot be removed from the hearts of the people, said Ali Amin.

He further said that the public mandate should be recognized in the better interest of the country and nation.

Ali Amin said that they will continue all political, constitutional and legal struggle to achieve their right to provide relief to people of the province.

Safari trip for thalassemia patients arranged

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Hamza Foundation Welfare Thalassemia Center and Blood Transfusion Services Peshawar KP Pakistan has arranged one day Safari Train trip from Peshawar to Attock Khurd, for Thalassemia kids and their parents with connectivity of World Thalassemia Day celebration's.

Famous poet, writer and educationalist Honourabl Dr. Abaseen Yousafzay was the Chief guest of that important function.

Divisional Superintendent Pakistan Railway Mr. Maqsood Jan has received and warmly welcomed all the Thalassemia kids and guests on Cantt Railway station Peshawar.

Pakistan Railway arranged musical band for the welcome reception for Thalassemia kids.

15 members of delegation of print and electronic media personals were also present on that occasion for the coverage of this important event on Cantt Railway station Peshawar, Founder Chairman Hamza Foundation Ijaz Ali Khan highlighted the importance of World Thalassemia Day and also delivered a lecture on Thalassemia disease and its prevention.

He also thanked the entire management of Pakistan Railway for their support and cooperation for the arrangements of wonderful trip for Thalassemia kids and their families from Peshawar cantt to Attock khurd. Juices, chips, cold drinks, lunch and tea was arranged by Hamza Foundation for all the participants of the event.

Thalassemia kids and their families too much enjoyed the journey by Train, horse riding, river side view and the Attock railway bridge on Indus river made during 1885 at Attock khurd tourist spot.

All the kids, families and print and electronic media personals thanked the management of Hamza Foundation for the arrangements of such a wonderful trip for the celebration of World Thalassemia day events.

At evening the train was returned to Peshawar from Attock khurd Railway station.

Students gain insight into urban mobility during BRT system visit

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Students of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University (SBBWU) Peshawar on Monday the opportunity to gain a firsthand understanding of urban mobility and sustainable transport initiatives during an informative visit to the BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) system.

The visit, arranged by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Urban Mobility Authority and TransPeshawar Company by Dr. Sidra Pervez, Assistant Professor, Department of Biochemistry and Ms. Tashfeen Zia, Deputy Registrar, under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Safia Ahmad (T.I), Vice Chancellor, SBBWUP, which provided students with an in-depth look at the management and functioning of the BRT system within Peshawar city.

The students' visit included a tour of the BRT control room, offering them a unique glimpse into the operational intricacies of the transit system.

This firsthand experience allowed the students to observe how the system ensures efficient and effective transport services across the city.

An engaging presentation delivered by the Managing Director of the BRT system highlighted the eco-friendly practices and sustainable climate change initiatives that the system embodies.

The students were able to learn about the innovative measures being taken to promote environmental sustainability within the urban transport sector.

The visit proved to be an invaluable educational experience, enhancing the students' knowledge and appreciation of sustainable transport solutions. The hands-on exposure to the BRT system's operations emphasized the importance of implementing green initiatives in urban planning and mobility.

Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar expressed sincere gratitude to Dr. Tariq Usman, CEO, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Urban Mobility Authority and TransPeshawar Company and his team for their efforts in facilitating this visit.

The university looks forward to further collaborations that will continue to promote community engagement, education and sustainable practices within the region.

The visit marks a significant step towards fostering a future generation of environmentally conscious individuals committed to sustainable urban development.



Torrential rains: Calls for investment in advanced forecasting technologies

PESHAWAR (APP): Following forecast of more torrential rains and ascending of water in River Kabul, Sohail Sardar (28), a poor farmer and resident of Mohib Banda was seen shifting livestock in urgency to safer places to avoid financial losses during possible flooding.

It was a hardworking day for poor Sohail, who quickly moved towards his cattle farm to shift goats, sheep and buffaloes in a three trucks for onward transportation to a secure area after seeing rise of floodwater in River Kabul, which an inundated low-lying areas of Nowshera and Peshawar districts.

"Since Monday morning, I was closely monitoring water level in River Kabul that was continuously rising with each passing hour, leaving me with no other option but to shift my cattle to the house of maternal uncle at Wapda Town on GT Road Nowshera," he said, adding he was yet to fully recovery of the 2022 flood damages.

Like Sohail, several villagers were seen shifting their cattle to Pabbi, Amankot, Khudarzai and other adjoining areas following heavy rainfalls that lashed parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Nowshera and Peshawar districts for the last couple of days including on Monday.

"These torrential rains have signified Pakistan's vulnerability to climate-change which started affecting almost all sectors of life including livestock, wheat crop, strawberry and watermelon orchards and agriculture," said Dr Muhammad Mumtaz Malik, former Wildlife Chief KP while talking to APP. He said that Pakistan was among 10 countries affected by climate change and the recent torrential rains and flash flooding in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces was evident of it.

"The World Meteorological Organisation report has endorsed that Asia bore the brunt of climate and weather disasters in 2023 where temperatures climbed up almost two degree centigrade above the historical average, thus exposing living creatures to heat-waves, torrential rains and devastated floods," he said.

Dr Mumtaz Malik said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was most vulnerable to climate change as evidenced by the 2022 flooding that swept away star hotels in Swat and affected about 33 million people and killed over 1,739 besides hundreds of thousands homeless.

"These floods and torrential rains are a wake-up call for the all stakeholders in Pakistan to respond quickly," he said, adding time has come to strengthen the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Provincial Disasters Management Authorities (PDMA) in terms of financial resources, manpower, capacity building of staffers and equipment to minimize floods and storms related damages.

Dr Mumtaz said in developed countries, advanced forecasting technologies and early warning systems enable the governments and relief organizations to take preemptive measures, adding such systems were also essential for Pakistan.

He said that investing in advanced forecasting technologies and expanding early warning systems in Pakistan would help ensure timely and accurate weather updates besides help provinces to take preemptive measures.

Underscoring the need for an inclusive strategy for climate resilience and climate-change adaptability, he said it will help strengthen infrastructure, bridges and buildings to withstand extreme weather patterns, ensure sustainable agricultural and forests practices imperative for a secure food and water resources, and empower local populations through community-based disaster-risk management programmes.

He said that about 27,000 hectares of forest were being lost per year in the country mostly in KP and Gilgit Baltistan where the high rate of deforestation mostly in watershed areas and community lands that have adversely impacted agriculture yield, food security and quantity of water at outlets besides triggering land degradation, loss of biodiversity and floods besides swallowing lands.

Dr Mumtaz said the high rate of deforestation has not only amplified floods and facilitated sea water intrusion but also inflicted huge economic losses due to the government kitty as evidenced by devastating 2010 and 2002 floods that affected about 33 million people and 8.2 million homeless besides nearly 1700 perished.

Fazl Elahi, Chief Conservator Forests KP said that forests were main weapons to win the fight against floods and mitigate effects of climate change.

To counter climate change, he said that green growth initiative (GGI) was launched focusing on six focal sectors including forestry, national parks, clean energy, climate resilience, water and sanitation besides water management.

Capitalizing on the GGI, he said billion trees afforestation project was launched on November 2014 under which 1208 million saplings including 732 million through enclosures on 306,983 hectares land, 316 million through plantation on 263,213 hectares land and 160 million through farm forestry planted in KP where 6.3 percent increase in forest covered areas has been registered.

The project was later extended to the entire country with a plantation target of 10 billion including additional one billion plants to KP for 2018-2023. Under the 10 billion trees project, he said about 707.36 million saplings were planted in the province till December 31, 2023.

The Forests Department chief said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister has principally decided to initiate the Billion Tree Plus project in order to enhance forest cover area. He said that direction has been issued to the quarters concerned to complete homework for launching of the project at earliest to mitigate effects of climate change.



PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary chairing a meeting regarding wheat procurement.

RTO Peshawar surpasses target

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR (APP): Regional Tax Office (RTO) Peshawar has surpassed the revenue target of Rs.185 billion for the third quarter of the current fiscal year and collected Rs.187 billion during the period.

This was stated by the Chief Commissioner Inland Revenue RTO Peshawar, Zafar Iqbal Khan while addressing an online open court here on Monday.

The Chief Commissioner said that the registration of new taxpayers in Peshawar is continued under Tajir Dost Scheme and termed the support and positive response of the trading community and other stakeholders encouraging in this regard.

He said that taxpayers are their power and heroes and urged them to register their complaints, problems and proposals on Whatsapp No.0310-8133880 without any hesitation, which would be redressed forthwith.

The Chief Commissioner assured that they are available for the resolution of the genuine problems of taxpayers anytime.

He said that under the Track and Trace System, the stamp of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) is essential on the locally manufactured cigarettes. He said that a smart mobile team of the RTO office has raided a godown last week and seized 1869 pack-rites cigarettes, whose estimated market value is Rs.162.6 million. The seizer is being considered a breakthrough against illegal cigarette manufacturing.

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Workshop on gemstone identification held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A One-day International Workshop on "Gemstone Identification, Certification, and Cutting according to International Market" was organized by Gem & Jewellery Centre of Excellence (GJoC), UET Peshawar in collaboration with the National Productivity Organization, and the All Pakistan Commercial Exporters Association (APCEA).

The workshop was held the other day at UET Peshawar. The aim of the workshop was to provide a platform to impart knowledge about Gemstone Identification, Certification, and Cutting according to the International Market.

The chief guest of the workshop was Prof. Dr. Qaisar Ali, Vice Chancellor, UET Peshawar, while the keynote speakers were Mr. Thanong Leelawatanasuk, Deputy Director (Technical) Gem and Jewelry Institute of Thailand (GIT), Dr. Surin Tayatoy, Assistant Professor GIT, and Ms. Supparat Pongnongnana, Gemmologist.

Prof. Dr. Qaisar Ali welcomed the participants from abroad and Pakistan.

He urged, "I trust that today's discussions will be enlightening and productive, paving the way for meaningful collaborations and advancements in our shared pursuit of excellence."

He said, "UET Peshawar is partnering with the Pakistan Commercial Exporters Association (APCEA) and the Export Promotion Board to establish a 'National Gemstone Certification Lab', aimed at empowering gemstone traders with internationally recognized certifications."

Prof. Dr. Khizar Azam Khan, Registrar, UET Peshawar, Dr. Khan Muhammad, Director GJoC, Ehtesham Ullah Khan, Ex-Director GJoC, Dr. Habib ur Rehman, GJoC, Mr. Wajih Abbasi, General Manager National Productivity Organization, Mr. Anwar Iqbal, MSME's, and Mr. Minhajuddin Sahib, President of the Pakistan Commercial Exporters Association (APCEA), were also present on the occasion. Later, certificates were distributed among the participants of the workshop.

WSSP warns defaulters

PESHAWAR (APP): Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP), in collaboration with the district administration, on Monday launched an initiative to recover outstanding arrears from defaulters.

This action comes in response to the directives of the Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar and is being executed in two distinct phases.

In the initial phase, emphasis is placed on issuing warnings and notices to defaulters, urging them to voluntarily settle their arrears.

Following this, a second phase is planned, involving a crackdown that includes steps such as water tap disconnections, fines, and other actions according to the provisions outlined in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Local Government Act.

A comprehensive strategy has been formulated during a meeting chaired by the Additional Deputy Commissioner. Notices are being dispatched to defaulting consumers by WSSP's zonal managers and directors of the East and West Capital Metropolitan Government. Concurrently, awareness campaigns are being conducted, with mosque imams utilising loudspeakers to disseminate information to their congregations.

Furthermore, efforts are underway to engage local elected representatives in encouraging community members to fulfill their financial obligations. Presently, WSSP is grappling with financial constraints, adversely affecting its sanitation and water supply operations.

Out of WSSP's total 89,000 registered users, only a mere 21,000 are consistently paying their bills. The remaining 68,000 are categorized as defaulters or intermittent payers, with 24,000 having never settled a bill, while 44,000 make sporadic payments or opt for installment plans.

The current outstanding arrears registered consumers owe to WSSP amount to approximately Rs1.48 billion. Of this, non-paying users owe Rs700 million, while partial or irregular payers owe Rs780 million.

The primary objective of this operation is to address WSSP's financial challenges and facilitate improvements in its service delivery.

National Highways and Motorway Police extend deadline

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The National Highways and Motorway Police have extended the deadline for employment applications, offering a fresh opportunity for candidates to apply for 2,331 vacancies ranging from grade 7 to grade 15. The new deadline for applications is May 31, 2024, a move aimed at ensuring equal and fair opportunities for all candidates, particularly those from remote areas who faced technical difficulties while applying online. The extension comes after candidates faced challenges in submitting their applications, which were previously advertised on March 10, 2024, through the National Job Portal (NJP). Candidates who have already submitted their applications need not reapply, and no changes have been made to the rules and regulations outlined in the previous advertisement. Interested candidates can now apply before May 31, 2024, through the National Job Portal website, with the extension providing a fresh chance for those who missed the initial deadline.

'Sharifs allocating portfolios among family members'

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Ishaq Dar, dissatisfied with the role of Foreign Minister, has been appointed Deputy Prime Minister, Advisor to Chief Minister on Information and Public Relations Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Barrister Dr. Saif, stated on Monday.

Dr. Saif mentioned that the Sharif family is allocating significant national portfolios among themselves. Ishaq Dar's discontent with the Foreign Minister post led to his appointment as Deputy Prime Minister, a position not constitutionally recognized.

He further added that the Sharif family's actions are undermining Pakistan's integrity, turning it into a patronage state / banana republic.

Instead of addressing public concerns, PDM 2 is preoccupied with distributing positions within the Sharif family.

Dr. Saif highlighted an event where "the Raj Kumari" of Punjab donned a police uniform due to dissatisfaction with the Chief Minister position in Punjab.

Dr. Saif emphasized that the Sharif family is pursuing personal agendas in their illegitimate government, mocking the importance of national portfolios by utilizing fraudulent means, such as fake form 47, to secure their government.

CBP arranges walk

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Cantonment Board Peshawar arranged an awareness walk regarding cleanliness and anti-littering campaign in Cantt Area Peshawar Cantt.

The walk was organized with the participation of the Cantonment Board members, residents of the cantt, and the staff of the Cantt. Board Peshawar to create awareness among the public about cleanliness and littering and to dispose off solid waste in a safe, prompt and efficient manner. To be sure, the objective of this exercise is also to create awareness among the youth. That cleanliness is important for both body and mind, clean environment is necessary to prevent the spread of disease, so support the Cantonment Board and beat the dirt and keep your surroundings clean, this is the requirement of our faith.



In brief

Brother, sister jump in river Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: Disheartened with the marriage of their mother and domestic issues, the brother and his sister jumped into River Indus to end their lives in Nowshera district on Monday. Police said the boy and his sister jumped into the river in Khairabad area of Nowshera. However, police added that local fishermen salvaged the girl alive from the river while search for the body of her brother was in progress. The DPO Nowshera said the siblings jumped into the river after their single mother remarried and domestic issues arose in their house.

One killed in Talash accident F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A passenger was killed while 10 others injured when a Hiace van collided head on with a pickup van near Bandagari in Talash tehsil here on Monday. Police said 11 people including women and children were injured in the accident. The injured included 55-year-old Muhammad Haroon, Amdad (13), wife of Muhammad Haroon, wife of Ameer Khan, Hafsa, daughter of Muhammad Zeb, Iqra, Somalia, Haji Rehman and others. Rescue workers provided first-aid to the injured and shifted them to Shamshi Khan hospital. Some of the critically injured were shifted to Timergara Hospital. Both the vehicles were also removed from the road by the rescue workers and the road was cleared for vehicular traffic. At the hospital, 55-year-old Muhammad Haroon, son of Taj Muhammad succumbed to his injuries and died.

Child shot dead, girl abducted

NAROWAL (INP): A minor child was killed and his mother injured in firing while a teenage was kidnapped here on Monday over rejecting marriage proposal. According to details, over dispute of rejecting wedding proposal, the culprits opened fire at rivals in Green Town area of Narowal. As a result of firing, a 3-year-old child was killed and his mother sustained bullet wounds. The culprits also kidnapped a 15-year-old girl. Police said that the gypsy family was in dispute over marriage proposal for last two months which led to the incident. A case was registered into the incident and raids were being conducted to arrest the culprits.

Youth electrocuted

NAUSHEHRO FERAZ (PPI): A youth was electrocuted in village Samoon Channa near Naushehro Feroz on Monday. According to Rasoolabad police, Arshad Channa, son of Maulvi Ali Bakhsh Chana, died when he was caught by an electric current while repairing the power supply in village Samoon Channa. His body was handed over to the family after necessary medico-legal formalities from a local hospital. Police have started investigation into the case. There was hue and cry upon the arrival of the body at home.

Levies arrests accused

KILLA ABDULLAH (PPI): Levies in Killa Abdullah district of Balochistan province claimed on Monday to have apprehended a suspect linked to the murder of a seven-year-old child. The victim, identified as Muhammad Asif, was found strangled to death in the Jungle Pir Alizai area of Killa Abdullah district the previous day.



HYDERABAD: Health worker administering polio drops to a child during polio eradication campaign.

Minister inspects ongoing work on Shahpur Bridge

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate has along with Member of National Assembly Shahyar Khan Afridi and Members of Provincial Assembly Shafi Jan and Dawood Khan Afridi made a surprise site visit to inspect the ongoing work on Shahpur Bridge in Kohat. The authorities concerned present on the spot briefed the elected members in detail about the



work done so far.

Talking to the media-men on this occasion, the Minister clarified that there will be no compromise on the quality of work and completion dates of the development projects, therefore, completion of the development works should be ensured in its

stipulated time. He assured that the departments will get the required support from the government upto the development of Kohat. During the visit, Chairman Tehsil Gumbat Sajid Iqbal, PTI Leaders Malik Nabi and Ishtiaq Qureshi were also with him.

Police arrest man who raped girl

PATTOKI (INP): Police in Pattoki have succeeded in arresting the alleged rapist of a young girl within hours on Monday. Police said that Aqeel had raped Asima Bibi, daughter of Muhammad Rafiq, a resident of Chak 69.

However, the police have arrested the man, registered an FIR against him and launched an investigation into the incident. Assaults kill minor, kidnap his sister in Narowal. Some persons, infuriated over the rejection of a marriage proposal, shot dead a three-year-old boy named Shamma before kidnapping his 15-year-old sister Sania in Green City area of Narowal.

The girl's mother Guddi was also wounded in the incident and was rushed to hospital. Police said they had registered an FIR against 11 persons, including one woman, on the complaint of the girl's father and were conducting raids for their arrest.

One killed, four injured in mishaps

BASIRPUR/MURIDKE (INP): One person was killed and four other sustained injuries in two separate traffic accidents in Basirpur and Muridke.

