

ATC grants bail to Zartaj

GUJRANWALA (INP): PTI leader Zartaj Gul was granted interim bail by An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Wednesday in a case pertaining to vandalism and riots at Gujranwala Cantt on May 9. According to details, Zartaj Gul appeared before the ATC and requested the court to grant her bail. The ATC judge approved the interim bail plea of PTI leader till April 18, directing her to cooperate with the investigators.



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# President lauds army's role in safeguarding country

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M) Wednesday called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at the Presidency and apprised him about the ongoing Army operations against terrorism highlighting the operational preparedness against conventional threats.

In the meeting, the COAS extended felicitations on his appointment as the President of Pakistan and Commander in Chief of Armed Forces and conveyed his sincere wishes for a successful tenure, a press release issued by the President House said.

The COAS also intimated about the contributions of the Army towards development initiatives, particularly in the regions of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The president acknowledged the exemplary role of the Armed Forces of Pakistan, affirming that the Army's contributions have been instrumental in safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state.

He commended the Army's efforts

towards social uplift of the affected areas, underscoring the unwavering commitment of the Pakistan Army to national progress. The president emphasised Pakistan's steadfast commitment against terrorism and reaffirmed the nation's resolve to respond with full force through all elements of national power.

He noted with grave concern the baseless and unsubstantiated allegations levelled by a specific political party and its few individuals against the institution and its leadership to accrue narrow political interests and resolved to deal with such disruptive elements with iron hand. The president paid homage to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the nation, emphasizing that their blood will forever symbolize the resilience and strength of the Pakistani nation.

He reiterated the nation's unwavering commitment to honouring the sacrifices of the Shuhadas and their families, holding them in the highest esteem. The meeting concluded on a note of solidarity and determination to uphold the values of peace, security, and progress in Pakistan.

Meanwhile, the President Asif Ali Zardari urged Pakistan's High Commissioner to Singapore to work for the promotion of bilateral trade and business linkages with Singaporean businesses, besides encouraging them to benefit from Pakistan's investment-friendly policies.

Talking to Pakistan's newly-appointed High Commissioner, Rabia Shafiq, who called on him, the President highlighted the need to explore opportunities for the export of Pakistani food and agricultural products to Singapore. He added that Pakistan could become a steady source of food supplies for Singapore by exporting processed food items, such as poultry, meat, seafood etc.

He also emphasized the need for exploring avenues to export Pakistani manpower to Singapore and work for the enhancement of bilateral cooperation in the areas of Information Technology and agriculture. The president congratulated Rabia Shafiq on her appointment as Pakistan's High Commissioner and wished her a productive and professional successful tenure in Singapore.



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff, General Asim Munir, called on President Dr. Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## CJP among 3 SC judges also receive letters

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, along with three other judges of the Supreme Court, received threatening letters on Wednesday. It is said that Justice Athar Minallah, Justice Jamal Mandokhail, and Justice Aminuddin received the letters, all of which were received in the Supreme Court on April 1.

According to sources, all four letters contained powder and were in threatening forms, and they have been referred to the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD). Earlier, four judges of the Lahore High Court (LHC) received threatening letters days after Islamabad High Court got similar post.

## PM for joint efforts to boost Pak-France ties

— stresses upon new initiatives to attract top talent

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday stressed the need for working together to enhance cooperation between Pakistan and France, particularly in the areas of trade and investment.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Ambassador of France in Islamabad Nicolas Galey who paid a courtesy call on him, invited the French companies to invest in Pakistan. He welcomed the initiative of the French side to bring corporate leaders from top French companies on a visit to Pakistan soon.

The prime minister, who was accompanied by Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, and SAPM Tariq Fatemi, also shared that stabilization of the economy was on top of the government's agenda. The ambassador handed over a congratulatory letter from French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal, addressed to Prime Minister Shehbaz on his re-election.

The prime minister thanked the French leadership for the message of greetings. He said that Pakistan enjoyed friendly and cordial ties with France and, although the relationship had undergone a difficult phase a few years ago, the two countries were now working together to further strengthen bilateral cooperation.

Prime Minister Shehbaz fondly recalled his numerous interactions with French President Emmanuel Macron, in particular their meetings on the sidelines of UNGA Session in 2022, as well as on the margins of the Paris Conference on New Financing Pact on Climate Change in June 2023. He also lauded President Macron's valuable contribution through virtual participation at the Geneva Conference on Resilient Pakistan in January 2023.

The prime minister reiterated his invitation to President Macron to undertake an official visit to Pakistan, at his earliest convenience.

## CJP says judiciary will not yield to any pressure

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa on Wednesday said that an "attack of any kind" on the judiciary's independence would not be tolerated.

He made the remarks as the Supreme Court took up a suo motu case pertaining to allegations made by six

Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges regarding interference by the country's security apparatus in the judicial affairs

A seven-member bench — comprising Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa and justices Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Yahya Afridi, Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Athar Minallah, Musarrat Hilali and Naeem

Akhtar Afghan — is presiding over the hearing. The proceedings are being live-streamed on the SC's website and its YouTube channel.