The first accident occurred at the Mandi Ahmadabad Road in Basirpur where a speeding motorcycle collided with a tractor-trolley coming from opposite direction, killing the bike-rider on the spot. Rescue teams reached the spot after being informed and shifted the dead body to hospital. Rescue sources said that the identity of the deceased was not yet known.

The second accident took place at the Grand Trunk (GT) Road in Kala Shah Kaku near Muridke where two racing busses hit motorcycles, injuring at least four persons. Rescue teams reached the spot and shifted the injured to a nearby hospital. According to rescue sources, the drivers of busses managed to escape from the scene after the accident.

Boy shot and injured two college girls

FAISALABAD (PPI): A boy shot himself after injuring two college girls with pistol shots in the Naseerabad area of Faisalabad on Monday morning.

According to a report, the he accused boy was identified as Shiraz, a resident of Sargodha Road, who ambushed two female students on their way to college. Accused Shiraz targeted girls named Amina and Alishba when they came out of the home to go to college. Both the girls sustained sever gunshots wounds who were rushed by the locals to Civil Hospital for medical treatment. When the locals attempted to apprehend the accused Shiraz turned the weapon on himself and shot himself in the abdomen. The locals also rushed accused Shiraz to another hospital--Allied Hospital for treatment. Mansoorabad Police arrived at the hospital to initiate legal proceedings, but the motives behind the shooting remain unclear.

KP Minister for Food visits STP Mardan

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru paid a surprise visit to the sewerage treatment plant (STP) and inspected the ongoing developmental work. He also chaired a meeting in which Deputy Commissioner Mardan and Chief Executive Officer WSSCM Muhammad Fayyaz Khan Sherpao, Chief Engineer Cities Implementation Unit (CIU) Mardan Engineer Imran Zaman, Chief Financial Officer Naveed Akhtar, Manager Municipal Services Muhammad Khalil Akbar, Manager HR and Admin Rahatullah, PMSC Resident Engineer Arshid Qayum Babar, General Manager Matracon Imran Haider and Deputy Manager Project Qasim Mumtaz Awan participated.

General Manager WSSCM and Chief Engineer of CIU Mardan Engineer Imran Zaman briefed the Minister and stated that under KPCIP project a modern sewerage treatment plant will be constructed. He told through the sewerage treatment plant (STP) project the domestic sewerage connec-



tions of six urban union councils will be connected for treatment. The construction work on Eighty two kilometers sewerage network is in full swing and will complete in the specified time. The construction work in Rorya is ninety percent completed while survey has been completed in the rest of Union Councils.

Four thousand and three hundred manholes and thirteen thousand sewerage connections will be constructed. The STP is being built on seventeen acres of land and it will treat six million gallons of wastewater on a daily basis through activated sludge processes.

Minister for Food Zahir

Shah Toru shown satisfaction over the ongoing developmental work and urged that the projects should be completed in specified time. He said that the provincial government is trying to improve the living standards of the citizens. The construction of the sewage treatment plant will reduce the health and sanitation problems. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has been launched Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project in five divisional headquarters of the province with the aim to improved sanitation services and living standard of the citizens. He also directed the contractor to speed up the construction work on STP.

Engineering role key in development: Ahsan

F.P. Report

NAROWAL: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal has said that engineering plays key role in development in modern world and resolving problems of all sectors of life, including health, food and industry.

These views were expressed by him while speaking at the ongoing "Science Mela 2024" at University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Narowal Campus. Students of different departments of the university presented their final year projects for exhibition at the Innovation Center of the University of Engineering and Technology sub-campus Narowal. The projects related to electrical, mechanical, civil, bio-medical engineering and computer engineering. Students of various universities including Agriculture University Faisalabad, UMT Sialkot Campus, ITU University of Narowal, Veterinary University Narowal Campus participated in the science fair.

Later, Prof Ahsan Iqbal

handed over new buses provided to the University of Engineering and Technology Narowal Campus to the administration and also planted a sapling in the university. He also participated in the prize distribution ceremony in the seminar hall of UET Narowal Campus.

Addressing the participants, the minister planning and development said that UET Narowal Campus was his dream for which he had worked hard to achieve. "Behind the development of the modern world is the hard work of engineers. The solution of most of the problems of all sectors of life, including health, food, and industry is related to the field of engineering. Today we are living in the era of technology, today's era is the era of artificial intelligence," he added.

He said, "If you want to establish your place in the world of education and research, you need to go through the process of continuous learning. We have established departments like National Center for Satellite Technology, National Center for

Nanotechnology, National Center for Quantum Computing. We allocated billions of rupees to engineering universities to equip their laboratories with modern gadgets to lay the foundation for innovation and creativity. Our children should focus on innovation. Our history is full of great scientists."

Ahsan Iqbal said, "Ever since the fountain of research dried up in our society, we have been left behind. Six countries have successfully completed their space missions. There is not a single Muslim among them. The aim of establishing this university was to lead the innovation movement in Pakistan, hence the innovation center has been established here and the Bill Gates of the future will be born from you."

The minister said that today's age was an era beyond the acquisition of a degree. "We have to work together to resolve the problems of Pakistan. Today is an era of teamwork. No nation in the world is successful until it works jointly," he concluded.

Five mine workers from Shangla die in 2 incidents

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: In two separate mishaps inside mines, five laborers hailing from Shangla district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have lost their lives, informed the correspondent on Monday.

Four laborers working in a coal mine in Hangu district were killed last evening when an explosion occurred inside the mine. They died after being buried under the heavy rubble.

Another miner working in an emerald mine in Swat also lost his life due to suffocation. The bodies of all the five deceased laborers

have reached their native towns in Shangla.

Those killed in Hangu mine incident included Jehan Badshah son of Rozi Khan, resident of UC Dheri Zaikhel, Habib Gul, son of Sar Zamin, resident of Kadoona Kuz Kana, Ayub son of Muhammad Sherin, resident of Nishal and Naeem Ullah son of Said Zaman, resident of Ganshal, Shangla. The victim of the Swat mine incident was identified as Iqbal Muhammad son of Muhammad Khan, resident of Sharona Amnovi, Shangla.

He said during the current year more than two

dozen laborers from Shangla district have lost their lives to various incidents in mines while 50 others were injured. A survey conducted by an NGO in the area said more than 50 percent of laborers of Shangla were associated with the mining industry adding that so far over 1000 laborers have sustained injuries with some critically injured and paralyzed for life. The locals have urged the government to devise a proper policy for the mine workers so that recurrence of fatal incidents could be averted and miners continue their work with some peace of mind.

Locals hold protest against decreasing of power supply

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: The tribesmen blockaded the Pak-Afghan highway at Thakia point, Sultan Khel tehsil Landi Kotal on Monday against decreasing of power supply from four hours to two hours round the clock.

Number of locals including tribal elders and political and social figures put hurdles on the main road to suspend it for all kinds of movement. The protestors were of the view that previously, the hiphup of Tribal Electricity Supply Company (TESCO) had ensured them a schedule of provision of four hours electricity in twenty four hours, however since last day; only two hours supply had been provided that could not meet their need.

Issues of temporary scarcity of potable water



have risen in the area due to decreasing power supply hours in addition to troubling daily activities, they lamented. They threatened that till resuming the old schedule of four hours power supply, they would not give up their agitation.

Because of the road blockade, passengers could

not reach their destinations on time and long queues of passengers and export, import vehicles were witnessed on the road. According to the local grid station official, last day their high officials directed them to provide only two hours of electricity to the 15 feeders of rural area consumers.

Woman murdered for using mobile phone in Khuzdar

F.P. Report

KHUZDAR: A man in Balochistan district of Khuzdar has confessed on Monday to murdering his wife for using mobile phone. Sources in district administration informed that the murder had happened about two weeks ago in Greesha area of Tehsil Zahri in Khuzdar District.

The sources said the investigation led to the discovery that the killer is the husband of the slain

woman. Accused Rahmatullah allegedly confessed to killing his wife for using mobile phone.

Meanwhile, on Sunday, at least three people including two labourers and a senior administration official were killed in two separate incidents of firing in Quetta and Kech district.

Armed men opened fire on a vehicle in Musa Colony area of Sariab road of the provincial capital,

killing Abdul Sattar Mashwani, tehsildar Dobandi Killa Abdullah. Levies official Sarwar Bangulzai narrowly escaped the attack. Separately, in Kech district, armed men opened fire and killed two labourers working on the construction of a road. The incident happened in the Hoshap tehsil of Kech. The attackers fled on their motorcycles after the attack.

Seminar held at IUB

BAHAWALPUR (INP): An international seminar on interfaith harmony was held here at Islamia University of Bahawalpur. On this occasion, the guest speaker from Malaysia, Dr. Shaheer Akram Hassan, Director of the Center for Islamic Development Management Studies, had a special interactive session with the students and teachers of the university.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairperson of the Department of World Religions and Interfaith Harmony Dr. Sajeela Kausar said that this is a great opportunity for the

students of the university to hear the reasons for interfaith harmony in an Islamic country like Malaysia from a great thinker. Dr. Shaheer Akram while presenting scenario of Malaysia in front of the audience regarding inter-faith harmony and said that main reason for inter-faith harmony in Malaysia is that they accept diversity in a pluralistic society. People of different religions and cultures live together in Malaysia, Dr Akram added.

Restaurants and festivals provide great opportunities to people for social interaction. Malaysians spend most

of their lives busy with work and new challenges, so they don't have time to criticize others, he stated. Prof. Dr. Rana Muhammad Shahzad, Chairman Department of Media Studies said that guest speaker from Malaysia, Dr. Shaheer Akram drew our attention to a very important topic which is an important need of our country. Later, Dr. Zia ur Rahman, Head of the Department of Quranic Studies thanked all the guests and said that unity in diversity should be our commitment so that we can serve our dear country by creating a better society.



Kenya postpones reopening of schools — flood-related deaths near 100



NAIROBI (AP): Kenya has postponed the reopening of its schools by one week due to ongoing flooding caused by heavy rains, as flood-related deaths since mid-March in the East African country neared 100.

Some schools remained "adversely affected" by the flooding, the Education Ministry said. Local media reported that more than 100 schools were flooded, some with collapsed walls and roofs blown away. All schools were set to reopen on Monday but will now open on May 6.

Ninety-three people have died in the flooding in Kenya and that number is expected to rise after a boat capsized in the northern

Garissa county. The Kenyan Red Cross said it had rescued 23 people from the boat, but more than a dozen people were still missing. Heavy rains have been pounding the country since mid-March and the Meteorology Department has warned of more rainfall. The East African region is experiencing flooding due to the heavy rains, and 155 people have reportedly died in Tanzania while more than 200,000 people are affected in neighboring Burundi.

The highest number of deaths in Kenya have been reported in the capital, Nairobi, according to police records. Kenya's main airport was flooded, forcing

some flights to be diverted, as videos of a flooded runway, terminals and cargo section were shared online. The airport's manager, Henry Kegoye, said the flooding was from ongoing refurbishment work that was due to be completed in June.

Heavy rains had overwhelmed a temporary drainage system set up by the contractor. More than 200,000 people across the country have been affected by the floods, with houses in flood-prone areas submerged and people seeking refuge in schools. President William Ruto had instructed the National Youth Service to provide land for use as a temporary camp for those affected.

4 dead in US after dozens of tornadoes rip through Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA: At least four people were killed and dozens more injured after multiple tornadoes wreaked havoc in the central state of Oklahoma in the United States. The tornadoes caused extensive damage in the town of Sulphur, home to about 5,000 people, flattened buildings, threw vehicles into the air and ripped the roofs from houses. "You just can't believe the destruction," Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt said during a visit to the hard-hit town. "It seems like every business downtown has been destroyed." A four-month-old baby was among the dead, Hughes County Emergency Management Director Mike Dockrey told Oklahoma television station KOCO.

Stitt said about 30 people were injured, including some who were in a bar when the tornado struck. Hospitals across the state reported about 100 injuries, including people apparently cut or struck by debris, and more than 20,000 residents were still without electricity. Stitt issued an executive order declaring a state of emergency in 12 counties due to the severe weather, while in a call with the Oklahoma governor, President Joe Biden offered the federal government's full support with recovery efforts, the White House said in a statement. The National Weather Service (NWS) reported that 38 possible tornadoes hit the area and that the worst of the storms rolled through Central Oklahoma spreading into northwest Texas, western Missouri and Kansas. — Aljazeera

Ireland looking to send asylum seekers back to UK

LONDON: The Republic of Ireland is looking to amend the law to allow the return of asylum seekers to the United Kingdom, according to broadcaster RTE, after an influx over the border with Northern Ireland, which is part of the UK. Dublin's Minister of Justice Helen McEntee, who will visit London on Monday, told a parliamentary committee this week that she estimates 80 percent of those applying for asylum in the republic came over the land border with Northern Ireland. UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak told Sky News it was evidence that London's plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda is acting as a deterrent.

"What it shows, I think, is that the deterrent is ... already having an impact because people are worried about coming here," he said. In response, a spokesperson for Ireland's Prime Minister Simon Harris said the leader "does not comment on the migration policies of any other country but he is very clear about the importance of protecting the integrity of the migration system in Ireland", RTE reported. "Ireland has a rules-based system that must always be applied firmly and fairly," Harris also said. The spokesperson added that the Irish PM had asked his justice minister "to bring proposals to cabinet next week to amend existing law regarding the designation of safe 'third countries' and allowing the return of inadmissible International Protection applicants to the UK". McEntee is expected to discuss a new returns policy when she meets British Home Secretary James Cleverly in London on Monday. "That's why I'm introducing fast processing, that's why I'll have emergency legislation at cabinet this week to make sure that we can effectively return people to the UK and that's why I'll be meeting with the home secretary to raise these issues on Monday," she told RTE.

Ireland had previously designated the UK a "safe third country" to return asylum seekers to, but last month the Irish high court ruled that this breached European Union law, stopping the process. The UK's Rwanda bill cleared its final parliamentary hurdle last Monday after a marathon tussle between the upper and lower chambers of parliament. — Aljazeera

Mali heatwave: Ice becomes a hot commodity as temperatures soar

BAMAKO (BBC): Record-breaking heat means ice cubes now cost more than bread and milk in parts of Mali. "I've come to buy ice because it's very hot now," says 15-year-old Fatouma Yattara as she visits her local vendor in the capital, Bamako. With no working fridge due to prolonged power cuts, she resorts to using ice cubes to preserve food and keep cool during a heatwave which has seen temperatures soar to 48C. It works to an extent, but price hikes are making life even harder. "In some places it's 100 francs CFA (\$0.20; £0.16)" for a small bag, she says, "even 300, 500 - it's too expensive." This makes ice more expensive than bread - a standard baguette normally costs about 250 CFA.

It is an even bigger struggle for Nana Konaté Traoré, who is now forced to cook every day instead of a few times a week. "We often go a whole day without power," she says, "so, the food goes bad, and you have to throw it away". The problems began almost a year ago, with Mali's state power company failing to match growing demand after accumulating

hundreds of millions of dollars in debt in recent years. Many Malians do not have back-up generators as it is expensive to refuel them. No electricity means no fans at night, forcing many to sleep outside. And it is affecting people's health.

"We really suffer," says Soumaïla Maïga, a young man from the Yirimadio district on the outskirts of Bamako. "At night it can reach 46C - it's unbearable because I suffer from dizziness. I have to pour water on myself to cope." Since March, temperatures have soared above 48C in parts of Mali, killing more than 100 people. Most vulnerable are the elderly and the very young. "We were seeing about 15 hospitalisations a day," says Prof Yacouba Toloba, who works at the university hospital in Bamako. "Many patients are dehydrated - the main symptoms are coughs and bronchial congestion. Some also have respiratory distress," he tells the BBC. Schools in some areas have closed as a precaution, and people in the Muslim-majority nation were advised not to fast during the Ramadan period which ended recent-

ly.

"We need to plan more for these situations, which will perhaps come back. This time it took us by surprise," adds Prof Toloba. The deadly heatwave is also affecting neighbouring countries such as Senegal, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Niger and Chad. Human-induced climate change is to blame for these extreme highs, according to scientists at World Weather Attribution (WWA). "Extreme 5-day maximum heat as rare as the observed event over Mali/Burkina Faso would have been 1.5C cooler and 1.4C cooler over the larger Sahel region if humans had not warmed the planet by burning fossil fuels," their latest report says.

With temperatures expected to remain above 40C in Bamako over the next few weeks, people are trying to adapt to their new normal. As sun sets in the capital, Ms Konaté Traoré takes several large mats outside to her yard and lays them down. "We have to be outside all the time because of the heat. When it's hot I get sick," she says. "It's not easy at all."

2 Russian journalists arrested over work for Navalny group

MOSCOW: Two Russian journalists have been arrested by their government on "extremism" charges and ordered by courts to remain in custody pending investigation and trial on accusations of working for a group founded by the late Russian opposition politician Alexey Navalny. Konstantin Gabov and Sergey Karelin both denied the charges for which they will be detained for a minimum of two months before any trials begin. Each faces a minimum of two years in prison and a maximum of six years for alleged "participation in an extremist organisation", according to Russian courts.

They are just the latest journalists arrested amid a Russian crackdown on dissent and independent media that intensified after its full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than two years ago. The Russian government passed laws criminalising what it deems false information about the military, or statements seen as discrediting the military, effectively outlawing any criticism of the war in Ukraine or speech that deviates from the official narrative.

A journalist for the Russian edition of Forbes magazine, Sergei Mingazov, was detained on charges of spreading false information about the Russian military, his lawyer said. Gabov and Karelin are accused of preparing materials for a YouTube channel run by Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation, which has been outlawed by Russian authorities. Navalny, President Vladimir Putin's most prominent critic, died under murky circumstances in an Arctic penal colony in February.

Gabov, who was detained in Moscow, is a freelance producer who has worked for multiple organisations, including the Reuters news agency, the court press service said. Karelin, who has dual citizenship with Israel, was detained in Russia's northern Murmansk region.

Karelin, 41, has worked for a number of outlets, including for The Associated Press. He was a cameraman for German media outlet Deutsche Welle until the Kremlin banned the outlet from operating in Russia in February 2022. "The Associated Press is very concerned by the detention of Russian video journalist Sergey Karelin," the AP said in a statement. "We are seeking additional information." Russia's crackdown on dissent is aimed at opposition figures, journalists, activists, members of the LGBTQ community, and Russians critical of the Kremlin. A number of journalists have been jailed in relation to their coverage of Navalny, including Antonina Favorskaya, who remains in pre-trial detention at least until May 28 following a hearing last month.

Favorskaya was detained and accused by Russian authorities of taking part in an "extremist organisation" by posting on the social media platforms of Navalny's foundation. She covered Navalny's court hearings for years and filmed the last video of

Navalny before he died in the penal colony. Kira Yarmysh, Navalny's spokeswoman, said that Favorskaya did not publish anything on the foundation's platforms and suggested that Russian authorities have targeted her because she was doing her job as a journalist. Evan Gershkovich, a 32-year-old American reporter for The Wall Street Journal, is awaiting trial on espionage charges at Moscow's notorious Lefortovo Prison. Both Gershkovich and his employer have vehemently denied the charges.

Gershkovich was detained in March 2023 while on a reporting trip and has spent over a year in jail; authorities have not detailed what, if any, evidence they have to support the espionage charges. The United States government has declared Gershkovich wrongfully detained, with officials accusing Moscow of using the journalist as a pawn for political ends. The Russian government has also cracked down on opposition figures. — Aljazeera

Bangladesh reopens schools even as heatwave alert extended by three days

DHAKA (AFP): Millions of students have returned to their schools across Bangladesh despite a heatwave that prompted a nationwide classroom shutdown last weekend. The reopening of schools came as the authorities issued another heatwave alert for three more days as the South Asian country faces its longest heatwave in 75 years. The heatwave reached a 29th day, the longest since the government started keeping records in 1948, said meteorologist Shaheenul Islam. The season's highest temperature at 42.7 degrees Celsius was recorded in the southwestern district of Chuadanga.

Capital Dhaka's maximum temperature was 38.2 degrees that day, according to the meteorological data.

The average maximum temperatures in Dhaka over the past week have been 4.5 degrees Celsius (7.2-9 degrees Fahrenheit) higher than the 30-year average for the same period. Extensive scientific research has found climate change is causing heatwaves to become longer, more frequent and more intense. Classes resumed with anxious relatives accompanying their children to school gates for the start of classes in Bangladesh, which follows the Islamic work week. "I went to the school with my 13-year-old daughter. She was happy her school was open. But I was tense," said Lucky Begum, whose daughter is enrolled at a state-run school in Dhaka. "The heat is too much," she told the AFP news agency. "She already got

heat rashes from sweating. I hope she does not get sick." About 32 million students were kept at home by the school shutdown, Save the Children said in a statement this week. A directive from education authorities announcing the resumption of classes said preschools would remain shut while primary school hours would be shortened. Bangladesh's weather bureau said the heatwave would continue for at least three days. The previously record hot spell of 23 days was recorded in 2019, according to data tracked by Bangladesh's meteorological department. Physician Mohammad Niatuzzaman, head of state-run Mughdah Hospital in Dhaka, said his hospital received a large number of patients suffering from heatstroke, dehydration,

exhaustion and respiratory problems.

Forecaster Kazi Jebunnessa said rain would likely bring some relief. Another weather bureau meteorologist, Muhammad Abul Kalam Mallik, told AFP Bangladesh had not seen such an intense heatwave since records began in 1948. "It is a record as far as the duration and the coverage area in the country are concerned," he said, adding that the searing temperatures were affecting about three-quarters of the country. Mallik said climate change and man-made causes, including rapid urbanisation, forest clearance, shrinking water bodies and increased air conditioning were to blame. "The trouble is, we will see more such severe heatwaves in the future," he said.

Chile declares mourning after three cops killed

CANETE: Armed assailants have ambushed and killed three police officers in southern Chile before setting their car on fire, authorities said, the latest attack on police to revive security concerns in the South American country.

In a statement on X, President Gabriel Boric called the attack in Arauco province's Canete municipality "cowardly" and declared three days of national mourning to honour the officers, identified as Sergeant Carlos Cisterna, Corporal Sergio Arevalo and Corporal Misael Vidal. "Today the entire country is in mourning. There is heartbreak, sorrow, anger. But these emotions do not paralyse us, they force us, they mobilise us," Boric wrote. "We will find the whereabouts of the perpetrators of this terrible crime."

Authorities said the officers responded to three false emergency calls and were attacked in their vehicle with heavy-calibre weapons. They burned inside the armoured patrol vehicle on a road near the city of Concepcion, some 400km (about 250 miles) south of the capital, Santiago. It remains unclear who carried out

the assault but a long-simmering conflict between the Mapuche Indigenous community and landowners and forestry companies in the region has intensified in recent years. The conflict forced the government to impose a state of emergency and deploy the military to provide security. In Chile, about one in 10 citizens identify as Mapuche, the tribe that resisted Spanish conquest centuries ago and was defeated only in the late 1800s after Chile won its independence.

Large forestry companies and farm owners control large tracts of land originally belonging to the Mapuche, many of whom now live in rural poverty. Boric, who travelled to the area with a large contingent, including top military and congressional officials and the president of the Supreme Court, offered condolences to the victims' families, promising the killers would be found and brought to justice. "There will be no impunity," he said after firefighters dousing the burning police car made the grisly discovery.

In Santiago, hundreds of people gathered outside the presidential palace to protest against the

killings, which coincided with National Police Day, celebrating the 97th anniversary of the establishment of the Carabineros, Chile's military police force. It was the second such fatal attack on the force this month. Ricardo Yanez, the Carabineros's general director, told reporters the officers had been dispatched in response to fake distress calls from the rural road, where they were met with a barrage of gunfire. "This was not coincidental, it was not random," he said of the ambush. The spate of bloodshed has tested Boric, who came to power in 2022 promising to ease tensions in the region, where armed Mapuche activists have been stealing timber and attacking forestry companies that they claim invaded their ancestral lands. Boric's administration has touted its success in reducing Chile's national homicide rate by 6 percent, according to government figures from 2023 published earlier this week. "This attack goes against all the enormous strides that have been made," said Interior Minister Carolina Toha, a centre-left former mayor of Santiago. — Aljazeera

Ukraine pulls back from three villages as Russia claims gains

KYIV: Ukraine's top commander has said Kyiv's outnumbered troops fell back to new positions west of three villages on the eastern front, where Russia has concentrated significant forces in several locations. Statement by Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskii reflected on Ukraine's deteriorating position in the east, which Kyiv hopes it can stabilise once it receives United States weapons under a \$61bn aid package approved in the US this week. "The situation at the front has worsened," Syrskii wrote on the Telegram app, describing the "most difficult" areas as west of occupied Maryinka and northwest of Avdiivka, the town captured by Russian forces in February. Kyiv's troops, he said,

had taken up new positions west of the villages of Berdychi and Semenivka, both north of Avdiivka, and Novomykhailivka, further south near the town of Maryinka. "In general, the enemy achieved certain tactical successes in these areas, but could not gain operational advantages," Oleksandr Syrskii said, adding that Russia had committed four brigades to the assault. Freshly rested Ukrainian brigades were being rotated in those areas to replace units that had suffered losses, he said. His statement did not mention the status of Novobakhmutivka, another village near Berdychi, which Russia's Ministry of Defence said its forces had captured. Al Jazeera's John Holman, reporting from

Kyiv, said Russian forces are concentrating on several different points on the front line. "This gives them the initiative on the battlefield," Holman also said, adding that the Russian side has superior ammunition and air power. He said that Ukrainian army personnel on the front lines told Al Jazeera that "they are outshelled six or seven to one". Holman added that the Ukrainian military is waiting for the recently approved US aid to arrive, which will help close the firepower disparity between the sides. Ukrainian officials say the aid is critical to holding off Russia's two-year-old invasion. Moscow's troops have been slowly advancing since capturing the bastion town of Avdiivka, taking

advantage of Ukrainian shortages of artillery shells and manpower.

Online battlefield maps produced by open-source intelligence analysts suggest they have advanced more than 15km (9.3 miles) in the direction of the village of Ocheretyne since capturing Avdiivka. Further up the front, the Ukrainian-held town of Chasiv Yar is a key emerging battleground because of its position on elevated ground that could serve as a gateway to the east of Kostiantynivka, Sloviansk and Kramatorsk. Syrskii described Chasiv Yar and the village of Ivanivske to its northeast as the "hottest spots" on that part of the front. Russia's Ministry of Defence said it had repelled Ukrainian counterattacks near Chasiv Yar. — Aljazeera

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US' callousness and hypocrisy know no bounds

Shortly after Israel intensified its air strikes on Rafah, a city in southern Gaza into which more than 1 million Palestinians have been pushed by Israel's military campaign, the United States announced that Secretary of State Antony Blinken will travel to Israel, Jordan and Saudi Arabia this week to start his seventh mediation tour since the outbreak of the Gaza conflict on Oct 7.

"The Secretary will discuss ongoing efforts to achieve a cease-fire in Gaza that secures the release of hostages and how it is Hamas that is standing between the Palestinian people and a cease-fire," State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said on Saturday.

That statement on Blinken's latest "pro-peace" shuttle diplomacy suggests that the United States is hell-bent on continuing to pour oil on the flames of the conflict while posing as an earnest peace-broker.

That Israel's air strikes on Rafah came as US President Joe Biden signed into law legislation that includes \$26 billion in assistance for Israel, the majority of which is earmarked for military spending, simply makes a mockery of the top US diplomat's mediation efforts, a key objective of which, according to Miller, is to "prevent the conflict from spreading".

After the US became the only party to veto a United Nations Security Council draft resolution to grant UN membership to the State of Palestine earlier this month, which is a necessary step to realize the two-state solution that the US allegedly supports, the US side still feels no qualms about claiming that it wants "lasting peace and security in the region, through a pathway to an independent Palestinian state with security guarantees for Israel".

With large-scale student protests against the Biden administration's lopsided pro-Israel policy engulfing the US, Blinken should be in a better position than before to realize that the root cause of the crisis is not that Israel's security has not been guaranteed, but Israel's greed that has not been satisfied yet.

The US has been covertly encouraging Israel to continuously encroach on Palestinian territories on the other side of the 1967 borders over the past decades, during which the US' closest ally in the Middle East has never stopped trying to grab parts of its neighbors' territories as its own land.

Blinken is therefore obliged to explain to his Middle East hosts whether the US can only accept a Palestinian state that is under its own control or governed by a proxy government of Washington since what the US vetoed in the aforementioned UNSC draft resolution is exactly what in the eyes of the majority of the international community is an independent Palestinian state.

The world can clearly see Washington and Tel Aviv are on the same page regarding the future of the Palestinian state and that it is not Hamas but the US that "is standing between the Palestinian people and a cease-fire".

Shame on the US for sending its top diplomat to the Middle East to talk about a cease-fire while it continues to supply Israel with weapons.

Musk's visit exposes malignancy

Coming hard on the heels of the rather gloomy visit by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, whose agenda for his trip seemed to be to hype up the US administration's latest stay-away smear that China is dumping green products in overseas markets, Tesla CEO Elon Musk's unannounced visit to Beijing had a much brighter atmosphere and sent a more positive message.

For Beijing, which is under tremendous pressure due to the United States-led Western push for economic decoupling and attacks on its leading industrial sectors, of which the exporting of alleged "overcapacity" is the latest manifestation, Musk's visit was a testament to its continuous commitment to openness.

Sustaining a mutually beneficial partnership with one of the US' leading technology leaders and EV manufacturers serves as a telling rebuttal of the US' allegation that China is trying to squeeze the space for the green products of other countries, both at home and overseas.

Meeting with Musk on Sunday, Premier Li Qiang called Tesla's China venture "a successful example of China-US economic and trade cooperation".

It is clear that in his talk with the Tesla CEO the Chinese premier was extending a welcome to all foreign companies and making a clear rebuttal to the US' "overcapacity" charge.

Coinciding with Musk's arrival was the news that all the models produced at Tesla's Shanghai factory have met Chinese data security requirements. Since the Chinese authorities had concerns about the US company's data collection, Tesla vehicles have faced various restrictions in China. With all such restrictions expected to be removed, the appeal of Tesla products to Chinese consumers will certainly get a boost. It will also enable the country to accelerate the perfecting of the company's Full Self-Driving software, which will further boost the appeal of its products.

But Beijing is not bestowing special favors on Tesla. It does not want the US EV-maker to be a lone example. It wants Tesla to be followed by more companies from outside the country.

Every new energy vehicle in China, every renewable energy project built by Chinese enterprises, and every Sino-foreign cooperation in the field of climate change, are examples of China's new energy industry providing the world with the high-quality green production capacity that is imperative to realize the global climate goals.

China's green production capacity is high-quality production capacity that promotes green development. The US is distorting facts and accusing China of "excess production capacity" in order to justify its protectionist policies and undermine efforts to repair Sino-US relations.

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The fight for justice ignites elite university campuses

LONG running pro-Palestine demonstrations at some of the most prestigious universities in the US, including Yale, Columbia and Princeton, have given way to mass sit-ins and demands for a halt to investments in Israel and in arms manufacture. Protesters at Columbia declared: "We will not rest until Columbia divests from apartheid Israel, Palestinians are free, and liberation is achieved for all oppressed people worldwide."

Hundreds of students and academics have been arrested at campuses throughout the US for peacefully exercising their democratic freedoms. State troopers in riot gear swarmed through the University of Texas, arresting dozens on the orders of far-right Governor Greg Abbott, who declared: "These protesters belong in jail." A police purge against Columbia University's "Gaza Solidarity Encampment" on April 18 inspired a host of copycat sit-ins elsewhere. "The irony is that in trying to quiet things down and assert control over the encampment, the administration unleashed this firestorm," one professor remarked. Parallel protests are springing up in France, Britain, Germany, Austria, Canada and elsewhere.

These students' passion and the impact of their demonstrations prompted an unnerved Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to take a brief break away from plotting mass murder and angrily denounce the protests as "reminiscent of what happened in German universities in the 1930s". US Senator Bernie Sanders, who is Jewish, forcefully hit back: "Do not insult the intelligence of the American people by attempting to distract us from the immoral and illegal policies of your extremist and racist government ... it is not antisemitic to hold you accountable for your actions."

Media commentators have patronisingly derided students as naive and misled, with political views shaped by TikTok. Others glibly portrayed

Baria Alamuddin

demonstrations as fronts for "radical Islamists." But these Ivy League students are defined by disproportionate intelligence, with attitudes toward Palestine shaped by intense, conscientious debate. With the death toll of Palestinians in Gaza heading toward 40,000, the real question is why anybody is NOT out protesting.

When I was a high-school and university student in Beirut, many of the defining and empowering moments of my adolescence were spent in protesting about the full

Muslim students has been regrettably frequent, but there are countless examples of students banishing those using antisemitic slogans, counterpointed with countless examples of pro-Israel agitators provoking violence and disruption. At Boston's Northeastern University the media widely reported a chant of "kill the Jews" — until video evidence showed that the offensive chant emanated from pro-Israel provocateurs seeking to rile up the crowd.

Observers carp that student activism is unlikely to improve any-

These students' passion and the impact of their demonstrations prompted an unnerved Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to take a brief break away from plotting mass murder and angrily denounce the protests as "reminiscent of what happened in German universities in the 1930s". US Senator Bernie Sanders, who is Jewish, forcefully hit back: "Do not insult the intelligence of the American people by attempting to distract us from the immoral and illegal policies of your extremist and racist government ... it is not antisemitic to hold you accountable for your actions."

spectrum of global causes: I probably spent more time marching in the streets than in my classes. Participation in these events cemented my views on the importance of freedom of speech, assertively putting ourselves on the right side of history. Students may have an evolving comprehension of global politics, but they habitually possess an enviably precise moral compass in defining right from wrong. Students' ability to exploit technology and social media to mobilize and disseminate their message confounds the reactionaries who seek to silence them.

Demonstrations are denounced by right wingers as antisemitic, but this ignores the substantial Jewish contingent within these protest movements. Intimidation of both Jewish and

those in Gaza, but historians say these protests are among the most consequential of modern times, comparable to the civil rights movement and student activism of the 1960s. Student-led protests shook the planet, from Tiananmen Square to the Arab world, from Latin America to apartheid-era South Africa. Nobody should be writing off these protests as irrelevant.

Yale, Harvard and Columbia are a conveyor belt into the top levels of US politics, the civil service, business and the legal profession, and campaigners from these top-ranking global universities are the elites of tomorrow. If these elites were previously defined by kneejerk pro-Israel sentiments, what should we expect when veterans of the 2024 pro-Palestine protest movement swarm

into the top levels of leadership, in a wider society horrified by Israel's brazen flouting of the rules of war? The Democratic Party's Progressive wing is defined by its pro-Palestine tenor, with outspoken figures such as Pramila Jayapal, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Cori Bush and Rashida Tlaib. In an increasingly diverse America, they are the future of US politics.

Seven months into the Gaza conflict, hundreds of thousands of demonstrators continue to turn out on the streets of London, Paris, New York and elsewhere. Despite constitutionally enshrined freedoms being a central tenet of European democracies, right-wing politicians have sought action against what they demonize as "hate marches."

But the right to debate and protest must be protected for all, including pro-Israel voices. Nancy Pelosi last week remarked that campus protests were a way of life in the US and that there was complete justification for objecting to the Gaza slaughter: "What's happening in Gaza challenges the consciousness of the world," she said.

Vested interests, partisan voices and entrenched elites have always hated student protests, because they relate directly to what is right and what is wrong — impassioned young people acting upon their consciences, short-circuiting convenient desires to stifle the cries of oppressed peoples. Justice and human rights are universal, they cannot be monopolized by one party in a conflict.

What we are witnessing around the world is nothing short of a battle of good vs. evil, and justice vs. injustice, as students, workers, lawyers, educators and civil servants rediscover political engagement.

After decades in which students were routinely accused of being apathetic and apolitical, we can be deeply proud of this generation — our leaders of tomorrow — as they risk arrest, blacklisting and expulsion from academia in order to stand up for the rights and common humanity of those facing genocide, oppression and injustice.

Sino-French ties bolster China-EU relations

Yan Shaohua

FOLLOWING German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's visit to China in April, President Xi Jinping's state visit to France in May will be another defining moment for China-European Union relations in 2024.

But unlike Scholz's visit to China which was focused on trade and investment, and unlike Sino-German economic relations which have been flourishing despite a derisking agenda pushed forward by the European Commission, China-French relations are more of a strategic nature.

Since the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries 60 years ago, Sino-French relations have been driven by a strategic consensus that both countries are major countries in a multipolar world and they occupy an important position in each other's foreign policy.

Based on this consensus, leaders of both countries have made great efforts to navigate the bilateral relationship from the top level, which provides the political impetus and strategic guidance needed in times of difficulties.

This is the spirit in which French President Emmanuel Macron visited China in April 2023 amid strained China-EU ties due to the Ukraine crisis. The Chinese leader will visit France in the same spirit, viewing to not only deepen Sino-French ties on the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, but also stabilizing China-EU relations in these turbulent times.

With the Russia-Ukraine conflict having entered its third year and the Middle East crisis deepening, the world is sailing into uncharted waters where global stability and prosperity are being threatened. It is time therefore for China and France to tap the potential of their strategic partnership and translate it into more fruitful cooperation.

At the political level, the concept of strategic autonomy championed by Macron will provide room for China and France to enhance dialogue on regional and global issues. Strategic autonomy essentially means the EU having the ability to act independently in an interdependent world.

Although the EU's strategic autonomy remains a controversial issue in Europe, China has continuously voiced its support for its strategic autonomy in high-level meetings with European leaders.