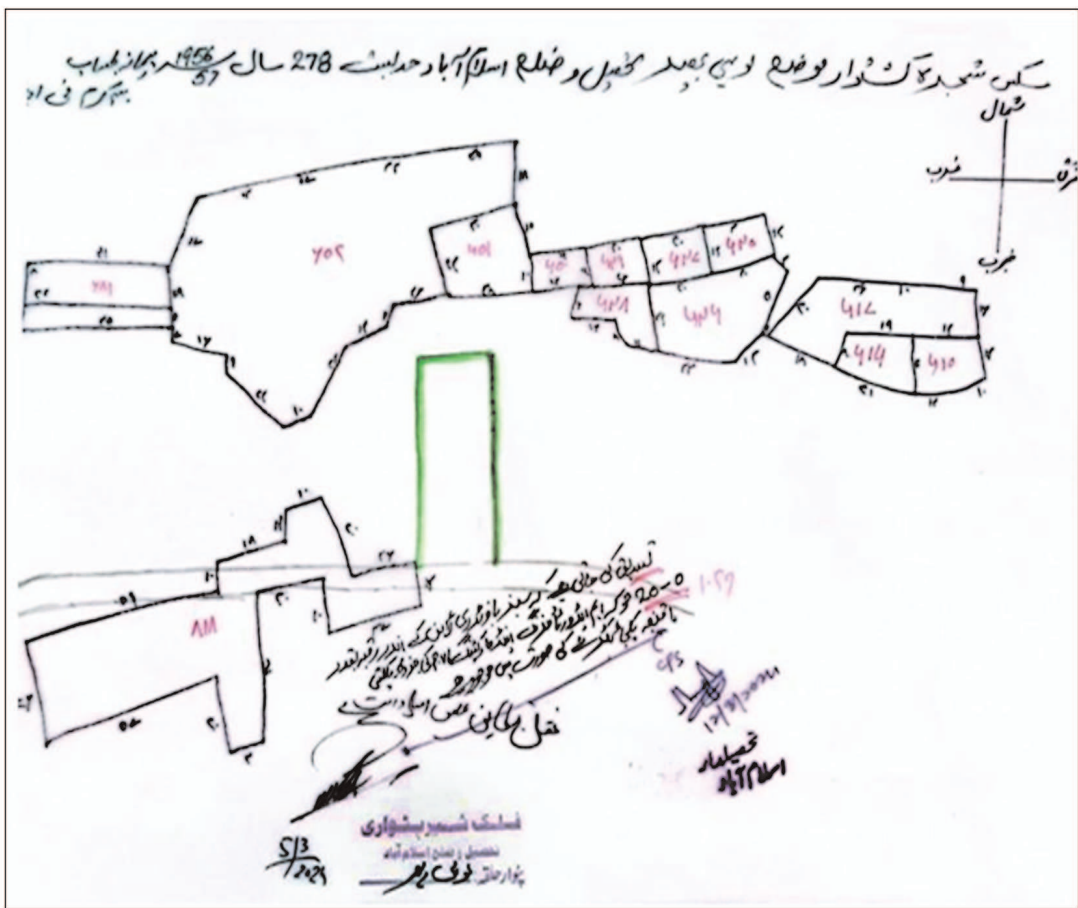
Last week, it emerged that six Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges — out of a total strength of eight — wrote a startling letter to the Supreme

(Continued on Back Page)

## CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

### PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified for information of general public that M/s Aim Advertising and Marketing Private Limited is proposing to sponsor a Standalone commercial project namely Islamabad Downtown Executive-12 on the land comprising 20 Kanal on Khewat No.531, Khatooni No.1019, Khasra No.2154/1029,2155/1029 in Mouza Lohi Bher, Zone V Islamabad as shown in this Aks Shajra.



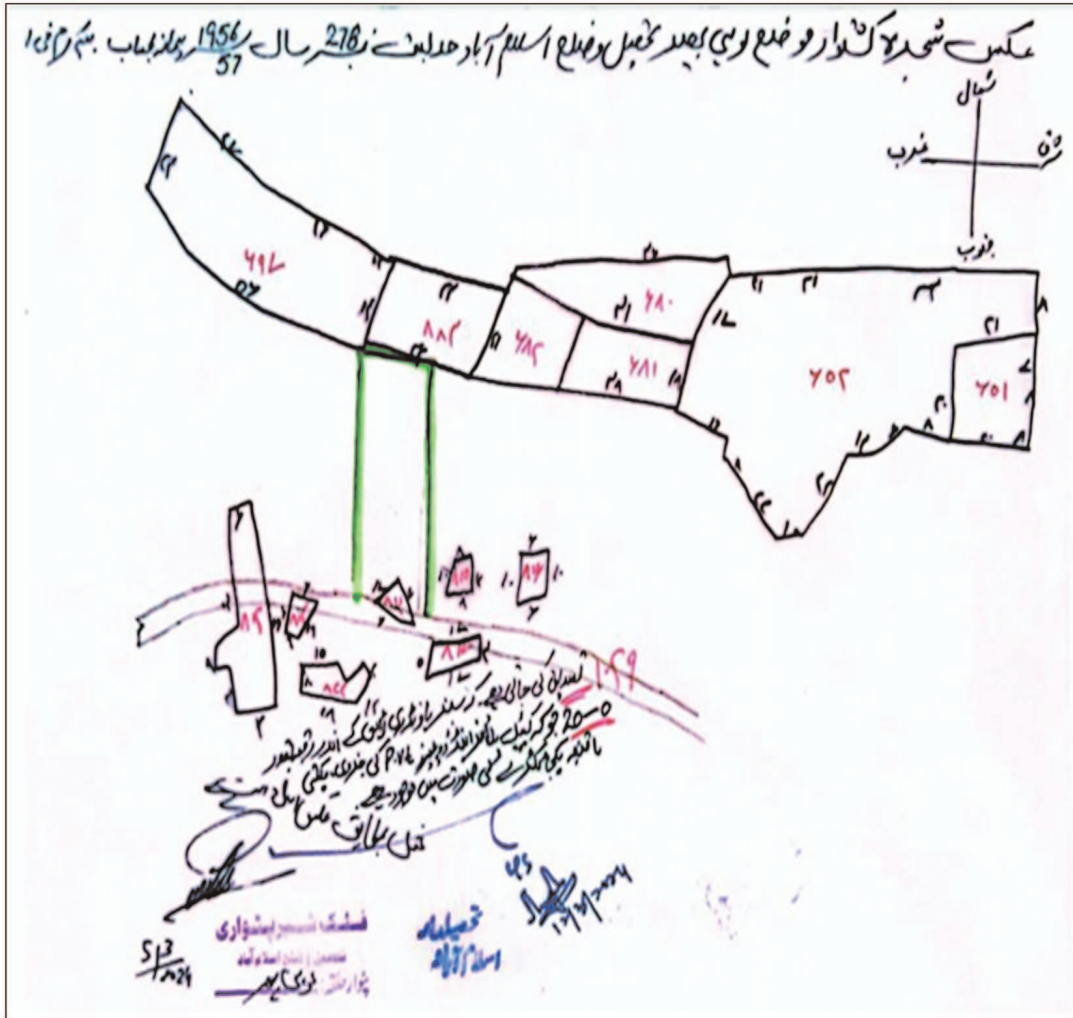
If Any concerned person / company / organization, has any objection / claim on the ownership of the above said land, may submit through Registered post, his / her objections in writing along with CNIC, fresh Original Fard Jamabandi, Original Aks Shajra, etc. of the impugned land duly certified by Revenue Department, ICT (Administration) to the Director (Housing Societies) Planning wing, CDA, within 15 days of the publicity of this public notice, failing which no objection shall be entertained.