However, China's support for the EU's strategic autonomy should not be misunderstood as an attempt to drive a wedge between the EU and the United States, as some in Europe have argued.

For China, the EU's strategic autonomy will allow the bloc to play a mediating role in China-US competition rather than rallying behind the US in the latter's geopolitical game to contain China. That's why when Macron called for the EU to pursue strategic autonomy and avoid following the US into a conflict with China over the Taiwan question, his credibility as a mediator increased in the eyes of the Chinese people.

ple. In a speech at the Sorbonne University on April 25, Macron reiterated that Europe should not become a "vassal" of the US and should be able to talk to everyone. In an interesting coincidence, the People's Liberation Army's Southern Theater Command signed a framework agreement on dialogue and cooperation with the Pacific marines of the French military on the same day with the aim of building trust between the two militaries in the Asia-Pacific.

The Ukraine crisis continues, with the looming threat of escalating into nuclear conflict.

As nuclear powers and members of the United Nations Security Council, China and France shoulder the common responsibility of avoiding the risks of a devastating nuclear conflict. On nuclear risks, China has made it clear in its position paper on the political settlement of the Ukraine crisis that nuclear weapons must not be used and nuclear wars must not be fought.

On the economic front, China and France should make more efforts to back the strategic partnership with more solid economic cooperation. During their recent summit in April, EU leaders' discussions were focused on boosting the bloc's competitiveness to reverse the EU's decline. And when it comes to competitiveness, it is important that both sides should avoid zero-sum thinking.

Since China's launch of reform and opening-up in the late 1970s, European companies have been playing an important role in enhancing the competitiveness of the Chinese economy. The same could be said about Chinese companies in Europe. The story of Huawei in Europe is an apt example.

In Europe, for Europe," Jim Lu, Huawei's regional president in Europe has made such remarks. Working with EU partners, Huawei has been helping Europe build the digital infrastructure, nurture local talents and achieve the EU's digitalization goals.

The green industry is another example. By exporting green products such as electric vehicles (EVs) to and investing in the EU, Chinese companies will not only contribute to the EU's green transition but also boost its competitiveness in green industry. It is therefore better that the EU and China pursue competitiveness with each other rather than competitiveness over each other.

Such a spirit should help resolve the China-EU dispute over the alleged subsidies to EV-makers in China — a dispute in which France is believed to be a key player.

In a world that is increasingly divided by geopolitical and ideological fault lines, it is important to keep building bridges across different levels of societies.

The 2024 Summer Olympic Games Paris is scheduled to host offers France a precious opportunity to bridge the gap in a contested world, showing that humankind and countries could compete, but in the spirit of peace and friendship.

Amidst Gaza's explosions American ideologies implode

Aysha Taryam

IT seems that yet again the war on Gaza has forced Western ideologies to self-destruct. Imploding once more in the face of a young America raising their voices in abolition, protesting the end of war on innocent people that has lasted more than 200 days and has taken with it countless souls with no end in sight.

Currently a wave of 'Pro-Palestine' protests is sweeping through universities across America, resulting in student arrests and expulsions. Their future jeopardized for simply exercising their right to protest. The West has always championed the idea that campuses are to be safe havens for self-expression and yet we are now witnessing the Ivy Leaguers like Columbia and Harvard take steps to stifle this freedom and silence its voice. For universities that were built on the core values that foster

debate and encourage dialogue to then suddenly label any thought that contradicts or criticizes Israel as anti-Semitic is shameful to say the least. Equating a pro-Palestinian stance to an anti-Semitic one is rendering the cause undignified by smearing it with an unjustifiable hatred for another. It is a cowardly way out of a real debate and a productive dialogue.

The Biden administration is now knee-deep in support of an unfathomable retaliation on a genocidal scale as it struggles to navigate its way through these endless protests. Historically the Democratic Party has rallied the young voters and relied heavily on their contributions towards solidifying their numbers to win presidential votes and yet we see them compromise their position ever more in defence of Netanyahu's own suicidal mission. With this maniacal stubbornness the US gov-

ernment is once again reaffirming to the world that the welfare of Israel is above all else, even above that of the American people.

As the war on Gaza continues and the number of casualties rise making way for a grave humanitarian disaster, we have seen America discredit numbers of innocents' deaths, cast a blind eye to innumerable war crimes and justify it all with one sentence: "Israel has a right to defend itself." Anything the Israeli government decides to do is their right to do, a right bestowed only on this country and no other country in the world but it. A right given time and again by a single raised hand at every United Nations Security Council Assembly. An American hand raised in the face of humanity.

The West's credibility as a reference for all things human rights related has

waned and is now almost non-existent. The war on Gaza has cost them more than just weapons, it has set the West back hundreds of years and tarnished their image as the leaders of humanity.

One must recall then US President Barack Obama's position on the Arab-Spring protests that set fire to the Middle East in 2011 and led to the crumbling of many Arab countries, a Syrian civil war, the rise of the ISIL, an insurgency and civil war in Iraq, costly unrest in Egypt, and a Libyan and Yemeni crisis. Obama's government, whose Vice President was Joe Biden himself, saw these protests as progressive and a birth sign for democracy. In Egypt, Obama opted to side with the streets and upended a long-standing relationship with one of its strongest allies in the region, washing

its hands off President Hosni Mubarak almost instantaneously. The rhetoric was that of spreading freedom to the rest of the world and freeing the people from their ruthless dictators. The events leading to today's world have proved that it was nothing but a ploy to divide and conquer. The Arab world is not the better for it, on the contrary some might not recover from that destructive spring.

The Arab Spring started when a Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire; a moment Obama, in a statement to the UN General Assembly in 2012, described as an inspiring one: "We were inspired by the Tunisian protests that toppled a dictator, because we recognized our own beliefs in the aspiration of men and women who took to the streets."

Yet in 2024's America, under the governance of the same party, we see no inspiration sparked by those stu-

dents who took to the streets or the campuses. Yet another ideal imploding on itself. Not all protests are created equal it seems, on home soil some are neither welcomed nor tolerated.

One must hesitate when calling these protests pro-Palestinian because in that labelling, we lose their truth. They are protests against senseless killings, they are a rejection of regimes that support occupation and a cry for an end to war as a pathway to peace. These protests are pro-humanity in its true sense of the word, an all-encompassing humanity that is not cherry-picked by the powers that be. They are protests against hypocrisy and for a right to life.

If political rhetoric was the truth these brave young Americans would be honoured not expelled. Only great solace remains in knowing that the youth see the truth and that they are not afraid to speak it.

The Abu Ghraib case is an important milestone for justice

I was in middle school when on April 28, 2004, CBS News first made public the haunting photos from Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. I can't remember exactly how I felt then except that it was an incredibly dark moment that rocked everyone. That has stuck with me to this day.

Almost 20 years later, I found myself in court looking at the same shocking pictures of men whose faces are hidden beneath coarse hoods. But this time, the men tortured in these photos were not nameless and faceless. I watched one survivor of Abu Ghraib testify from Iraq via video-link, and I shook hands with another outside the court, 20 minutes away from the nation's capital where decisions were made that changed their lives.

It was two weeks before the 20th anniversary of the Abu Ghraib scandal that the civil trial of Al Shimari v CACI finally started. I attended as an observer from the Center for Victims of Torture, which seeks accountability for torture perpetrated by the United States.

This case, brought forth by three Iraqi men – Suhail Najim Abdullah al-Shimari, Salah Hasan Nusaif al-Ejaili and Asa'ad Hamza Hanfoosh Zuba'e – is the only one by survivors of Abu Ghraib against a military contractor that has reached trial.

The three men are suing CACI International Inc, a private military contractor, over the allegation that CACI personnel "participated in a conspiracy to commit unlawful conduct, including torture and war crimes at Abu Ghraib prison". Since 2008, the company has tried to dismiss this case more than 20 times.

The trial marks a significant moment in the legal battle for justice and redress for Abu Ghraib and, more broadly, the US torture programme. It represents a culmination of relentless

efforts by the victims themselves, human rights advocates and legal experts to shed light on the dark underbelly of the US "war on terror".

At the Center for Victims of Torture, where I work, we directly interact with survivors of torture, hear them speak about what was done to them, and how torture affected their sense of security, sense of trust, and sense of self. Torture is about intentionally breaking the human – mind, body, and spirit; it doesn't end when the acts stop. That is why telling the story matters. In the courtroom, the plaintiffs gave harrowing accounts of their experiences at Abu Ghraib and the effects with which they live with 20 years later.

They walked the court through the kinds of torture and humiliation they were subjected to by both military personnel and private contractors. They spoke about the lasting physical pain and injury, the difficulties in interacting with family, loss of meaningful relationships and trouble sleeping due to nightmares. They related how they could not even make eye contact with each other – a simple human act to see and be seen – because of the shame they felt over what was done to them.

Al-Ejaili, a journalist who used to work with Al Jazeera, testified how meaningful it was to him to tell his story: "Perhaps it's like a form of treatment or a remedy."

At court, Major-General (retired) Antonio Taguba and Major-General (retired) George Fay testified about their respective investigations into torture at Abu Ghraib. General Taguba's 2004 inquiry was conducted before any pictures from Abu Ghraib were made public and was initiated by the military following investigations from the

Yumna Rizvi

International Committee of the Red Cross and the Army's Criminal Investigation Command. General Taguba found that "incidents of sadistic, blatant and wanton criminal abuses were inflicted on several detainees" and that the "systemic and illegal abuse ... was intentionally perpetrated".

General Fay's report, released in August 2004, found that torture techniques on the detainees included the use of dogs, nudity, humiliation and physical abuse. It described torture, including "direct physical assault, such as delivering head blows rendering detainees unconscious, to sexual posing and forced participation in group masturbation".

Both Fay and Taguba's investigations, and a subsequent one by the US Senate Armed Services Committee in 2008, uncovered that the atrocities at Abu Ghraib were not isolated. The horrors were part of the Bush administration's "war on terror" torture policy and reflected tactics authorised by senior officials, including Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. Some of the torture practices were brought over to Abu Ghraib from Guantanamo Bay and Bagram, a military base in Afghanistan, where also detainees were tortured.

The Taguba and Fay reports implicate CACI personnel in abuses, such as tactics to "soften up" detainees prior to interrogations. One of them was Steve Stephanowicz, who, according to internal CACI emails presented at court, was a "NO-GO for filling an interrogator position", as he was "neither trained nor qualified". In court, General Taguba testified that Stephanowicz even tried to "intimidate" him during his investigation.

Despite this, Stephanowicz was promoted within CACI and

received a 48 percent increase in salary – a trend also seen with those in the Bush administration who authorised torture.

The Fay report mentions unnamed CACI personnel who physically assaulted detainees and placed them in unauthorised stress positions. One even bragged about "shaving a detainee and forcing him to wear red women's underwear".

What is unique about Abu Ghraib is that, unlike Guantanamo and other CIA secret prisons, the world has seen the atrocities that took place there. And today, the world sees again through this trial, through the stories of these survivors, what was done by the US. No senior government or military official has been held accountable for crimes perpetrated by the US. No victim has received redress relative to the harm they live with every day till they die.

But this trial offers the opportunity to obtain some level of justice. Survivors of torture have the right to redress, rehabilitation and compensation, all of which I hope these three men receive. While they will never get the full justice they deserve, a verdict in their favour could get them financial compensation as well as acknowledgement of their suffering and make public CACI's complicity.

The fight for justice does not end with this case. There is much more still that needs to be done.

Abu Ghraib and the detention centre at Bagram were officially closed in 2014, but Guantanamo remains open, with 30 men indefinitely detained in conditions that may amount to torture, according to the United Nations. Efforts to close have stalled despite the current US administration's stated intent to do so. Nevertheless, efforts to close the detention centre and seek justice and redress for victims of the US torture programme continue.

— Aljazeera

Across the Western world, public opinion on Palestine is finally shifting

Othman Moqbel

FOR a very long time, many in the Western world have not engaged at all with the issues stemming from the occupation of Palestine. The occupation was in the news, every year or so, for a day or two, and then it would go again. It was too "complicated", those who knew about the context – on either side – were too passionate. So many opted to remain neutral. Many more believed the smeared Palestinian people.

However, the scale and severity of brutality that has defined the past six months of conflict has put an end to the widespread apathy towards the suffering of the Palestinian people. The wall-to-wall media coverage, thanks to fearless reporting from organisations like Al Jazeera and Palestinian journalists on the ground, has opened people's eyes to the reality people in Gaza, and the rest of Palestine, have had to endure for generations.

At Action For Humanity, one of the leading NGOs working in Gaza and influencing policymakers in the United Kingdom, we have commissioned polling by YouGov and found that 56 percent of the UK are now in favour of halting arms exports to Israel. Only 17 percent are against and the rest are unsure.

This is huge. We have been polling the public on conflicts like Syria and Yemen for years and never have the UK public not just been so aware of a conflict, but also felt so passionately about it.

Furthermore, when asked, 59 percent of the respondents said they felt Israel was committing human rights abuses in Gaza – almost three in five people and just 12 percent felt this was not the case. And it's worth noting

this survey was conducted before the April 1 killing of World Central Kitchen aid workers – an atrocity which has horrified the world, even the UK and US governments. We now anticipate, due to the widespread condemnation of this event, that the number of people who realise what horrors are being committed and want no part of it, is higher.

Other polling by YouGov has shown that, the longer this war on Gaza goes on, the more people are likely to support a ceasefire (from 59 percent in November to 66 percent in February), are more likely to think the attack on Gaza is not justified (from 44 percent in November to 45 percent in February) and are more likely to want peace talks (61 percent in November to 66 percent in February).

And this is a pattern we are seeing all across the Western world. In the United States, the biggest backer of Israel on the global stage, it is not just the administration in the White House that is struggling to attempt to justify the accelerating civilian death toll, the public too are showing disapproval. A CBS/YouGov poll found that in October 47 percent – almost half – of the US supported sending weapons to Israel, this month the number has plummeted to just 32 percent – less than a third, and that support for a ceasefire is growing.

We believe that this is the case across the West and now that the overwhelming majority of the Western public are becoming more and more aware of the crimes against humanity that are being committed in Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem, the more people are completely appalled. And even

those who once felt the huge civilian death toll in Gaza were justified and realising in increasing numbers that nothing on this earth can justify what is happening.

However, sadly, the politicians of Western governments are completely out of step with their public's mood. Not only is this morally reprehensible, but it is politically shortsighted.

The year 2024 has been called "the year of elections", with at least 49 percent of the world voting at some point this year, politicians who do not realise their publics want them to stop facilitating and supporting human rights abuses in Gaza, face electoral defeat – even if they refuse to face their conscience.

Here in the UK, the Labour Party, which many believe will form the next government, have also been behind the public's growing demand to stop arming Israel – even though our polling found that a huge 71 percent of those who intended to vote Labour at the next election believe the UK government should stop funding Israel.

For decades, Western states were able to support abuses against Palestinians with impunity due to public ignorance on the issue – due to people not paying attention to what's happening, and buying into lies.

This is now over, and the horrific way Israel conducted its war on Gaza is the reason why. Humanity, in all its forms, everywhere, is fundamentally good. Most humans, at their core, believe in peace and justice. They know that murdering innocents is wrong. Now the world is paying attention to Gaza, everyone can see what an unnatural, horrendous reality Palestinians are forced to endure, and they want no more of it.

Truth takes its revenge on Trump and his team

Frida Ghitis

PERHAPS it's a naïve view. Maybe it's something we were told as children. But most of us believed that truth is more powerful than lies. That's one of the reasons why the years of the Trump presidency were exasperatingly frustrating. How was it possible that a man who told lies in such prodigious quantities, overpowering the army of frantic fact checkers who simply couldn't keep up, would face no negative consequences from his relentless assaults on the truth?

Worse yet, the lies worked. They penetrated the national psyche, cast doubt on truth-tellers, helped polarize the nation, weaving an alternate reality and undercutting American democracy.

Incredibly, most Republicans believe former President Donald Trump's most pernicious lie, that he won the 2020 election.

It seemed as if a cosmic law was being violated. Lies, denial of reality, weren't supposed to succeed with such ease. Now, however, the truth is getting its revenge.

It may be temporary, but in recent days, the deceivers have been put on the defensive. And it's not a good look for that class of people whose misleading ways so often come dressed in supreme arrogance.

The image of Trump sitting in a New York courtroom, seething, looking angry, diminished, should have a soundtrack. What Trump was hearing was the confession of one of his facilitators admitting to their alleged tactics. David Pecker, the former head of the National Enquirer, was granted immunity to testify.

He admitted to the plot he coordinated with the Trump team, using his publication to smear Trump's opponents with stories they knew to be false,

while hiding truthful news about Trump's misdeeds from the public.

That, of course, includes the story of adult film actress Stormy Daniels, at the center of the case, who claims Trump paid her off to keep the story of their alleged affair out of the media, because it could harm his presidential prospects in 2016. (Trump has denied all wrongdoing, including denying that he had an affair with Daniels, and has pleaded not guilty to the charges.)

The revelations, though not surprising, are appalling. A national publication knowingly, deliberately engaged in deceiving its readers. We knew the outlet did it for entertainment purposes. Now it confessed to adapting their unethical practices to bamboozle American voters.

While criminal defendant Trump had to sit and listen, other alleged accomplices in his effort to overthrow the US election faced an unhappy truth of their own. It's taken much too long, but the lies about the 2020 election – all of them found to be false by dozens of courts across the country – are now turning into prosecutions.

This week, Arizona indicted multiple people in connection to the plot to declare Trump the election winner. Among them: Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani and Trump White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows. While his acolytes faced the prospect of prison, Trump's lawyers went to the Supreme Court to argue the former president enjoys absolute immunity for just about everything, including to weaponize his lies.

"If the president decides that his rival is a corrupt person and he orders the military ... to assassinate him, is that within

his official acts for which he can get immunity?" asked Justice Sonia Sotomayor. "That could well be an official act," said Trump's lawyer, D. John Sauer.

Words fail to capture just how outrageous this claim is, for a would-be president, no less. This week also marked the first anniversary of another moment in the battle between truth and lies. A year ago, Fox News, a purveyor of election lies, fired Tucker Carlson, a host who spewed conspiracy theories.

Fox, you'll recall, did face consequences for its mendacity. After letting hosts and guests relentlessly claim that voting machines had thrown the 2020 election, the right-wing network settled with Dominion Voting Systems for \$787 million. Then it fired Carlson.

Carlson's effort to retain his enormous influence seems to be faltering. At the height of his fame, he could make or break Republican politicians. AHis show was getting four million viewers a night. Now his "network" TCN has half a million followers on Elon Musk's limping platform, X. Carlson now sounds like a Putin-loving conspiracy theorist howling under a Russian moon. Even Sen. Mitch McConnell blasted him, blaming him for the "demonization of Ukraine."

Other far-right publishers of conspiracy theories are also on the ropes, or down for the count.

The Gateway Pundit, home to wild inventions and a mainstay of MAGA falsehoods, including about the 2020 election, announced this week that it filed for bankruptcy.

The website, like others in its realm, is facing expensive lawsuits. Turns out when you're accused of telling lies, it's hard to come up with a defense. (One

reason Trump's best shot is to argue that he cannot be prosecuted.) One of the lawsuits against the Gateway Pundit came from Georgia election workers Ruby Freeman and Shaye Moss, who became well known when they testified during the January 6 hearings in Congress about how their lives had turned into a nightmare following lies about their role in the vote count.

Also facing the consequences of their lies is another far-right "news" outlet, One American Network, or OAN. OAN, too, spread fantasies about voting machines playing a role in a supposedly fraudulent election. Last week, the network and Smartmatic, another election machine company, announced they had reached a settlement in the company's lawsuit. The amount was not disclosed. Somehow, the courts have become the place of reckoning for malignant liars, although the process can be long and frustrating.

Alex Jones, who all but tortured the parents of children massacred by a gunman at Sandy Hook, claiming it was all staged, was ordered to pay nearly \$1.5 billion. He and his company declared bankruptcy, but court documents claim he continues to "enjoy an extravagant lifestyle."

Still, there is a certain satisfaction in seeing enemies of the truth, perennial manufacturers of deceptions, at last face strong and potentially effective push-back.

It's not only that their words caused harm, although they did. And it's not only that they deserve to be punished, which they do. But there's something else. There's a fundamental, necessary law of the universe that truth must be stronger than lies.

It turns out that enforcing universal laws can also require an army of prosecutors.

Lunar missions exciting time for space

Quentin Parker

THE success after success of China's space program, with all its diverse elements for scientific exploration and technological development in what remains a risky business, is as impressive as it is exciting.

China launched three astronauts into low-Earth orbit on Thursday night for a six-month mission at the Tiangong space station, as part of its preparations to send astronauts to the moon by the end of the decade. During a press conference on April 24, China Manned Space Agency stated that the development and construction of systems for a Chinese manned lunar landing are progressing as planned, with the aim of achieving a moon landing by Chinese astronauts before 2030.

China's accomplishments in space exploration and technology over the past five years, in particular, are without precedent. This includes the completion of China's space station Tiangong (Heavenly Palace), whose first major component, the core module Tianhe, was launched in April 2021 and the two major science modules, Wentian and Mengtian, were launched in 2022.

China's space station continues its program of development and progress from its current T-configuration but with plans for further expansion. Indeed, the docking time for "taikonauts" from launch to entry into the space station has recently been reduced from an already impressive six-seven hours to just two and a half hours due to the development of space rendezvous and docking technologies.

Tianzhou 7, the latest automatic cargo resupply vessel, took off from the Wenchang Satellite launch center in the Hainan island in January and docked in three hours compared with the 16-19 hours taken by the Elon Musk Space-X "Dragon" capsule to dock with the International Space Station (and the about six hours taken by the old Soyuz capsules).

Also, there was the Tianwen 1 Mars mission with Zhurong Rover in May 2021 – perhaps the most complex and hazardous of China's space missions. This should be seen in the context of about 60 percent of Mars missions failing to land on the surface of the Red Planet.

Also, the Chinese Space Station Telescope, Xuntian, is scheduled for launch and operation in 2025. Xuntian

is an optical and ultraviolet space observatory that will boast a 2-meter-diameter lens, making it comparable to the venerable Hubble Space Telescope. Although the resolution of China's telescope will be similar to Hubble's, its field of view will be 350 times larger.

More important, China's Chang'e (Beautiful Moon Goddess) series of lunar missions have proved amazingly successful, with the Chang'e 3 lander making the first landing on the moon way back in December 2013. The mission included a lunar lander and a small yutu (jade rabbit) rover that was set down in the Mare Imbrium region of the moon, a prominent lava filled basin from one of the largest impact craters known in the entire solar system and easily visible to the naked eye. It made China only the third country to achieve a lunar soft landing.

Chang'e 4, a similar mission of lander and rover, followed in 2019. It was designed as a backup in case Chang'e 3 failed. What set the mission apart was that its landing zone was on the far side of the moon, which is not visible from Earth, the first such landing in space exploration history.

This feat was made possible by the success of Chang'e 3 that gave the mission planners and scientists the opportunity and confidence to reconfigure Chang'e 4 for the more challenging but interesting far side alternative. Since this made the mission far more complicated, to maintain essential communication with the Earth a separate queqiao (magpie bridge) relay satellite was deployed into a halo orbit around the so-called L2 Earth-moon Lagrangian point of gravitational equipotential for stability. This mission, too, was a big success.

The Chang'e 5, which followed, was China's first lunar mission that involved bringing back rock sample from the moon. It was launched in November 2020 and landed on the moon on Dec 1, 2020. The return module came back with its precious cargo of 1.7 kilogram of moon rock two weeks later. The scooping device attached to the lander was developed by the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong while my own university, the University of Hong Kong, was fortunate enough to get a small sample of the moon rock for scientific study.

As a result, China became only the third country, after the United States and the former Soviet Union (now Russia), to bring back rock samples from the moon.

Just like Chang'e 4 was a backup for Chang'e 3 so was Chang'e 6 for Chang'e 5. Given the success of Chang'e 5, the Chang'e 6 mission has been redesigned to collect rock samples from the far side of the moon for the first time. This mission is due to be launched in the near future. If successful, this will be another science bonanza, as game-changing amounts of water ice are suspected to exist in the shadowed lunar craters which can be used as fuel for future space missions or to breathe by future space explorers. However, international cooperation is vital in space exploration. And I believe China is keen on deepening cooperation as it has made clear in its white paper on space program published in January 2022. Indeed, many of the scientific payloads on the Chang'e landers have had international scientific packages. For example, Chang'e 4 had scientific packages by Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands and Saudi Arabia.

And while the European Space Agency supported the Chang'e 5 mission by providing essential tracking from both its Kourou station in French Guiana and Maspolomas station in the Canary Islands at various crucial parts of the mission, different scientific payloads have been provided by France, Italy and Sweden again, and a Pakistani ICUBE-Q CubeSat for Chang'e 6 for detecting ice traces on the lunar surface from orbit.

The Chang'e series of missions is not over, for Chang'e 7 is planned for around 2026 and Chang'e 8 for around 2028, with both focused on the south pole of the moon in order to build a China-led lunar base in the 2030s.

Anticipating further international cooperation, this follows the recent unveiling of the most comprehensive lunar atlas ever created, crucial for guiding future lunar endeavors. This remarkable achievement is the result of over a decade of meticulous work by Chinese lunar scientists and geologists. With this in mind, "watch this space" as humanity sets its sights on new aspirations of lunar exploration and envisions moon bases as a gateway to further frontiers.

Café culture rules Kolkata

Shaadaab S. Bakht

SOCIAL media, with the enormous support of refashioned lies, harmful half-truths, quasi-logic, rules our lives, but I miss the café culture. We all go to schools and colleges, but if you ask me, the best lessons come not from uniformed attendance, but from wild café sessions.

It's only in such places that we are surrounded by people who allow us to talk freely, people who hit back when we are wrong, people who support our excesses, people who play the leader when required, people who play the follower when required and people who speak the truth to bail us out when we are in trouble.

And it is in such cafes that knowledge pleasantly becomes wisdom and a writer or an artiste or a political rebel or a crook or a romantic is born. In short, the foundations of our lives are laid.

The lucky ones get a chance to visit such coffee sessions, the unlucky ones don't. They wait

for some prejudice-laden writer to tell them about human beings and life.

I consider myself to be very lucky. I belong to a gang, which fed itself just on views: predictably at the top was amorous romance, but not amoral; second was football and cricket; third was rebellious philosophy; fourth was religion; fifth was human suffering and last was whether the heaviest book was indeed the chequebook?

For us it all began at a coffee corner called Coffee Cabin, Calcutta (now Kolkata). The trigger for the rendezvous was, your guess is right, the swarthy and vivacious counter clerk and inexpensive coffee.

She, however, left in a couple of weeks, but the joint became our parliament, taken to thrilling heights by a serious agnostic, a pair of jilted lovers, a heartless prankster and an incurable rationalist, for the next five years.

The coffee corner was located in a dingy room at the end of an archway, with busts in all the staircase windows of Swami Vivekananda, Raja Rammohun Roy, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, Uttam Kumar and local icons.

In the same building were located a typist, a cigarette-seller and a signboard painter.

The room, which in size and situation, took precedence over all the rest was the coffee shop.

The door of the shop was always open and the hall was blocked with a grand, but unclean partition and several musical instruments looking rakish in the daylight. We were told that the shop was set up by a man whose only love was music, but he could not realise his dream and found refuge in selling coffee.

The place had a washroom, which was like an enlarged mew lighted primarily by skylight.

Scores of youngsters, ranging

from 17 to 25 years, were regulars like us. Some of them subsequently went on to win international awards.

The common denominator of all the sessions was our faith in arguments and in focusing not only on the now, but also on a serious attempt at an ethically nourishing tomorrow.

Many years later three of that group landed in Dubai and immediately wanted to create an "adda" or a rendezvous.

They were very happy to meet at a café on the Sharjah corniche. The gang now has a Sufi-like romantic with a serious interest in poetry and paintings.

It has been made richer by the presence of a guy, who neither belongs to our part of India nor speaks our language, but has become the irreplaceable nerve-centre. He is our fountainhead of rationality. We also have a silent listener. We are determined to keep the café culture alive because nothing can replace the joy of a face-to-face meeting.



PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 1,047 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Monday, shedding 1,047.71 points, negative change of 1.44 percent, closing at 71,695.03 points against 72,742.75 points the previous trading day.

A total of 613,314,754 shares valuing Rs 26.314 billion were traded during the day as compared to 541,144,650 shares valuing Rs 22.589 billion the last day.

Some 385 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 133 of them recorded gains and 231 sustained losses, whereas the prices of 21 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Hascol Petrol with 60,072,684 shares at Rs 8.11 per share, Fauji Fert Bin with

35,168,028 shares at Rs 35.62 per share and Pace (Pak) Limited with 32,652,000 shares at Rs3.49 per share.

Hallmark Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 86.32 per share price, closing at Rs 1,239.14, whereas the runner-up was Sazgar Engineering Works Limited with a Rs 31.33 rise in its per share price to Rs694.78.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 600.21 per share closing at Rs 19,553.71, followed by Nestle Pakistan Limited with Rs 338.41 decline to close at Rs 7,484.20.

Rupee sheds 01 pasia against US dollar

Pakistani Rupee on Monday lost 01 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.39 against

the previous day's closing of Rs 278.38.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.25 and Rs 279.85 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 49 paise and closed at Rs 298.38 against the last-day closing of Rs 298.87, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged at Rs1.78, whereas an increase of 31 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs348.79 compared to the last closing of Rs348.48.

The Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal witnessed no change and closed at Rs75.79 and

Rs74.22 respectively.

Gold rates decrease by Rs 500 per tola to Rs 243,900

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 500 and was sold at Rs 243,900 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs 244,400 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 429 to Rs 209,105 from Rs 209,534 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs 191,680 from Rs 192,072, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained stagnant at Rs 2,650 and Rs 2,271.94 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$2 to \$2,335 from \$2,337, the association reported.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of UAE to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where three ships namely, MSC Beira IV, Gold Trader and Milaha Qatar carrying Container, Chemicals and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Engro Terminal and Gasport Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile three more ships, MSC Antigua, Majestic Noor and FSM scheduled to load/offload Container, Rice and LPG also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours.

A total of eight ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them an edible oil carrier 'Thanasis' left the Port on today morning.

Meanwhile two more ships, MSC Beira-IV and Libertango are expected to sail on today.

Cargo volume of 123,270 tonnes, comprising 78,303 tonnes imports cargo and 44,967 tonnes export cargo carried in 2,939 container (448 TEUs imports and 2,491 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 03 ships at outer Anchorage of LPort Qasim, out of them two ships, MSC Antigua and Majestic Noor & another ship, Advantage paradise scheduled to load/offload Container, Rice and Gas Oil are expected to take berths at QICT, FAP and FOTCO on today while two more container ships, Meratus Jayakarta and MSC Anchorage are due arrive at Port Qasim on Tuesday.

Traders commends PM initiatives

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari on Monday lauded the initiatives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for strengthening the national economy.

In a press statement, he said that the meetings of the Prime Minister on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum would bring about a positive impact on the economy. He said that due to the conducive economic policies of the government economic conditions started improving and the business cycle was moving.

He urged the need for broadening the tax base to get rid of the debt trap, besides creating more fiscal space to initiate more developmental projects.

During his recent visit to Pakistan, he said that the Saudi Minister for Investment has also assured that a delegation of Saudi investors would also soon visit to explore trade and investment opportunities existing between both countries.

ICCI head urged the need for wise decisions and continuity in economic policies to achieve sustainable economic development in the country.

SBP to remain closed

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan and all the banks will remain closed on Wednesday, May 01, 2024 on the occasion of Labour Day. The central bank, in a statement issued here on Monday, announced that "State Bank of Pakistan will remain closed on May 1, 2024 (Wednesday) being public holiday on the occasion of Labour Day, as declared by the Government of Pakistan." All the banks, micro finance banks and development finance institutions will also observe holiday on the May 01, 2024.

POGEE-2024 showcases new global technologies for Oil, Gas & Power

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The 18th edition of 'Pakistan Oil, Gas & Energy Exhibition' (POGEE), is receiving tremendous response from the leading international and local Energy-companies and stakeholders of this key industry. The exhibition will take place from 8th to 10th May 2024, at the Lahore Expo Centre.

The energy sector of Pakistan plays a vital role in the economic development of the country while directly affecting the operations and growth of all other industrial sectors. Given the socioeconomic impact and contributions of this robust sector, optimal planning for sustainable energy is imperative. As per the recent 'Integrated Energy Planning' (IEP) report, the country's energy demand will increase substantially by 2030, which presents excellent opportunity for the global compa-

nies to invest in Pakistan, increase their business-share and contribute in the nation's development.

Speaking about the event, Aamer Khanzada - the Managing Director of Pegasus Consultancy highlighted that; "POGEE is reckoned as the premier oil & gas exhibition of the region and it is heartening to see a tremendous response from the global industry players, despite the show is returning after a long gap, due to the COVID pandemic. He further informed the media that: "Around 100 resourceful companies from 17 countries have confirmed their participation in the show, including exhibitors from Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, China, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, South Korea, Sweden, Taiwan, UAE and USA.

Along with POGEE, the 15th International Fire, Safety, Security & Health

Exhibition - 'Safe Secure Pakistan' will also be taking place, attracting a large number of exhibitors and visitors from the relevant industrial sectors. POGEE and 'Safe Secure Pakistan' are very prestigious events, organized by Pegasus Consultancy and supported by the relevant government bodies and trade associations.

Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) is the strategic partner of the event, along with Chevron Group as the Gold-Sponsor, which represents global enterprises like: Chevron, TEXACO and CALTEX. Hence, POGEE is a must-attend forum for related decision-makers and professionals associated with the Oil, Gas and Energy sectors, including petroleum companies, operating in exploration & production, Geo-Sciences, refining and petrochemical distribution, along with related products and services.

KEH pioneers a paradigm shift in wellness management

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Karwan-e-Hayat (KEH), Institute for Mental Health Care, a leading organization in Pakistan dedicated to preventing, treating and rehabilitating mental illness in marginalized communities, is excited to introduce its groundbreaking R.E.S.T. Model. Led by Dr. Minhaj Qidwai, Consultant for Quality Management at KEH, this innovative approach seeks to revolutionize mental health education and support systems, aiming to break down barriers, combat stigma, and create a society that embraces mental well-being for all. The R.E.S.T. Model, standing for Research, Education, System and Training, offers a comprehensive framework tailored to address the complex challenges within mental health care.

The R.E.S.T. Model places a strong emphasis on research, advocating for

evidence-based practices and interventions in the field of mental health. Through rigorous research initiatives, KEH aims to advance society's understanding of mental health disorders and develop innovative solutions to effectively address them.

Education plays a pivotal role in raising awareness and reducing the stigma surrounding mental health issues. With the R.E.S.T. Model, KEH is committed to providing comprehensive mental health education to communities, workplaces and educational institutions. By empowering individuals with knowledge and resources, the institute strives to promote mental well-being and encourage help-seeking behaviors.

Health systems development is essential for quality service delivery in mental health care. The R.E.S.T. Model focuses on process improvement for wellness

management, engaging in discussions on existing service delivery areas and exploring new avenues based on evidence-based research and technology.

Effective professional training and development are crucial components of a resilient mental health infrastructure. KEH is dedicated to providing specialized training to healthcare professionals, educators, and community leaders in wellness management. By equipping individuals with the skills and knowledge to support those in need, the institute aims to build a more resilient and compassionate society.

This KEH initiative invites the community to support its mission to revolutionize mental health education and energize the R.E.S.T. Model. Collaborating in this effort can break down barriers, challenge stigma, and create a world where mental well-being is embraced by all.

Yen swings after hitting new 34-year low; stocks mixed

LONDON (AFP/APP): The yen swung in volatile trade Monday as it rebounded soon after hitting a 34-year low against the dollar, fuelling speculation

Japanese authorities had intervened to support the currency for the first time since late 2022.

The dollar's rally came as another forecast-topping US inflation report dented hopes for US Federal Reserve interest rate cuts this year.

The yen sank to 160.17 to the greenback in choppy Asian trade, with liquidity also thin amid a holiday in Japan. It later bounced back as high as 154.54.

"We're seeing huge volatility in the Japanese yen at the start of the week," said analyst James Mill at trading firm TickMill.

"The move suggests that Japanese authorities have finally intervened in the market after plenty of anticipation over recent weeks."

Masato Kanda, Japan's vice minister of finance for

international affairs, offered no comment to reporters on Monday.

The currency has come under renewed pressure after the Bank of Japan (BoJ) refused to tighten monetary policy further at its meeting last week.

Officials have repeatedly said they are ready to step in if there are wild movements in the exchange rate, citing speculators as a key

issue. "The BoJ's dovishness in keeping rates unchanged late last week was an open invitation for yen sellers," noted Finalto analyst Neil Wilson.

Most Asian equity markets rose Monday following a pre-weekend rally on Wall Street as strong tech earnings offset the stubbornly high personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index.

USAP-CMA audit team releases report

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The USAP-CMA Audit Team releases the report for ICAO USAP CMA Audit of Pakistan. The PCAA was successful to score 86.73% score in the Audit while the ICAO Goals Set For 80% for 2023. The current score is closer to ICAO goal for 2030 that is 90%.

The USAP-CMA Audit Team from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) had completed its assessment of Pakistan's aviation security systems during February 2024.