**Director (Housing Societies) Planning Wing  
Capital Development Authority, Islamabad  
051-9252630**

## CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

### PUBLIC NOTICE


It is notified for information of general public that M/s Capital Planners Developers Private Limited is proposing to sponsor a Standalone Commercial project namely Islamabad Downtown Executive-9 on the land comprising 20 Kanal on Khewat No.531, Khatooni No.1124, Khasra No.2169/1029/2 in Mouza Lohi Bher, Zone-V Islamabad as shown in this Aks Shajra.



If Any concerned person / company / organization, has any objection / claim on the ownership of the above said land, may submit through Registered post, his / her objections in writing along with CNIC, fresh Original Fard Jamabandi, Original Aks Shajra, etc. of the impugned land duly certified by Revenue Department, ICT (Administration) to the Director (Housing Societies) Planning wing, CDA, within 15 days of the publicity of this public notice, failing which no objection shall be entertained.

**Director (Housing Societies) Planning Wing  
Capital Development Authority, Islamabad  
051-9252630**





# OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER

## DIR IRRIGATION DIVISION DIR LOWER

Phone/Fax: 0945-9250068 Email:dirirrigation2@hotmail.com

### NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

SINGLE STAGE SINGLE ENVELOPE

Dir Irrigation Division Dir Lower Govt: of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Invites Electronic Bids from eligible firms/bidders in accordance with KPPRA procurement Rules 2014 on Single Stage Single Envelope procedure for the following works:-

Sr. #	Name of Work	E/Cost Rs. in million	E Money + S/Duty	Bidding documents submission date & time	Opening date & time of Tenders	Completion Period
	<b>Name of Work: - ADP No. 1169/210553</b> <b>District Development Plan for Lower Dir, Buner, Upper Dir, Malakand, Upper Chitral, Lower Chitral in Malakand Division.</b>					
1.	Channelization confining and remedies measures against erosion of tributaries of Swat River in Adenzai Area District Dir Lower (Package-1) Shaban to Shawa and adjoining area (PK-old-14 New PK-15)	20.00	440000	25-04-2024 at 12.00am	25-04-2024 at 12.30Noon	As per work order
2.	Channelization confining and remedies measures against erosion of tributaries of Swat River in Adenzai Area District Dir Lower (Package-2) Shaban to Shawa and adjoining area (PK-old-14 New PK-15)	20.00	440000	-do-	-do-	-do-
3.	Construction/Improvement of Check Dams, Water Ponds Culverts in Civil Channels (PK- old-14 New PK-15) Adenzai area Dir Lower.	12.90	298000	-do-	-do-	-do-
4.	Channelization confining and remedies measures against erosion of tributaries of Swat River in Adenzai Area District Dir Lower (Package-3) Gul abad to Chakdara and adjoining area (PK-old-14 New PK-15)	20.00	440000	-do-	-do-	-do-
5.	Channelization confining and remedies measures against erosion of tributaries of Swat River in Adenzai Area District Dir Lower (Package-4) Chakdara to Fishing Hut and adjoining area (PK-old-14 New PK-15)	20.00	440000	-do-	-do-	-do-
8	<b>Annual Maintenance and Operation of Irrigation Works within the Jurisdiction of Dir Irrigation Division Dir Lower for the Year 2023-24</b>			-do-	-do-	-do-
6.	Repair of Apron & Existing Flood Protection works Ouch Khwar.	0.40	9300	-do-	-do-	-do-

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR E-BIDDING**

1- Bid solicitation documents including instructions to bidders can be downloaded from Irrigation website <http://www.irrigation.gkp.pk> as well as KPPRA website otherwise bids submitted without these documents (fully filled) will be considered non-responsive. 2- The bidder shall submit their bids through leading courier service on or before the deadline along with requirement as per NIT with the condition that in case of failure of delivery of the said envelope containing the bid etc: shall rest on the bidder/company who has used the relevant courier service. No. liability and responsibility shall rest on the department for any delayed delivery and any other pretext leading towards late submission shall be accepted. 3- Electronic Bidding shall be done on "above/below system" on BOQ/Engineer Estimate, based on the MRS/NSI where applicable. Only two digits after the decimal point shall be considered for evaluation purpose. 4- The KPPRA Notification No. SOR (14) vol:1-24/2021-22/6058-71 Dated 10-05-2022 & Notification NO. SOR(15)Vol-1-25/2022-23 /6301-13 Dated 22-08-2022, will be applicable. The Notification can be downloaded from the KPPRA website as well the Notification No. & Date has been made part of Slandered Bidding Documents. 5- The Employer has the authority to reject any bid to all the bids assigning cogent reasons. 6- Bid security of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest Electronic bidders for the specific will be retained by the Department for one week after Issuance of letter of acceptance to the successful bidder. 7- The Exemption information in the BOQ shall be provided complete in all respect supported by evidence of exemption otherwise the bid shall be declared Non-responsive as per KPPRA Notification SRO (10)/Vol:1- 18/2020-21/2785-98 Dated 10-02-2021. 8- All the bidder s/Firms must be register with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority. 9- All the prevailing KPPRA Acts/Rules updated Instruction/Notifications and other Government Notification issued from time to time will be applicable. 10- As per KPPRA Notification the Contractors/Firms bid is below 20% are bound to attaché 8% Additional Original CDRs. The CDRs should be replaced by the Bank Guarantee after Tender Approval. 11- Bid Security of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> lowest Electronic Bidders for the specific work will be retained by the Department for one week after issuance of letter of acceptance to the successful bidders. 12- In case two or more bidders offered the same rates, successful bidder will be decided through DRAW. 13- Mandatory conditions as per solicitations bidding documents (SDBs) will be adhered. 14- The bids will be opened on the above mentioned date at 12.30 PM in the office of the undersigned in front of Contractors and their representatives who wish to attend. 15- In case of holiday or other un-avoidable circumstances, the next date for opening shall on 29-04-2024 at 12.30 hours with same Terms & conditions however the contractor shall fill their rates on 25-04-2024.

**INF(P) 632/2024**

**Executive Engineer**

**Dir Irrigation Division, Dir Lower**  
**Phone & Fax # 0945-9250068**





# Muzammil vows to bring private investment in KP

Ali Sheikh

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Adviser Muzammil Aslam has assured that he would try his best to release the annual grant of Peshawar Press Club and will also suggest the government to enhance this grant in the next fiscal budget.

Addressing as a chief guest during the ongoing Peshawar Press Club Ramazan Sports Gala, Muzammil Aslam appreciated the role of media especially in KP and said that he would raise issues of KP in the national media along with the local media.

Highlighting the ordeal faced by tourists, who often resort to routing through Islamabad before embarking on their journeys to KP, the minister stressed that facilitating direct access to the region is not only a logistical necessity but also a fundamental right of the people of KP.

"It is strange that KP is not connected with rest of the country," he said while highlighting lack of flights from Karachi and Lahore to Peshawar. "Tourists who want to travel to Kaghan, Naran, Swat and other such



places usually go to Islamabad first from where they plan their tour through private tourism companies." Muzammil said while adding that this should be done from Peshawar not Islamabad and for this I would look towards the private sector. Emphasizing the disconnect between Peshawar and the rest of the country, the minister lamented the limited air connectivity, the Finance Adviser said that this glaring disparity not only hampers economic development but also inhibits seamless interaction between KP and other provinces.

Moreover, he drew attention to the pivotal role of the private sector in driving development, citing the

remarkable 95% contribution to Sindh's development by private entities. Encouraging private sector engagement in KP, the minister urged businesses to step forward and leverage the vast opportunities for investment and growth in the region. Muzammil reiterated the government's commitment to fostering inclusive development and connectivity in KP, calling upon all stakeholders to collaborate in harnessing the region's potential for the collective prosperity of the nation. Earlier, President Peshawar Press Club Arshad Aziz Malik welcomed the Finance Adviser of the KP government and informed him about the working of PPC.

## FC distributes ration among needy people

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: As Ramazan commences, Frontier Corps North remains steadfast in its commitment to support those in need across various districts including Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Orakzai, Swat, Dir, and Chitral.

Under the directives of higher authorities, local commanders are actively overseeing the distribution of essential ration to ensure that no deserving individual is overlooked. Collaborating closely with District Administration, Frontier Corps North is diligently delivering dry ration packages comprising dates, flour, pulses, rice, sugar, leaves, dry milk, cooking oil, and syrup to disadvantaged households.

This concerted effort aims to alleviate the hardships faced by vulnerable communities during the holy month. The commendable initiatives undertaken by Frontier Corps North have garnered appreciation from the residents of these districts, who express gratitude towards the top officials for their unwavering support during these challenging times.

## FIA action against power theft

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In the light of the orders of the Federal Minister of Interior, the crackdown continues against elements involved in electricity theft and sale of fake medicines continued with 17 raids conducted by FIA Kohat Zone, a spokesman said here Wednesday.

FIA registered seven cases against those involved in the sale of fake medicines and 10 cases against those involved in electricity theft. As a result of the raid operations, nine accused were arrested, FIA spokesman said.

The raids were conducted by Composite Circle Bannu, Kohat and Dera Ismail Khan and among the arrested accused are Ehsanullah, Wajibullah, Rehman Shah, Khilur Rehman, Muhammad Ramzan, Zeeshan, Abdul Waheed, Sajid Rehman and Manoor Khan, the FIA spokesman said.

The raids were conducted at Mustafa Bazar, Ashiq Colony and Muslimabad in Kohat and Medina Steel Workshop, Chief Tailoring Shop, Insaf Carpenter Factory in Bannu, FIA officials said. PESCO officials disconnected the illegal connections on the spot, FIA spokesman said.