The success of this audit was a result of National Aviation Security Act 2023 and the continued efforts from airports, airlines, cargo agents, ground handlers and ASF working on the locations.

Poland can help Pakistan combat climate change challenges: Envoy

LAHORE (APP): The Ambassador of Poland to Pakistan, Maciej Pisarski, said on Monday that Pakistan is affected by climate change and Poland has expertise in this sector which can be helpful for this country.

Talking to the business community here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) here, he added that a delegation in this regard would be visiting Pakistan in the last week of May to engage with the government and private sector at federal and provincial levels. It is pertinent to mention here that the delegation needs complete assistance from government and the private sector to fetch results in assisting Pakistan to combat the persisting issue of climate change.

On this occasion, the LCCI President Kashif Anwar assured the Ambassador that all necessary arrangements would be made to ensure that the delegation is received in a befitting manner, facilitating constructive dialogue and meaningful engagement.

The Ambassador said that it is time to enhance collaboration between Poland and Pakistan for fighting common challenges like the climate change.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that climate changes have badly affected Pakistan and to overcome this issue, technology from Poland can be beneficial for Pakistan.

The Ambassador said that European Union is the bigger receiver of Pakistani products and Poland has supported the inclusion of

Pakistan in the GSP Plus under which Pakistani products have access to the European market. He added that Poland is serving as a significant gateway for Pakistan's exports towards Europe.

He said that trade between Poland and Pakistan is on the rise. Poland wants to enhance cooperation in trade and investment. "We would encourage people to come to Pakistan. We would like to bring them to Lahore."

He said that Poland and Pakistan are enjoying friendly and solid relations based on mutual honor and understanding. He said that the bilateral agenda concentrated on diplomatic engagement, economic cooperation and the development of people-to-people relations during the last six decades.

The Ambassador said that Polish oil and gas company is operating in the Sindh province of Pakistan. The Ambassador to Pakistan, Maciej Pisarski said that Poland is one of the fastest growing export markets for Pakistan and wants to expand its presence here.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that Poland is an important economy in EU and has strategic location as it shares borders with countries like Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Germany. Because of this strategic location, Poland serves as a gateway to the European Union (EU) market. This presents an opportunity for both our nations to explore new avenues of collaboration and mutual benefit.

He said that the relationship between Pakistan and Poland has been marked by mutual respect, shared values and a commitment to promote economic cooperation. Poland has been a great friend of Pakistan for decades. Both countries have always provided facilitation to each other at different international forums. "We are thankful to Poland for its continuous support to Pakistan with respect to the GSP Plus status," he added.

The LCCI President said it is also a fact that the mutual relations do not get reflected in bilateral trade volume which is currently not at par with the actual potential. Poland's global exports are in excess of USD 381 billion while its global imports are in excess of USD 370 billion. Pakistan's exports to Poland were merely USD 345 million while our imports from Poland were around USD 78 million in FY 2022-23, taking the trade volume to USD 423 million.

He said that in the first eight months of the current financial year (July-March) 2023-24, Pakistan's exports to Poland were around 303 million dollars while the imports were around USD 63 million. There is a tremendous potential to take the trade volume to at least USD one billion by making some mutual efforts.

The LCCI President added that Pakistan's exports to Poland are concentrated in Textiles. The other potential areas where Pakistan and Poland can enhance trade ties are Automotive Parts, Surgical Instruments, Pharma-

ceuticals, and Processed Food Items.

He said that the 8th Bilateral Political Consultation (BPC) between Pakistan and Poland took place last year to discuss issues of mutual interest and to enhance the pre-existing bilateral ties. Both countries reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen their cooperation in various sectors including trade, energy, defense, higher education, agriculture, and dairy etc.

Kashif Anwar said, "We are glad to know that Polish Oil and Gas Company (POGC) is playing an active role in the energy sector in Pakistan. Similarly, there is tremendous potential for Pakistan to benefit from the Polish expertise in development of our Tourism sector, skill development of workforce and addressing climate change issues as Pakistan is one of the countries which are facing acute environmental changes."

He mentioned about the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) established by the Government of Pakistan and hoped that the Ambassador would apprise the Polish investors about the investment opportunities in Pakistan.

The LCCI President said that the exchange of Trade Delegations and Single Country Exhibitions can prove to be critical in further enhancing the present trade volume. By utilizing each other's strengths and exploring new avenues for cooperation, both the countries can unlock new opportunities for growth and prosperity for both of our countries.

in Pakistan.

Aramco's acquisition indicates a significant milestone in Pakistan's energy sector, bringing advanced expertise and technology to the fuels retail market. This development is expected to boost competition, elevate service standards, and provide consumers with a broader range of high-quality products.

The acquisition will bring in the much-needed foreign direct investment in Pakistan's energy sector, contributing to economic growth and development.

opportunities.

He asserted that trade with neighboring countries was very important and that there are numerous opportunities to promote bilateral trade between Pakistan and Iran.

company wholly owned by Saudi Aramco, filed the pre-merger application with the CCP. The company specializes in sales, marketing, procurement, logistics, and related services, with a focus on prospecting, exploring, drilling, extracting, processing, manufacturing, refining, and marketing hydrocarbon substances.

GO, the target Pakistani company, is a licensed oil marketing company operating in Pakistan. It is involved in the procurement, storage, sale, and marketing of petroleum

products and lubricants. GO is also a prominent operator of downstream fuels, lubricants, and convenience stores, making it one of Pakistan's largest retail and storage companies.

CCP's merger analysis determined that the acquisition would not result in the acquirers' dominance in the relevant market post-transaction, leading to the authorization of the merger. This decision aligns with CCP's mission to foster competition and ensure a fair business environment

for which we have to make positive efforts. Iran's big investors also want to invest in Pakistan."

During the interactive session with the business community, the envoy also shared the highlights of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi's recent visit to Pakistan and enlightened the Pakistani business community on new trade opportunities. He emphasized that this visit signifies the strong bonds between the two nations and the alignment of their authorities in various aspects.

On this occasion, FPCCI Regional Chairman and Vice President Zaki Ajiaz said that Pakistan and Iran

have great scope for promoting bilateral trade. Regional trade is of great importance, and it needs increased time.

He said that despite Pakistan and Iran's strong ties of friendship and brotherhood, bilateral trade is not up to the potential. The business community is facing transportation, tariff and non-tariff barriers, banking channels, and currency problems, he mentioned.

Zaki Ijaz said that the purpose of the meeting of the Pakistani business community with Pakistan's ambassador to Iran was to promote bilateral trade between Pakistan and Iran and pave the way for new

Pakistan's envoy to Iran visit FPCCI

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran, Muhammad Mudassir Tipu discussed with business community the challenges and opportunities for enhancing bilateral trade between Pakistan and Iran during his visit to the FPCCI (Federation Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry) Regional Office here Monday.

Tipu said the trade bodies of Pakistan and Iran should further strengthen bilateral trade relations. "We are working on institutionalizing barter trade with both countries. Iran is trading with other neighboring countries; trade with Pakistan is also possible,



In brief

MEPCO, LESCO win Kabaddi matches

FAISALABAD (APP): Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO) and Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) have won their matches by defeating their rivals during All Wapda Inter Unit Kabaddi (Asian) Style Tournament played at FESCO Ground, here on Monday. FESCO spokesman said that first match was played between MEPCO and Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) in which MEPCO defeated its rival team with 52-40 points. In second match, LESCO beat the team of Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO) with 49-40 points. Two matches would be played on April 30 (Tuesday). MEPCO would face LESCO in first match while FESCO will fight against GEPCO in second match, he added.

Table Tennis League kicks off

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Talent Hunt Prime Minister Youth Table Tennis League kicked off here at the Rodham hall of Pakistan Sports Complex on Monday. Executive Director National Vocational & Technical Commission (NAVITC) Aamir Jan, who was the chief guest on the occasion said the Talent Hunt Prime Minister Programme gives chance to players in bringing their talent out on the big platform. Players need to work hard and use this platform to showcase their expertise in the game, he said. He said the game of table tennis was very close to him and there is a lot of talent in the country. Winning or losing doesn't matter as players just need to give their best shot in the game, he said. He also lauded the Higher Education Commission (HEC) for supporting the games. The aim of the league is to give opportunities to new players at the national level. Table tennis league will provide an opportunity to bring out new talented players, he said. Jan said the Prime Minister was taking all-out steps for the development of sports in the country. Players from all over the country are participating in the Table Tennis Talent Hunt League organized by HEC. Two teams from each province were featuring in the league including Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Federal-Azad Jammu and Kashmir & Gilgit-Baltistan.

'Gov't committed to promoting hockey'

RAWALPINDI (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Leader, Hanif Abbasi on Monday said the national game hockey was top priority of the government, and efforts were being made to promote sport across the country. In the previous PML-N government's tenure, over 20 hockey stadiums were constructed and astro turfs were laid across the country. This year would see a significant boost in sports promotion, he added. Abbasi expressed these views during a visit to Vigar-un-Nisa Post Graduate College, where he also announced the establishment of a hockey academy. He promised to provide all necessary facilities and coaching to the academy, with the help of Olympian Khawaja Junaid. Abbasi said the PML-N government had always supported sports and athletes, and this initiative was also part of that commitment. Khawaja Junaid, who was also present on the occasion, lauded Abbasi's efforts in constructing hockey grounds across the country and expressed his full support for the hockey academy.

New Zealand skipper Williamson set for sixth T20 World Cup

WELLINGTON (AFP): Captain Kane Williamson will play at his sixth Twenty20 World Cup in June after New Zealand named an experienced 15-man squad Monday.

The tournament, taking in the United States and the West Indies from June 2-30, will be Williamson's fourth as captain. The batsman leads a squad including New Zealand's Test captain Tim Southee, who will be taking part in his seventh T20 World Cup.

Southee, 35, has taken a record 157 T20 interna-

tional wickets and he spearheads the attack alongside seasoned pace bowler Trent Boult, 34, who will be playing in his fifth T20 World Cup.

Seam bowler Matt Henry and batting all-rounder Rachin Ravindra, voted the emerging cricketer of 2023, are the only players in the squad who have not played in a previous T20 World Cup.

"When you go to World Cups, you want experience," said New Zealand head coach Gary Stead. "It's an exciting squad

with lots of options for Kane and I to consider in terms of balance, pitches and surfaces."

Seamers Adam Milne and Kyle Jamieson were both ruled out by injury.

New Zealand squad for T20 World Cup: Kane Williamson (capt), Finn Allen, Trent Boult, Michael Bracewell, Mark Chapman, Devon Conway, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Daryl Mitchell, Jimmy Neesham, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Ish Sodhi, Tim Southee.

Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar win 6th round matches of National Women's One-Day Tournament

FAISALABAD (APP): Karachi, Lahore and Peshawar won their 6th round matches of the National Women's One-Day Tournament held here on Monday.

In the match between Peshawar and Rawalpindi, Sidra Nawaz's unbeaten 80 off 109 balls, which included six four helped Peshawar beat Rawalpindi by two wickets with 16 balls to spare.

Batting first at the Jawad Sports Complex Ground, Rawalpindi managed to score 151 for nine in 50 overs. For Peshawar, Captain Mahnoor Aftab picked three wickets for 18 runs in 10 overs.

In the second match of the day, a half-century by Yusra Amir and seven wickets between left-arm spinners Anosha Nasir and Maham Manzoor led Karachi to a six-wicket win over Quetta at the Bohranwali Ground.

Opting to bat first, Quetta were bowled out for 156 in 49 overs, with Khadija Chishty scoring 50 off 77 balls, which included nine boundaries. Karachi's left-arm spinners Maham and Anosha were the pick of the bowlers, with the former bagging four wickets for 33 and the

latter clinched three scalps for 21 runs from 10 overs.

In reply, wicketkeeper-batter Yusra (64 not out, 92b, 6x4s) helped her side chase down the target with 17 overs to spare.

At the Iqbal Stadium, in a low scoring contest, Lahore overcame Multan by four wickets courtesy of a half century by Iram Javed and three wickets each by Ayesha Bilal and Qurat-ul-Ain.

Batting first, Multan was bundled out for 123 in 39 overs. Opening batter Sadaf Shamas was the only batter to score in double figures and returned undefeated on 81 off 112 balls, hitting 11 fours and a six.

In turn, Lahore achieved the target in the 28th over, losing six wickets in the process. Iram (54, 81b, 5x4s, 2x6s) added 63 runs for the fifth wicket with Noreen Yaqoob (33, 43b, 4x4s) to take her side home.

Scores in brief:
Peshawar beat Rawalpindi by two wickets at Jawad Sports Complex Ground. Rawalpindi 151-9, 50 overs (Aqsa Yousuf 28, Aima Saleem 26, Waheeda Akhtar 22, Fajar Naved 20; Mahnoor Aftab 3-18, Aleena Shah 2-38). Peshawar 152-8, 47.2

overs (Sidra Nawaz 80 not out; Tania Saeed 3-23, Fatima Zahra 2-28).

Player of the match – Sidra Nawaz (Peshawar). Lahore beat Multan by four wickets at Iqbal Stadium.

Multan 123 all out, 39 overs (Sadaf Shamas 81 not out; Qurat-ul-Ain 3-22, Ayesha Bilal 3-23, Zunash Sattar 2-15).

Lahore 124-6, 27.4 overs (Iram Javed 54, Noreen Yaqoob 33, Samiya Afsar 20; Shameer Rajput 2-20). Player of the match – Iram Javed and Noreen Yaqoob (Lahore).

Karachi beat Quetta by six wickets at Bohranwali Ground.

Quetta 156 all out, 49 overs (Khadija Chishty 50; Maham Manzoor 4-33, Anosha Nasir 3-21).

Karachi 158-4, 33 overs (Yusra Amir 64 not out, Omaira Sohail 39; Kinza Wahab 2-20).

Player of the match – Yusra Amir and Maham Manzoor (Karachi).

Wednesday's fixtures:
Quetta Women vs Rawalpindi Women, Jawad Sports Complex Ground; Peshawar Women vs Lahore Women, Iqbal Stadium; Karachi Women vs Multan Women, Bohranwali Ground.

Chief Minister KP to open Inter-Madrasa, Special Games on Tuesday

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur will formally inaugurate the third Inter-Madrasa Games and Games for the Person with Different Abilities here at Hayatabad Sports Complex on Tuesday (April 30).

A total of 800 players will participate in the games and the official inauguration will be made by Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur, Director General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Abdul Nasir Mohmand told media men here. Additional Director General Sports Miss Rashida Ghaznavi Director Sports, Director Sports Miss Nazia Zaki, Director Operation Aziz Ullah Khan, Deputy Director Operation Jamshed Baloch, Director Account Shah Faisal were also present.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Inter-Madrasas and Games for Person with Different Abilities to be organized by Directorate General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will start on Tuesday (April 30) and will continue till May 2. He said, 400 madrasa students from Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Kohat, Peshawar, Mardan, Hazara and Swat regions would participated in cricket, volleyball and football, while 400 Persons with Different Abilities would participate in 34 different Games including Boche, wheelchair cricket, standing cricket, badminton, table tennis, tug-of-war, basketball.

A total prize money of Rs 1 million has been fixed for the Games to be awarded. Director Sports Operations Azizullah and Deputy Director Jamshed Baloch said that on the special instructions of the adviser of the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Sports and Youth Affairs Syed

Fakhar Jahan Games would be organized in befitting manners.

These games are being organized for which Additional Director General Sports Rashida Ghaznavi has been appointed as the Organizing Secretary, Zawar Noor for Person with Different Abilities, Zardad Bulbul for Games for Special Person would be facilitated.

Habibullah for Blind Cricket, Parvez Khan for Madrasa Cricket, Faisal Javed for football and Wasifullah for volleyball have been appointed as organizers. He said that various events will be held at Hayatabad Sports Complex, cricket matches will be held at Islamia College Ground and Board Ground, Persons with different abilities including Visually Impaired, Hearing Impaired and Low-Status Persons would also be organized.

The purpose of the games is to provide positive entertainment and opportunities for students and for persons with Different Abilities to express their talents so that they too can progress, Abdul Nasir Mohmand said. In response to a question, he said that organizing the games will bring out players with the best skills for the provincial and national teams.

He said players have already arrived and among them their TA, DA have been distributed along with different Games equipment, track-suite, and uniform. The players would reach Hayatabad Sports Complex at 2.00 p.m, he added.

Games lists for Persons with Different Abilities:

1. Cricket Wheelchair (Male) Team Game
2. Cricket Wheelchair (Female) Team Game
3. Cricket Standing (Male) Team Game
4. Cricket Visual Impaired

(Male) Team Game
5. Cricket Hearing and Speech (Male) Team Game
6. Cricket Dwarf (Male) Team Game

7. Badminton Standing (Male) Team Game
8. Badminton Wheelchair (Male) Team Game

9. Table Tennis standing (Male) Individual Game
10. Table Tennis Wheelchair (Male) Individual Game

11. Table Tennis Wheelchair (Female) Individual Game
12. Race Wheelchair (100 M) (Male) Individual Game

13. Race Wheelchair (100 M) (Female) Individual Game
14. Race CP 100 M (Male) Individual Game

15. Race Upper Limb (Male) Individual Game
16. Race Dwarf (Male) Individual Game

17. Race Lower General (Male) Individual Game
18. Race Brace lower (Male Open) Individual Game

19. Race Crutched (Male) Individual Game
20. Discus throw Wheelchair (Male) Individual Game

21. Discus throw Standing (Male) Individual Game
22. Javelin Throw wheelchair (Male) Individual Game

23. Javelin Throw Standing (Male) Individual Game
24. Short put wheelchair (Male) Individual Game

25. Short put Standing (Male) Individual Game
26. Archery wheelchair (Female) Individual Game

27. Bocce Game Male Tetra (sever) (Male) Team Game
28. Bocce Game Open for Wheelchair (Female) Team Game

29. Wheelchair Basket Ball (Male) Team Game
30. Wheelchair Tennis (Male) Team Game

31. Tug of War Dwarf (Male) Team Game
32. Musical Chair Game for Dwarf (Male) Individual Game

33. Archery wheelchair (Male) Individual Game
34. Tug of War Standing (Male) Team Game.

Jason Gillespie wants Pakistan Test side to play "their way"

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): The newly-appointed head coach of the Pakistan Men's Test team, Jason Gillespie, said Monday that he would not impose Australia's style of play and instead wants the players to play the style of cricket that suits them.

Gillespie appeared in the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) podcast and talked about various aspects, linked to his appointment as the Pakistan Test coach.

Jason Gillespie was asked whether he would transfer Australia's aggressive style of playing cricket to the Pakistan side, said his philosophy is different;

that is not to try something you are not.

"Look, I simply want the Pakistan cricket team to play the style of cricket that's going to suit them; for me, that's important. My philosophy is – don't try to be something that you're not," said Gillespie.

"You've got to be authentic in how you go about it. I will go out there and say: just be positive, aggressive, entertaining. Play with a smile on your faces and entertain our fans.