Cable and other equipment used for illegal electricity supply were also seized and the national exchequer was losing lakhs of rupees due to electricity theft, FIA officials said. The accused was arrested and investigation started, FIA spokesman said. Actions were taken on 8 medical shops involved in the sale of fake medicines, spokesman said.

## Weather to remain dry

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The weather is likely to remain dry and partially cloudy in most districts of the province, an official of the Meteorological Department said here Wednesday.

Chance of rain and thundershowers in Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Kurram, Khyber, Shangla and Buner in the evening and during the night time, said the Met Office official. The minimum temperature has been recorded as low as 19 degrees Celsius and it is likely to rise to a maximum of 26 degrees Celsius, said the official of the Meteorological Department.

He said that the humidity in the air has been recorded up to 59%. Cold weather and rain and snowfall are predicted in Upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said the official.



PESHAWAR: KP Minister for Health, Syed Qasim Ali Shah listening problems of people a his office.

# SACM directs speeding up digitization of business

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Abdul Karim Tordher has directed to speed up the digitization of all professional and general business of the Directorate General of Industries and Commerce while emphasized upon improving the performance of department in terms of services delivery in consumer protection rights.

He has directed that a resource mapping cluster of special resources and products belonging to different regions of the province should be created so that the complete data of the special products of each region is available. He has also directed the concerned authorities to take appropriate steps to make the Government Printing Press fully activate and profitable institution.

He issued these instructions during a briefing given to him regarding the

department on the occasion of his visit to the Directorate General of Industries and Commerce on Wednesday. DG Industries Kabir Afridi, Director Industries Muhammad Hanif and other officers were present on the occasion. On this occasion, the Special Assistant was briefed in detail about the department performance, achieved goals, professional responsibilities and activities. He was told that the department is providing its services through regional offices in 26 districts while 5086 cases have been disposed up regarding consumer rights in which fines of Rs 4700 million have also been imposed.

He was told that 58147 inspections have been conducted while 86% of the target of the financial year from July 2023 to March 2024 has also been achieved. He was further informed that the rules of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Registration Godown Act 2021 has been finalized and forwarded to the concerned authorities

for Cabinet approval.

Similarly, the rules of the Industries, Commerce and Trade Statistics Act have also been finalized. He was told that work is in progress to compile the resource mapping data and finalize it in the form of a report. He was also informed that 1932 firms have been registered with the department, while with the establishment of MIS system, the field activities of the department are put on the system and sharing with the department on dashboard.

On this occasion, the Special Assistant said that instead of the traditional method in the department, all the affairs should be made online and all the factors of registration and operational activities with the department should also be made digital for the convenience of the people. He also directed to add more potential features as required in the MIS system of the department.

# 60th death anniversary of Barrister Saifullah Khan today

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 60th death anniversary of Barrister Khan Saifullah Khan, a well reputed personality of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and active participant of Pakistan Movement, will be commemorated on April 4 (Thursday) with due respect and veneration.

The commemoration ceremony will be held in Peshawar at the residence of his son, Salim Saifullah Khan, a veteran politician and former Federal Minister. People belonging to different walks of life will attend the death anniversary of Barrister Saifullah Khan, who besides playing an active role in politics of the country also made remarkable contributions for industrial development of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa especially the neglected southern region.

According to memoir of Barrister Saifullah Khan shared by his son, Salim Saifullah Khan, he was born on January 1, 1916 at Mohabbat Khan Kot Ghazni Khel in Lakki Marwat district.

In his childhood, his mother died and his father Haji Faizullah Khan took him to Dera Ismail Khan where he studied up to Matric and went to Government College Lahore for further education. After graduating from

there in 1936, he moved to Middle Temple UK for higher education and from there became a Barrister.

Apart from receiving education, late Saifullah Khan also took part in extra-curricular activities and was one of the best football players of his time. He served as the captain of the college team and also visited different European countries including Hungary.

He returned to India in 1939 and after spending some time in Dera Ismail Khan started practical politics from there. Dr. Khan Sahib who was the Chief Minister of the province at that time had a very kind eye on him. In 1940, Khan Saifullah Khan moved from Dera to Peshawar, where he married Kulsoom Bibi, daughter of Bahadur Quli Khan and sister of Aslam Khan Khattak who served as interior minister, Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Ambassador of Pakistan.

After 1940, Khan Saifullah Khan started legal practice with Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan who later became the Chief Minister of Frontier Province. In 1940, he started his own business. And he took over a government factory. As the Pakistan Movement started, Khan Saifullah Khan took an active part in the movement and did not hesitate to render all

kind of physical and financial sacrifices in freedom movement against the British.

He also faced imprisonment for three months in Bannu for his active participation in freedom movement and at time when people were coming from India by migrating in the form of caravans, Saifullah Khan made arrangements for the refugees by providing them food, medicine, accommodation and other necessities. He also had very good relationship with the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. During the visit of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to Peshawar, on the way Khan Saifullah Khan, Sardar Bahadur Khan, Pir Bakhsh Advocate, Jalaluddin Baba Justice Shah Nawaz Khan, Abdul Rahim Khan Advocate Nawab Qutbuddin Khan (Nawab of Tank) All of them met Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and gave him a warm welcome.

For doing this, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah awarded gold medals to Khan Saifullah Khan and another personality from Bannu, Khan Habibullah Khan Menakhel. He also had close relations with the first prime minister of Pakistan, Liaquat Ali Khan. Saifullah Khan had a deep friendship with Liaquat Ali Khan.