"There are going to be times when you have to grind it out, and that's what Test cricket is. It's a test of your skills, mental capacity,

and patience. There are times to attack and times to soak up some periods of cricket from the opposition.

"If we can be as consistent as we can, then hopefully, the scoreboard will look after itself, and we can pick up some wins."

For the unversed, Jason Gillespie's first assignment as the Pakistan Test team's head coach will be the home series against Bangladesh in August, followed by the England series in October and an away series against South Africa in December.

Pakistan currently sit fifth in the World Test Championship (WTC) standings and need to make hard

yards to make it to the final. "Obviously, the ICC World Test Championship 2023-2025 for Pakistan is going to be a challenge; there's no question about that. But, we'll just take each series as it comes.

"The first opportunity that I'll be involved in will be against Bangladesh at home, and I am looking forward to it. We'll just take each series and each Test match as it comes.

"Look, Test cricket is a challenge, there's no doubt about that. But if you prepare well, put your best foot forward, then we'll give ourselves the best chance to have some success."

O'Sullivan beats Day to reach Crucible quarter-finals

SHEFFIELD (Agencies): Seven-time champion Ronnie O'Sullivan moved into the quarter-finals of the World Championship with a comfortable 13-7 win over Ryan Day.

Having led 10-6 overnight, O'Sullivan took three of Monday afternoon's first four frames to seal victory before the planned mid-session interval. 'The Rocket' is aiming for a record-breaking eighth title in the modern era, having drawn level with Stephen Hendry's tally of seven in 2022. He will now face either Jack Lisowski or 2015 winner Stuart Bingham in the last eight.

Meanwhile, Kyren Wilson also advanced with a 13-6 win over debutant Joe O'Connor. Former finalist Wilson also held a 10-6 advantage on the resumption of play and reeled off three frames in a row to set up a meeting with Mark Allen or John Higgins in the next round.

O'Sullivan cruises through

Jackson Page 10-1 in the first round, O'Sullivan continued his serene progress in snooker's blue riband event against Day. "If I'd not been as tight or as clinical in some situations, he would probably have got on more of a roll at times," O'Sullivan told BBC Sport.

"I was pleased to be able to stem that at points and try to have an impact when I got a chance." After establishing a commanding lead in the first two sessions of their best-of-25 contest, against an opponent who has not beaten him for 13 years, O'Sullivan appeared in relaxed mood once play got back under way. And that was underlined as he laughed along with an enthusiastic fan while taking on a shot with the rest in frame 17.

Top Pak athletes to feature in 8th Jiu-Jitsu Asian C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Top national athletes will represent Pakistan in the 8th Jiu-Jitsu Asian Championship, scheduled to run from May 3 to 8 at Mubadala Arena in Zayed Sports City of Abu Dhabi, Pakistan Jiu-Jitsu Federation announced on Monday.

Around 1,500 athletes from over 30 countries will feature in planned mid-session interval. 'The Rocket' is aiming for a record-breaking eighth title in the modern era, having drawn level with Stephen Hendry's tally of seven in 2022. He will now face either Jack Lisowski or 2015 winner Stuart Bingham in the last eight.

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and Examination. Tariq Ali, the General Secretary of Pakistan Jiu-Jitsu Federation will accompany the national team and also represent Pakistan at the General Assembly of the Jiu-Jitsu Asian Union.

The President of the Pakistan Ju-Jitsu Federation has expressed the hope that the national team would demonstrate

standout performance in the championship, building on their success in the 2023 Asian Jiu-Jitsu Championship in Thailand.

He also emphasized the federation's commitment to provide ample opportunities to junior athletes and ensure the best possible training to them with the support of Pakistan Sports Board.

Pakistan's Ashab wins Rochester Proam Squash

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan emerging squash player Muhammad Ashab Irfan has made the country proud by winning the US 9000\$ Rochester Proam Squash Tournament.

He downed Gomez Dominguez of Mexico by 3-1 in the final held at Huston squash club, USA. According to details, after months of hard work and dedication with special support from Houston Squash Club Ashab won his first PSA title as his achievement was even more notable as he is only the second Pakistani player to win a PSA title outside of Pakistan in recent years,

cementing his position as a rising star in the sport.

The second seed and world number 112 from Pakistan looked very energetic and aggressive during the final match of the tournament, Ashab squared off against Gomez Dominguez in a thrilling encounter as young Ashab emerged triumphant with a 3-1 victory, securing the title with set scores of 12-10, 11-4, 9-11, and 11-9 during 60 minutes decisive game.

As the stakes heightened in the semi-final, Ashab Irfan faced a formidable opponent in Ronald Palamino of Columbia.

Despite dropping two sets, Ashab displayed resilience and determination, ultimately prevailing with a hard-fought 3-2 victory. The set scores reflected the intensity of the match, with Irfan claiming victory with scores of 9-11, 11-9, 11-2, 4-11, and 11-4.

Jahanzeb Khan, owner of Houston Squash Club said Ashhab was the second Pakistani player who win the PSA title in abroad is being supported by Houston Squash Club and we were very happy that young squash players are making Pakistan's name outshine at the international level.

LPP, TCA hostS Women's Exhibition Cricket Match



Saqib Mushtaq

LAHORE: Lodhran Pilot Project (LPP) hosted a Women's Exhibition Cricket Match in collaboration with Tareen Cricket Academy (TCA) and Kinnaird College Lahore.

The event was held at Kinnaird College Lahore and marked the unveiling of the trophy for the South Punjab Women's Champions League 2024 and the commencement of the countdown for the T20 World Cup 2024.

Distinguished guests such as US Consulate Counsel Generals (CGs) from Peshawar, Lahore, and Karachi, alongside President LPP and owner of Multan Sultans, Mr. Ali

Khan Tareen, graced the occasion. They emphasized the event's significance in promoting grassroots sports and recognizing the achievements of female athletes in the region.

In an exciting match, the Kinnaird College Lahore team secured victory in the T10 match by 7 wickets, chasing the target in just 8 overs. The Deputy Chief of Mission, Mr. Andrew Schofer, expressed his excitement about witnessing the talented young women cricketers at the event. He remarked, "I am impressed with the talent and passion of these women playing here today." His enthusiasm highlighted the anti-

pation surrounding the T20 World Cup 2024, with the USA hosting its first-ever World Cup.

During the event, Ali Khan Tareen shared, "The unveiling of the trophy for the South Punjab Women's Champions League 2024 symbolized a milestone in promoting women's cricket and recognizing the achievements of female athletes in the region. We are committed to providing full support to girls' cricket and making safe spaces for women, especially in South Punjab."

Dr. Abdul Saboor, CEO of Lodhran Pilot Project, expressed his enthusiasm for the event, stating, "We are thrilled to host this

Women's Exhibition Cricket Match and unveil the trophy for the South Punjab Women's Champions League 2024.

This event not only highlights the talent and dedication of female cricketers but also underscores our commitment to promoting women's empowerment through sports.

LPP extends its heartfelt gratitude to all participants, sponsors, partners, and supporters for their invaluable contributions to making this event a resounding success. We look forward to future endeavors aimed at celebrating women in sports and fostering a culture of inclusivity and excellence.



In brief

Strict action against illegal construction

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Director General (DG), Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA), Kinza Murtaza has directed the authorities concerned to take strict action in accordance with the law against illegal construction. According to an RDA spokesman, the DG while chairing a meeting instructed the MP&TE Directorate of RDA to make all-out efforts to provide relief to the citizens regarding the construction of residential and commercial buildings. She said that strict action should be taken without any discrimination against illegal constructions, encroachments, and commercial activities in residential areas. He said the DG had directed the Estate Management Directorate of RDA to work hard to expedite the process of the property transfer cases. The spokesman said the DG had also given special tasks to the officers concerned to ease traffic flow on the city roads.

IRSA releases 170,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 170,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 258,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1454.91 feet and was 40.91 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 48,800 cusecs and 5,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1148.35 feet, which was 98.35 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 69,400 cusecs and 25,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 82,900, 53,400, 57,200 and 39,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 111,400 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 22,300 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Police arrest four persons

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested four persons involved in fireworks and aerial firing reported during marriage party, police spokesman told here Monday. Police have also recovered weapons from the possession of violators of laws. Dharmyal police conducted raid and apprehended Taimur, Owais, Shahid and Aamir, setting off fireworks during a wedding ceremony. Separate cases have also been registered against them for further investigation. SP Saddar Muhammad Nabil Kokhar appreciated the performance of police team and said that action will continue against such persons who are posing threat to the lives of citizens through aerial firing and fireworks.

5 stolen motorcycles recovered

RAWALPINDI (APP): The police here on Monday arrested two-member gang involved in motorcycle theft and recovered 5 stolen motorcycles from their possession during a crackdown. According to police spokesman, Race Course police conducted raid and held motorbike lifters who were identified as Javed and Zubair and recovered weapons also. The police have registered separate cases against the accused and further investigation was in progress. The SP Potohar commended police team and said that the accused will be presented in the court with solid evidence.



ISLAMABAD: People visiting National Monument during cloudy weather in Federal Capital.

Polio drive in full swing: ICT admin oversees campaign activities

ISLAMABAD (APP): All the Assistant Commissioners of the Federal Capital were actively engaging with polio teams to ensure the success of the seven-day anti-polio drive which started on Monday in ICT. This proactive involvement aligned with the directives from Islamabad's Deputy Commissioner and the Additional Deputy Commissioner East, said the Spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory Administration, Dr Abdullah Tabassum here.

In this regard, the Assistant Commissioners from across the city have visited different locations to oversee the polio teams' activities. At Jinnah Garden, Assistant Commissioner Saddar area, Ms Mehreen joined the morning assembly, where she discussed the day's goals and addressed issues concerning polio vaccination.

She emphasized meeting the targets, addressing "not available" (NA) cases, and handling refusals to ensure maximum coverage. Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioner Nellore area, Uzir Ahmad participated in the morning briefing at I-8 area. During this session, he reviewed the first day's planning and addressed any complaints or concerns related to the polio campaign. Similarly, in the Industrial Area, Assistant Commissioner, Farwa Batool checked in on the polio teams at UCG-15, issuing additional guidance to enhance their operations. This focused approach aimed at streamlining the vaccination process and solve any logistical issues. Furthermore, Assistant Commissioner, Shalimar area attended the morning assembly and provided feedback on reaching out to

those unavailable for vaccination and managing refusals. Dr Abdullah said these efforts were part of a coordinated approach to ensure that the polio vaccination campaign runs smoothly and covers as much ground as possible. It is important to note that these visits were part of a broader initiative to maintain close supervision of the anti-polio campaign. On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon said the polio campaign was a critical public health effort to eradicate the crippling disease, and the involvement of the Assistant Commissioners was a key factor in its success. By monitoring the progress, addressing challenges, and ensuring efficient operations, ICT administration aimed at to make this anti-polio drive effective and comprehensive.

MoCC&EC, HEC mull over climate change inclusion into national curriculum: Romina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Coordinator for Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam on Monday said the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination was mulling over inclusion of climate change as part of the national curriculum with the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) to start climate awareness at the grassroots level. Prime Minister's Coordinator expressed these views at the launching ceremony of Pakistan's Roadmap on Plastics.

She said the nation must cope with climate change together as it had to learn from each other's experiences. Romina Khurshid said she has demonstrated zero tolerance on the use of

single-use plastics and strictly adhered to the avoidance of drinking water in plastic bottles. "Aquatic life is also in trouble because of plastics that demands urgent action and responsibility of all as individuals towards shunning the one-time use plastics," she said. The Minister underscored that Pakistan is among the 175 countries of the UN which have signed the agreement to eliminate plastic pollution. "Pakistan is the first country in South Asia to launch the "National Plastics Action Partnership" programme of the World Economic Forum," she said. The climate change is not limited to national borders, and it needed to be resolved beyond politics, Romina noted. "The society will have to take actions unitedly for

addressing adverse impacts of climate change on a formal war footing basis. However, by organizing seminars in five-star hotels can be a waste of money and not a solution to the problem," the Minister noted. Addressing climate change was ne of the Prime Minister's priorities, and therefore under the leadership of the Prime Minister, a committee was being formed including the provinces of Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan to take up serious interventions," she said. She said the exacerbating onslaught of climate catastrophes has gripped other regions as well as there are floods in Asia and droughts in Africa, whereas solution to all these problems has to be done on a now or never basis.

AKUH's Global Recognition Pakistan's healthcare excellence in limelight

ISLAMABAD (APP): In the latest Brand Finance 2024 Global Top 250 Hospitals report, Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH), Karachi, has been listed in the top 100 Academic Medical Centres (AMCs) worldwide. AKUH is the first and only hospital from Pakistan making to the top 100 on this list. Meanwhile, four other hospitals from Pakistan, Mayo Hospital, Jinnah Hospital, Combined Military Hospital and University Dental Hospital have scored spots in the 101-250 rank list. Three Indian hospitals are also in the top 100, while one is in the 101-250 list. According to Joint Commission International (JCI), the world's leading hospital accreditation body considered the gold standard in healthcare quality, an "Academic Medical Centre is a tertiary care hospital that is organizationally and administratively integrated with a medical school." It is important to note that the Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi, is the only JCI-accredited academic medical centre in Pakistan. Aga Khan University Hospital has an almost 40-year tradition of serving the community of Karachi and wider Pakistan with the highest standards of care. AKUH has a strong tradition of quality. It was the

first hospital in Pakistan to get ISO certification in 2000, the first to get JCI accreditation in 2006, the first to get JCI accreditation as an AMC in 2015 and the first to get CAP accreditation in 2017. This latest recognition underscores AKUH's commitment to exemplary patient care, teaching standards, ground-breaking research, and extensive community service initiatives, not only within Pakistan but also reaching beyond its borders. Renowned for its state-of-the-art infrastructure, cutting-edge equipment, and a team of highly skilled medical professionals, AKUH stands out as a beacon of innovation and excellence in Karachi's healthcare landscape. Brand Finance, the company behind these global rankings, is a chartered accountancy firm that was set up in England in 1996 with the goal to bring marketing and finance together. The quoted report is the second time Brand Finance has listed the Academic Medical Centres, globally. This year, the top two global AMCs are the world-renowned US hospitals, Mayo Clinic and Massachusetts General Hospital, with India's AIIMS in the third spot and Singapore's Singapore General Hospital in the fourth spot.

'Theatre Wallay' to organize classes from May 5

ISLAMABAD (APP): Theatre Wallay (TW) would organize a 12-week long "acting classes" for students with age 16 plus from May 5, 2024 here in the federal capital. The training will focus on preparing an actor for theatre performance include building an actor's physical stamina, breathing, and control over his/her voice, dialogue delivery, understanding character, scene analysis, basic acting techniques, and an understanding of acting for cameras, said a statement issued here. The last date for the registration of training classes is April 30, 2024.

Theatre Wallay is a non-commercial group of artists with a passion for theatre and literature. Active in Islamabad since 2005, Theatre Wallay has put up many performances of plays hailing from world literature. The group is also involved in 'Theatre for Social Change' projects and works to promote the use of creative expression as a tool for empowerment and critical dialogue. Theatre Wallay also organizing street theatre performances on various social issues across Pakistan with different local and national languages being used in this country.

First ever-literature based museum, likely to be inaugurated soon

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) has started work on procuring manuscripts and other essential items for the country's first-ever literature-based museum of Pakistani languages being established here at academy. Chairperson PAL, Dr Najiba Arif told APP that the establishment of Literary Museum aimed to protect and promote the unique literary asset of all the regional languages of the country. Besides preservation and promotion of the unique linguistic taste of Pakistani culture and linguistics, this museum will provide an opportunity for the visitors to seek information about scripts, history, alphabetical information, folk tales and prominent literature of the regional languages of Pakistan, she added. Dr Najiba Arif said that the museum would provide information about all the regional languages being spoken in the length and breadth of the country in form of scripts, booklets, audios and video documentary display.

Backward areas uplift among govt top priorities: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Communications Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said on Monday that the government's top priority is the welfare of the masses, and it is using huge funds to reduce poverty and unemployment and uplift backward areas of the country. Talking to a private news channel, he said that the government's working on upgrading communication, education, and health sectors and generating new economic activities. The minister said that the government is focused on long-term development projects that will benefit the country's economy. "This government is sensitive to the aspirations of every section of society, say-

ing that cutting-edge communication systems will also become more attractive for both domestic and foreign investments. Replying to a question, he stressed the need for responsible governance that would not only ensure stability but also embrace reform and adapt to changing external environments. He said that a strong infrastructure was necessary to achieve the task of development in any country in the world, and it was the reason that the federal government was focusing on road connectivity and enhancing power generation capacity. He said that the government are also working on to produce skilled manpower in order to achieve the required tasks of development in all four provinces.

Price Magistrates conducting raids to check prices of Roti Naan: DC

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Price Magistrates are conducting raids to check prices of 'Roti and Naan', said Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi, Hasan Waqar Cheema. He said that on the instructions of Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the price of 100 grams of Roti was fixed Rs 16, while the price of 120 grams of Naan was fixed Rs 20. He said that the government was taking all possible measures to ensure implementation of the fixed prices of 'Roti and Naan'. Hasan Waqar Cheema said strict action would be taken against profiteers, selling 'Roti and Naan' at higher prices than the prescribed rates.

The DC said, objective of the administration was to ensure implementation of fixed prices of 'Naan and Roti'. After the reduction in flour prices, the rates of 'Naan and Roti' were reduced, he added. Hasan Waqar Cheema said that the benefit of the reduction in flour prices would be passed on to the people in any case. The DC informed that 335 tandoors were checked during last 24 hours in Rawalpindi and 268 were selling 'Naan and Roti' at the new rates. A fine amounting to Rs 223,000 were imposed on 67 tandoors which were selling 'Roti and Naan' at a price higher than the fixed price, he said adding, 15 tandoors were sealed.

NADRA 'doorstep service' bringing improvement in CNIC issuance system

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) "doorstep service" is not only bringing improvement in the CNIC issuance system but also simplifies the process. The differently-abled citizens can get their digital IDs without much disturbance through doorstep services, said an official of NADRA here Monday. Talking to APP Muhammad Shakeel, said that effort highlights NADRA's commitment to inclusion and its strong dedication to providing CNICs at people's doorsteps particularly those who have some physical issues or disability. The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) official, while giving a briefing to the press, said that the initiative is focusing on NADRA's objective of empowering people with disabilities. He highlighted how the community will be a great beneficiary of this service, ensuring the accessibility and diversity. He further said that the objective was first implemented in 2009, adding that Special CNIC services has long been recognized as an important tool in Pakistan to close the gap and guarantee the rights and

benefits of PWDs. NADRA's dedication to inclusivity and empowerment is verified by the Special Helpline 1777, created to act as a centralized support hub and offer comprehensive assistance and guidance on NADRA's identification services, including the home-based CNIC issuing process. He added that through this programme, NADRA officers personally visit homes where they verify documents, capture biometric data, and finally issue CNICs, for ensuring equality in obtaining a key identification document for the disabled population. He underscored that it is important to dismantle barriers to accessing essential services. The CNIC offers opportunities ranging from multiple operations like job quotas, discounts on utilities, consumable and transportation. However, due to their transportation issues or other physical constraints, many PWDs found it impossible to avail NADRA services even with a special CNIC. Due to this problem, NADRA tried an exempted CNIC option to provide PWD residents directly through its door-to-door service programme, he added.