# Spring plantation kicks off at Islamia College

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The spring tree plantation drive 2024 launched at Islamia College University in Peshawar. The initiative was led by Secretary of Higher Education, Arshad Khan, and Secretary of Local Government, Dawood Khan, alongside Vice Chancellor ICU Pro Dr. Ali Mohammad Khan, on Wednesday.

The campaign began with the planting of a sapling at the Town complex. During the event, both Secretaries emphasized the importance of educating the public about the significance of trees. They called for collective efforts to raise awareness and encourage active participation in creating a better environment for a prosperous future.

Ali Muhammad Khan expressed his belief that this drive would help in maintaining a clean, green, and pollution-free campus. He urged citizens and students to play a vital role in national endeavors to combat climate change. Dr. Ali Muhammad Khan also took the time to appreciate the gardening staff and works department for their efforts in preserving the greenery on campus.



PESHAWAR: KP Minister for Population Welfare Department, Malik Liaqat Ali Khan meeting with IGP, Akhtar Hayat Khan.

## Cops deployed on important projects

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: After the attack on Chinese engineers, security measures for other projects are strict and the government of KP has tightened security for 10 other water projects.

The declaration of giving responsibility to the top police officers has been released with SP Muhammad Yasin appointed for the security of under construction Mohmand Dam under CPEC. SP Fida Muhammad has been appointed for Warsak Canal System in Khyber District. The responsibility of security of Dasu and Bhasha Dam has been given to SP Muhammad Arshad, and DSP Raja Mehboob has been given the responsibility for the security of Ski Canary Dam Mansehra, DSP Bashir Gul has been appointed for the security of Tarbela Dam, DSP Farrukhzada has been appointed for the 10th Hydropower Project in Chitral, Inspector Saeed Jadoon appointed for Dasu Dam Upper Kohistan, DSP Abdul Ghafoor has been appointed for Bhasha Dam District Upper Kohistan respectively.

# EUTA requests govt for release of arrears before Eid

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Peshawar administration has failed to release the arrears on account of Ad-hoc Relief Allowance 2023 and other remuneration, due to non-availability of the funds.

According to details, Ad-hoc Relief Allowance 2023 was released by the government after several strikes by the university employees. However, the university is going through financial turmoil to pay off the arrears due to limited

financial support from the government.

This government policy will have an adverse effect on the academic excellence and financial well-being. Compelled by the situation the university administration will shift the financial burden towards students.

Seriously affecting the lower middle, and middle classes access to tertiary education. Important to mention the current situation not only resulted in the distress among the faculty and staff of the University but will also have a negative impact over this critical

juncture when Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is recovering from the past extremism fanaticism such mismanagement could result in serious national insecurities.

Therefore, the Engineering University Teachers Association (EUTA) and Engineering University Employees Welfare Association (EUEWA) requests the government to release funds for ensuring the smooth running of the university activities. If not addressed, the faculty and staff will record their concern.



PESHAWAR: Mayor, Haji Zubair Ali chairing a meeting regarding Board Bazaar.

# Contaminated eggs, milk, beverages and sweets seized

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority conducted raids on various food businesses across the province, on Wednesday, seizing contaminated eggs, milk, beverages, and sweets.

According to Food Safety Authority spokesperson while disclosing details, food safety teams are actively carrying out inspections against the food adulteration mafia. Under the supervision of Director General Wasif Saeed, food safety teams conducted raids on bakeries, dairy shops, and cold drink units within Peshawar main city. Samples of consumable items were collected and examined through mobile food testing laboratories on the spot.

During the crackdown, approximately 200 liters adulterated milk were recovered from a dairy shop which was promptly disposed of, and subsequently sealed. Additionally, approximately 100 KG of substandard sweets, along with 500 grams of food-grade colours and expired eggs, were confiscated and disposed of from a bakery

unit, resulting in its closure due to unsatisfactory hygiene standards. Furthermore, fines were imposed on two other bakery units and three tandoor shops for breaching health regulations.

In parallel, according to details, a food safety team in Swat also conducted inspections in the Mata Bazaar, uncovering 2,400 expired eggs from a single bakery unit. Heavy fines were levied on the proprietors and further legal action has also been started as per Food Safety Act.

Furthermore, the spokesperson revealed that food safety teams in Swabi also executed a surprise raid on a beverage distribution unit, confiscating approximately 4,000 Liters of counterfeit and harmful beverages from the warehouse, resulting in its sealing.

Director General Wasif Saeed has lauded the successful operations and directed inspection teams across the province to ensure systematic monitoring of sweet production units. Wasif underscored a zero-tolerance policy towards food adulteration, reaffirming the Food Safety Authority's commitment to eradicate food contamination as its primary mission.

## Minister, IGP discuss Dir hostages issue

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister, Malik Liaqat Ali on Wednesday met with KP Inspector General of Police, Akhtar Hayat Khan and discussed the plight of Dir people that are in captivity of dacoits in Katcha area of Sindh.

The CM aide apprised IGP about the plight of victims' families and threats being faced by them. He said that hostages are being kept in hideouts and tortured on daily basis to force families to bow before demands of kidnappers. He urged IGP to take steps and solve problems of families that are under unbearable duress since kidnappings.

Speaking on the occasion, Akhtar Hayat assured cooperation to families and contacted IGP Sind to resolve the matter. He said that efforts are underway to settle the matter on priority basis.





## In brief

### By-election in Kohat reviewed Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: A meeting regarding the peaceful conduct of by-elections in constituency PK 91 under the Chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Kohat here on Wednesday. A special meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Kohat Dr. Azmatullah Wazir regarding the conduct of fair, transparent and peaceful by-elections in Kohat constituency PK 91 in which district administration, Kohat Police, Health, Education, Local Government, Municipalities and Officials from other concerned departments participated. In the meeting, various issues related to the security of the by-elections held in the said constituency, installation of CCTV cameras in sensitive polling stations and other arrangements were reviewed in detail and several important decisions were taken in this regard. The Deputy Commissioner directed all the concerned departments to discharge their responsibilities with full honesty and diligence regarding the fair, transparent and peaceful conduct of the by-elections and in this regard all the concerned departments and institutions should show mutual cooperation.

### Two alleged culprits arrested F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Police have arrested two suspects including a proclaimed offender during a search and strike operation in Sarga Kherukhel area of Tank district. The operation was launched against miscreants and wanted men on the instructions of regional police officer Qasim Ali Khan following the murder of a truck driver by highwaymen on Saturday's night. A police official said that Shabbazkhel police station SHO Zaman Shah led the action wherein the law enforcers destroyed the hideouts of criminals in the remote rural localities of the district. He said that during the operation, the cops captured a proclaimed offender identified as Aslam and seized a rifle and ammunition from him. "The arrested man was wanted by police in four cases of heinous nature including murder and narcotics selling", he claimed, adding that another suspect identified as Naseebullah was also arrested and a Kalashnikov rifle, bullets and spare magazines were recovered from him. Zaman told this scribe that the arrested suspects had been shifted to the police station where cases were registered against them. Police said that during the operation, police also checked hotels and houses for verification of tenants and suspected vehicles with the help of modern technology.

### Police arrests suspect F.P. Report

HARIPUR: Police have intensified efforts to maintain peace and security by conducting checkpoints at various locations. Under the supervision of DSP City Saudaqaq Nasir, SHO City Police Station Ijaz Ali, along with police personnel, conducted a checkpoint near Noonan Road gate. During the operation, four individuals riding on two motorcycles aroused suspicion, prompting the police to signal them to stop. However, the suspects attempted to flee, leading to a pursuit by the police. In the ensuing chase, one motorcycle slipped, resulting in one suspect sustaining injuries, while another succumbed to injuries inflicted during the exchange of fire with his accomplices.

# Threatening public servant to death PTI MPA with 80 others charged

F.P. Report

MARDAN: In response to threats of violence and death to the Sub Divisional Officer (SDO) PESCO-I Mardan, a three-count case has been registered against about seven dozen people, including the MPA of Tehreek-e-Insaf in Police Station City, The FIR filed on the plea of SDO Par Hoti PESCO-I and strong protest by WAPDA employees. They claimed that PTI backed SIC MPA Abdul Salam led a public procession for the defective transformer, police teams have been deployed for arrest.

According to the details, a case was registered against 80 people including Tehreek-e-Insaf Assembly member Abdul Salam Afridi former Nazim Sajid Mohmand, under Sections 188, 148 and 149 in Mardan Police Station. According to the registered FIR the members of the provincial assembly tried to forcefully drag Talha Ahmed SDO of Par Hoti subdivision, from the third floor in the office of PESCO-I and threatened to kill him, which was foiled by the officers of PESCO-I present at the spot.

The authorities of PESCO-I had applied to the city police station against the dispute of the Member Provincial Assembly in the presence of a heavy presence of the city DSP and the police, however, the police registered a formal FIR against the member of the provincial assembly and his other associates after a strong protest by WAPDA employees and a three-day deadline.

**Committees constituted against polythene bags:** Commissioner Shaukat Ali Yousafzai has set up district committees under the supervision of Additional Deputy Commissioner (G) at the district level in Mardan and Swabi to make the ban on polythene bags effective in the Division.

According to the official announcement issued here committees have been formed in both the districts to end the use of polythene bags as environmental terrorism. Other members of the committees headed by the Additional Deputy Commissioner

include the respective Assistant Commissioner/Additional Assistant Commissioner and the respective Tehsil Municipal Officers.

The committees will submit a report every fortnight to the Commissioner Mardan Division regarding the cleanliness of their respective districts from polythene bags.

**Installation of street lights along with anti-encroachment drive continues:** Under the Directions of Mayor Mardan Himayatullah Mayar work is underway to install streetlights and remove encroachments in Different markets at Mardan. Installation of streets lights at Main areas including Bijli ghar, Canal Road, Ameer Haider Khan Road in Kaskorona, Par Hoti Road, Kaskorona Road, Charsadda Chowk, Shamsi Road, Main Nowshera Road and others will soon be completed.

Encroachments will be gradually eliminate from the Main Markets of the city. In the first phase, Encroachments would be eliminate from Kachahri Chowk to Pakistan Chowk markets and Par Hoti Chowk will be cleared of encroachments while encroachments from other markets will be removed in subsequent phases. Mayor Mardan Himayatullah Mayar has requested of cooperation from the public and the Traders community.

Projects are also under consideration to make the areas clean and beautiful. Work is ongoing on sewerage treatment plants and sewerage lines at a cost of 8 billion rupees. Furthermore, to Stable the gas pressure, 24-inch reserve pipes and 12-inch and 8-inch pipes have been laid, and work is underway to connect these pipes to residential areas which will completely resolve the low gas pressure issue.

Efforts are also underway for several years to complete incomplete projects related to education, health, and infrastructure in Mardan. Meetings and requests have been made to Provincial government, the Chief Minister, ministers, and provincial authorities through various channels. It has been requested that they fulfill their role in releasing funds from the Provincial government.

## Blind murder case: Alleged young killer held

F.P. Report

KARAK: The mystery of Latambar's blind murder is solved, the killer turns out to be a close friend, the accused confessed the crime during interrogation.