International Photo Competition "Save the Earth" announced

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Science Museum (NSM), Thailand has announced the International Photo Competition for the Future themed "Save the Earth, Save Us All" for the enthusiastic nature photographers. According to the ECO Science Foundation, the 2024 International Photo Competition for the Future will be displayed at the National Science and

Technology Fair 2024 (NST Fair 2024), scheduled to be held from August 16-25. The proposal submissions are open for selection and joint presentations in two categories including Reportage Photo and Campaign Photo while the deadline of submission of the photos is June 20. The photos can be submitted through the web link: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSecD6Ev5>

zamDOKUVA0LXtm7zPJD Fg9n9LnvX_NkZiXYZd Bw/viewform The schedule of the competition include nomination of judges: June 05-20, judging period: June 21-July 05, announcement of award winners: July 06, via the Facebook page NSM Thailand, awards ceremony: during National Science and Technology Fair 2024 (NST Fair 2024) in Thailand.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of UAE to Pakistan H.E. Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja.



ISLAMABAD: Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan, Syed Mehdi Shah and Chief Minister of GB, Gul Bar Khan, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

‘We will protect your freedom,’ Canada PM tells Sikhs

TORONTO: Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has assured nearly a million Canadians of Sikh heritage that his government will always be there to protect their rights and freedom, as tens of thousands raised slogans in support of Khalistan before the former on the occasion of Khalsa Day in Toronto.

In the videos released by Sikh groups, chants of “Khalistan Zindabad” and tribute to “Shaheed Hardeep Singh Nijjar” can be heard during the speech of PM Trudeau who looked on whilst a charged congregation of Sikhs raised slogans. Pro-Khalistan slogans were also raised in the presence of opposition leader Pierre Poilievre, Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow and prominent Canadian Sikh leader Jagmeet Singh, chief of the New Democratic Party. All of them spoke to the Sikh crowd.

Trudeau told the crowd: “The story of the Sikh community in Canada is, in fact, the story of Canada...To the nearly 800 thousand Canadians of Sikh heritage across this country, we will always be there to protect your rights and your freedom, and we will always defend your community against hatred and discrimination.” The Canadian PM also said the country is enhancing the security and infrastructure programmes by “adding more security at community centres and places of worship, including Gurdwaras.”

“Your right to practice your religion freely, and without intimidation is exactly that. A fundamental right guaranteed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that we will always stand up and defend you for,” Trudeau assured the Sikh community in his Khalsa Day address in reference to the attacks Canadian Sikhs from the Indian govt. He said, “Vaisakhi brings together friends and family. I know that many of you have loved ones who you want to see more often. That’s why, our government has negotiated a new agreement with India to add more flights and more routes between our countries. And we will keep working with our counterparts to add even more flights, including to Amritsar.”

Thousands of Sikhs reached Toronto on Sunday for one of the

biggest yearly gatherings in the city. Vaisakhi, which is also called Khalsa Day, celebrates the founding of the Sikh community in 1699. It is also the Sikh New Year. Trudeau’s remarks come at a time when the diplomatic relations between India and Canada are on the rocks after the assassination of Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) and Khalistan Referendum’s Canadian head Hardeep Singh Nijjar by the Indian state agents last year and an unsuccessful attempt on the life of Gurbatwant Singh Pannun, the SFJ founder who is both Canadian and American national. Nijjar was killed as he came out of a Gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia, on the evening of June 18, 2023.

Trudeau on September 18, 2023, told the Canadian House of Commons that Canadian security agencies had been actively pursuing “credible allegations of a potential link” between agents of the Government of India and the killing of Nijjar. The PM has been consistent in his condemnation of Indian-sponsored terrorism, mainly on Canadian soil. The Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) says it is clear Nijjar was killed by the Indian govt for running the successful Khalistan Referendum campaign in various Canadian states, attended by tens of thousands of Sikhs in a huge show of opposition to India and for the creating of Khalistan.

In November last year, the United States (US) authorities thwarted an Indian conspiracy to assassinate a pro-Khalistan leader of Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) Mr Gurbatwant Singh Pannun on American soil and issued a warning to India’s government over concerns it was involved in the plot. The US federal prosecutors have filed a sealed indictment against at least one perpetrator of the plot in a New York district court. Washington shared details of the Pannun case with a wider group of allies after Trudeau went public with details of the Vancouver killing, the combination of which sparked concern among allies about a possible pattern of behaviour.

US Ambassador to Canada David Cohen also said in September that Ottawa received information about the Vancouver case of Nijjar from the

intelligence-sharing network “Five Eyes”, which comprises the US, United Kingdom (UK), Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The Khalistan Referendum voting campaign is being organised under the supervision of the independent Punjab Referendum Commission (PRC).

The voting started on October 31, 2021, from London — UK and have so far been held in several cities across Britain, Geneva Switzerland, Rome and Milan (Italy), Australian cities of Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney; and Canadian cities of Brampton, Mississauga, Malton (Ontario), Vancouver (British Columbia) and two states of the US. The Indian Ministry of External Affairs expressed outrage over the event and summoned the Canadian Deputy High Commissioner to protest against the pro-Khalistan slogans raised in the event which was addressed by the Canadian premier.

A statement issued by the Indian ministry termed the development an illustration of “political space” given in Canada to “separatism, extremism and violence”. It further stated that such expressions would impact the bilateral ties between both countries.

Pannun, central leader of SFJ, wrote on X that pro-Khalistan Sikhs demanded the prosecution of Indian High Commissioner Sanjay Verma for orchestrating Nijjar’s assassination during Trudeau’s speech. He added the SFJ activists displayed the “Wanted” banner of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the “Face of Shaheed Nijjar’s Killer” and raised “Khalistan Zindabad” slogans.

Trudeau’s address is reassuring that “Pro Khalistan Sikhs Right To Campaign For Liberation of Punjab From Indian Occupation is protected under Canadian Charter of Rights and the Liberal Government will always stand with the Canadian Sikhs”, the post read. SFJ will continue Phase III of Khalistan Referendum Voting in Calgary AB on 28th July 2024. Khalistan Referendum Phase III is dedicated to Shaheed Hardeep Singh Nijjar and Canadian Sikhs who attained martyrdom during the 1990s armed struggle for the creation of Khalistan, it concluded. — Agencies

Blinken ‘hopeful’ of Gaza ceasefire deal

‘ Hamas must accept truce deal: UK foreign secretary

RIYADH: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said he is hopeful Hamas will accept an “extraordinarily generous” ceasefire offer to stop Israel’s devastating Gaza offensive in return for the release of hostages.

“Hamas must decide, and decide quickly, whether to accept the extraordinarily generous offer for a ceasefire. I am hopeful they would make the right decision, and we can make a fundamental change in the dynamics,” the US official told a World Economic Forum panel in Riyadh. A high-level Egyptian delegation flew in to Israel for talks last Friday amid a new diplomatic push for a truce in the six-month hostilities and the release of Israeli hostages held by the Palestinian militants.

The conflict in Gaza, which began following the Hamas-led assault on southern Israel on Oct. 7 last year, has resulted in the deaths of almost 35,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and reduced 75 percent of the besieged enclave into rubble according to authorities there. “We are working with partners trying to bring the conflict to an end, trying to ensure it does not spread and all of it is a collective effort. The quickest way to bring the Gaza conflict to an end is to get to a ceasefire and the release of hostages,” Blinken said, as he thanked Egypt and Qatar for their instrumental role in pushing for a truce and the release of hostages.

Blinken also reiterated US opposition to an impending Israeli military operation in Gaza’s southernmost city of Rafah in the absence of a plan to ensure civilians will not be harmed. “We have not yet seen a plan that gives us confidence that civilians

can be effectively protected,” Blinken said. Israel has for weeks threatened to launch an all-out offensive in Gaza to destroy Hamas’s remaining forces.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who spoke during a WEF panel a day earlier, said the US “was the only country capable” of preventing Israel’s long-feared invasion of Rafah, where more than 1.5 million Palestinians are currently living. Only a “small strike” on Rafah would force the Palestinian population to flee the Gaza Strip, and the “biggest catastrophe in the Palestinian people’s history would then happen,” Abbas said.

Blinken said there was a “need to be ready for a day-after plan for Gaza to include what is to be done about security, governance and administration and humanitarian and reconstruction needs. “A lot of work has been done on that, more work needs to be done,” he said. Blinken also said that the “single biggest rebuke to both Iran and Hamas would be Israel having normal relations with every country in the region and the realization of the Palestinian state.” The US and Saudi Arabia have done intense work together over the past months to focus on the Saudi-Israeli normalization agreement. — Arab News

10 killed in KP rain-related incidents

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Heavy rains in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) have resulted in the death of 10 people over the past two days, according to a report released by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA). The report revealed that 14 people were also injured in rain-related incidents. The injuries sustained vary in severity, with casualties reported from different districts including Bajaur, Battagram, Mansehra, Buner, Upper, and Lower Dir.

Moreover, a total of 56 houses suffered damage from collapsing walls, roofs, and lightning strikes. However, despite the challenges posed by the adverse weather conditions, all highways and link roads across the province remain accessible to traffic of all kinds.

Earlier, the Met Office predicted more rainfall in various districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the next 24 hours, with a possibility of heavy showers in some areas. According to the Met Office, Peshawar, Mardan, Charsadda, Nowshera, and Swabi are expected to receive rainfall, while Abbottabad, Kohistan, Haripur, and other cities may also experience light to moderate rain.

There is also a possibility of hailstorms in some areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Met Office warned. The department has also alerted relevant authorities about the possibility of landsliding and flooding in nullahs (streams) due to heavy rainfall. PDMA’s Emergency Operation Center is fully functional, so people should report any untoward incident to 1700.

K-Electric apply for hike in power tariff

E.P. Report

KARACHI: K-Electric has sought a Rs18.86 per unit hike in the power tariff on account of monthly Fuel Charges Adjustments (FCA) of seven months.

According to a report on Monday, in an application to the National Electric Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), KE requested for an increase in the power tariff for Karachi consumers by Rs18.86 per unit for seven months (July 2023 to March 2024).

The sole power provider of the port city has requested to lower the power tariff for two months by Rs0.29 per unit. The NEPRA will conduct a hearing on the K-Electric application on May 9. In a separate development on Saturday, it emerged that the federal government has finalised a plan to privatize profit-making power distribution companies (Discos).

Sources in the power division told media that the Shehbaz-led coalition government has finalised the plan to privatize five profit-making power companies. The power companies include Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO), Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO), and Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO). The government has decided to constitute new board for power companies, they say, adding that the privatization ministry has sent a summary to the cabinet regarding the formation of a high-powered 12-member board for Discos privatization.

Dozens of wheat growers held in Punjab

E.P. Report

LAHORE: Farmers will begin protest outside the Punjab Assembly against the government failure to procure wheat at 2pm on Monday.

As the Kissan Ittehad Pakistan announced its plan to launch a protest drive, the Punjab government has devised a plan to stop farmers from reaching the provincial capital. It is reported that heavy contingents of police have been deployed on the motorway and roads leading into Lahore, who have arrested a number of farmers. Kissan Ittehad Pakistan General Secretary Mian Umair confirmed that the government had blocked the interchanges of the motorways.

Audio leaks case IHC throws out FIA, PTA, Pemra’s recusal pleas

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court Monday fined three government departments Rs500,000 each while dismissing their petitions regarding the bench hearing the audio leaks case.

The court also hinted that contempt of court proceedings may also be initiated against the authorities of the said departments which include Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). The separate petitions were filed by the three aforementioned departments as well as the Intelligence Bureau, whose Joint Director General Tariq Mehmood has been summoned by the court on the next hearing of the case.

At least four government departments filed separate applications with the IHC in the audio leaks case to request that the matter be placed before the same bench of the court that has already decided a similar issue. The applicants said that the petitions of Bushra Bibi, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Imran Khan’s wife, and former chief justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar’s son Najamul Saqib should also be placed before the bench that had decided an identical matter in 2021, requesting recusal of Justice Babar Sattar to avoid any differing decision.

Justice Sattar had been hearing the aforementioned petitions after the matter surfaced in 2023. In the case being heard by Justice Sattar, the government departments argued in the pleas, that an identical matter was previously decided by Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani in 2021. Therefore, they requested the judge’s recusal in the case to avoid a conflicting decision as well as in the interest of justice.

The departments are seeking Justice Sattar’s recusal after a letter by six IHC judges, which also includes him, was written to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC), complaining about the interference of intelligence agencies in the court’s decision. The judges, on March 25, demanded to convene the judicial convention to con-

sider the matter of alleged interference of intelligence operatives in the judicial functions or “intimidation” of judges in a manner that undermined the independence of the judiciary.

Justice Sattar told Dogal that the purpose of filing miscellaneous pleas to transfer the case to another court is to embarrass the judicial proceedings. “If the executive threatens the judges and judges starts contempt of court proceedings against them, how is it a conflict of interest?” he asked, adding whether the judge will conduct contempt of court proceedings for personal gain.

Justice Sattar questioned if the court should ignore all the cases related to IB and FIA in that case. “If your argument is accepted, then no case should be heard against the government,” he remarked. Later during the hearing, the veteran lawyer and judicial assistant Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan said he is happy that the judiciary had decided to take a stand saying “enough is enough”.

He also insisted that the judiciary should have taken a stand even during the delay in elections. “There is still time for us to stand up and put our house in order. I believe in the supremacy of Parliament and the supremacy of the Constitution,” he said. When, during the hearing, the senior lawyer referred to the case against the trial of civilians in military courts in the Supreme Court, the court barred him from doing so.

Ahsan also mentioned the audios of Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz and Asif Zardari surfacing in the past. “This is a matter of public interest and FIA should take action on its own,” the lawyer said. According to the Benazir Bhutto case, Justice Sattar remarked that spying on anyone is “illegal”. The judge further questioned: “Can this court just give a declaration and the federation continues to violate it? What will happen if a plea comes tomorrow and the federation says we haven’t done it?” The court then sought assistance on the aforementioned point at the next hearing, stating that the hearing’s next date will be mentioned in the written order.

Israel kills 30 Palestinians in Rafah

CAIRO (Reuters): Israeli airstrikes on three houses in the southern Gaza city of Rafah killed at least 25 Palestinians and wounded many others, medics said on Monday, as leaders of Hamas arrived in Cairo for a new round of talks with Egyptian and Qatari mediators.

In Gaza City, in the north of the Gaza Strip, Israeli warplanes struck two houses, killing at least four people and wounding several people, health officials said. The strike on the other house killed two brothers, they added. The strikes on Rafah, where more than one million people have sought refuge from months of Israeli bombardment, took place hours before Egypt was expected to host leaders of the Islamist group Hamas to discuss prospects for a ceasefire agreement with Israel.

The Israeli military said it was checking the reports. Speaking on Monday at a World Economic Forum

meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said Egypt was hopeful about a proposal for a truce and the release of hostages in the Gaza Strip but it was waiting for a response on the plan from Israel and Hamas.

“We are hopeful the proposal has taken into account the positions of both sides, and we are waiting to have a final decision,” Shoukry said. Asked about the new round of talks in Cairo, a Palestinian official close to mediation effort told Reuters: “Things look better this time,” but he declined to say whether an agreement was imminent.

Israel has vowed to eradicate Hamas, which controls Gaza. Its six-month-long military operation has now killed 34,488

Palestinians, 34 of them in the past 24 hours, and wounded 77,643, according to Gaza’s health authorities.

The war has displaced most of the 2.3 million population and laid much of the enclave to waste. The conflict was triggered by an attack by Hamas militants on Israel on Oct. 7 in which they killed 1,200 people and took 253 hostage, according to Israeli tallies.

An assault on Rafah, which Israel says is the last Hamas stronghold in the Gaza Strip, has been anticipated for weeks but foreign governments and the United Nations have expressed concern that such action could result in a humanitarian disaster given the number of displaced people crammed into the area. On Sunday, Hamas officials said a delegation led by Khalil Al-Hayya, the group’s deputy Gaza chief, would discuss a ceasefire proposal handed by Hamas to mediators from Qatar and Egypt, as well as Israel’s response. Mediators, backed by the United States, have stepped up their efforts to conclude a deal.

Four terrorists gunned down in Tank operation

E.P. Report

TANK: Security forces personnel gunned down four terrorists during an operation in District Tank of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to a statement issued by the military’s media wing Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Monday, the security forces launched the operation after receiving information about present of the terrorists in the area.

The security forces cordoned off the area and launched a swift action

which resulted into the death of four terrorists. According to the ISPR, the slain terrorists were involved in a number of attacks against security forces and civilians.

It may be mentioned here that a sessions judge, Shakirullah Marwat, was abducted while travelling from Tank to DI Khan on Sunday but he was recovered from North Waziristan district during the night. The judge was heading from Tank to DI Khan when unidentified gunmen abducted him. The kidnappers made the judge step out of his vehicle and took him away. They left behind his security guard and driver, but set his vehicle on fire.

Later, a video surfaced showing the judge claiming that the Taliban had abducted him. In the footage, he made an appeal to the authorities concerned to fulfill the demands of his abductors. The Peshawar High Court took notice and summoned authorities concerned to secure the release of the judge at the earliest.

Karakoram Highway closed

E.P. Report

GILGIT: The Kohistan-Gilgit section of the Karakoram Highway has been closed off due to severe landslides triggered by recent heavy rains. Due to the recent rains, debris from the landslide is still present on the road at the Doga bridge near Barsin. The closure, which has been in effect since

Sunday, has disrupted land connectivity between Gilgit and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, affecting travel and trade in the region. Efforts to reopen the highway have been hampered by the presence

of mountain debris on the road. Despite machinery being dispatched to the site, clearance work has been delayed pending favourable weather conditions. The spokesman for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa tourism authority has assured that once the weather clears, efforts to clear the debris and reopen the highway will commence promptly.

He said the authority had issued an alert to tourists last night. Hundreds of travellers are stranded in various areas of Kohistan and Diamer. The work for the rehabilitation of the Karakoram Highway could not be started till now.

Furthermore, a spokesman for the National Highway Authority has said that in view of the heavy rains, there are risks of landslides at several places on the Karakoram Highway. A clearing operation is underway wherever possible, he said, adding that due to adverse weather conditions, they have encountered difficulties in removing the debris.

The NHA further cautioned the public against travelling on Karakoram Highway. The NHA, FWO and local administrations are working hard to clear the roads, the spokesman said.