According to the details, the dead body of a 40-year-old local man named Rafiullah was found in the football ground in the limits of Latambar police station four days ago. To trace this case and arrest the accused, District Police Officer Karak formed a special team headed by DSP, SHO of Latambar Police Station

and Investigation Officer to find out the facts. He had given the task of bringing the real accused to justice.

DSP Headquarters Karak Nazer Hussain while briefing the media said that. On the instructions of DPO the accused was traced by getting the ground information and the call data of the deceased's missing mobile phone and the accused was identified as Khudir Younas, aged 16/17 years. Latambar was arrested.

He further said that the accused has told the police in his confessional statement during the investigation

that a year ago I had become friends with the deceased Rafiullah and later the deceased had developed an illicit relationship with me.

I used to sexually abuse my partner for which I had a grudge in my heart and before that I have tried to kill the victim several times but I failed. And after killing him with the pistol of the deceased, I escaped from there. However, the police have recovered the murder device pistol, cartridge shells and the mobile phone of the victim on the mark of the accused.

## Young footballer commits suicide in Buner

F.P. Report

BUNER: A young footballer and student of 2nd year named Imad Khan resident of Pacha Kali area of Peer Baba, committed suicide by hanging himself on the first floor of his residence just before Iftar last day.

According to details, the sad news sent wave of grief in whole Pacha Kali, village told. Imad was 19 years old, second year student and a good football player and very good mannered, told his friends.

However, the cause of suicide is unknown. When

contacted, SHO Thana Pir Baba confirmed the incident and further said that the CDR report is being waiting by obtaining the data from the mobile phone of the deceased and the investigation team is busy investigating the incident from various aspects and hopeful that the real reasons for suicide will be brought out.

**Green belt inaugurated at DHQ Buner:** Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA) developed a green belt in front of the headquarters hospital while it was inaugurated after planting of sapling to in

spring drive, on Wednesday. The TMA supervisor Rauf Khan with staff members also contributed. Chairman Haji Rozi Khan and TMO Afsar Ali Khan in their brief message to the media said that the environment becomes green and beautiful by making green belt.

They appealed people to make green belts in front of their homes, shops, and stores so that they can be a part of Green and Clean Pakistan campaign and play their role in protecting the country from the negative effects of climate change.

## Social activism key for children suffering from Autism

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: There is a need to make children suffering from autism socially active, while the role of teachers and parents is very important in this regard. These views were expressed by Principal Government Special Education School Chah Shamoo Wala Kamalia, while speaking at the awareness seminar organized on the occasion of World Autism Day.

It is worthy to mention that teacher Aqsa Afzal interpreted in sign language for hearing impaired students. On this occasion, Teachers Ayesha Riaz, Aasia Rafiq, Abida Parveen, Shareen Kulsom, Humira Siddiqua Amin, Zahoor Alam, Razaq Ali and affected hearing students were present. Speech expert, Nauzia Mehmood said that the symptoms of autism appear in children at an early age, which affects children's language, sociability, friendship, emotions and

feelings.

Its intensity can be less or more. Principal Bashir Rabbani further said that social rehabilitation of autistic children is possible with timely diagnosis, awareness, guidance and interpersonal communication training programs. Later, an awareness walk was conducted in which the affected hearing students carried information books related to autism.

**Smoking cause of various diseases:** Director Mian Hospital Kamalia, Dr. Mian Kamran Saleem said that a person who smokes is prone to various diseases including heart and lung diseases. So, people should avoid smoking.

This he said while talking to The Frontier Post and further said that nowadays the young generation is getting addicted to smoking, due to which young people are suffering from heart and lung diseases.

The government should ban cigarettes completely,

So that the young generation is protected from these dangerous diseases. In the end, he said that parents should also take care of their children and keep an eye on them so that they do not become addicted to smoking.

## Ban on fire crackers F.P. Report

KARAK: Deputy Commissioner Karak Mujibur Rahman Wednesday imposed a ban on the use and sale of Chinese and other firecrackers (firecrackers) across the district under Section 144 of the Penal Code for a period of 15 days immediately.

Those who violate this order, action will be taken under Section 188 of the Pakistan Penal Code. This was announced officially here.



GWADAR: Officials of Pakistan Navy showing seized Narcotics from Coastal village to media.

## Pak Coast Guards thwart smuggling bid F.P. Report

QUETTA: Pakistan Coast Guards have intercepted a ship attempting to smuggle a large quantity of narcotics from Gwadar. Acting on intelligence gathered through covert means in Gwadar, authorities seized a substantial amount of high-quality narcotics, effectively thwarting the smuggling attempt.

Following credible information about drug trafficking through the coastal areas of Gwadar, a specialized search team was deployed. During the operation, the team successfully disrupted an attempt to smuggle narcotics via a boat along the shoreline.

In a bid to evade capture, the smugglers took advantage of the cover of darkness, abandoning both the ship and the narcotics before fleeing the scene. However, the operation resulted in the seizure of 164 kilograms of high-quality narcotics, prompting immediate legal action against the perpetrators.

## 'Officials looting widow women' F.P. Report

WANA: An alleged massive corruption has been reported in kifalat Ehsaas program in tehsil Birmal, Tui Khulla Wana and Tehsil Shakai of district Lower Waziristan, the officials sitting in the franchises of Ehsaas Kifalat program have started robbing poor and widow women in different ways. It is equivalent to absolute cruelty.

On the other hand, for the sake of this blessed month of Ramadan, the provincial government approved 10,000 rupees as an aid package for the poor, disabled and widows. People's money has not come, it will come in the next episode, owners of franchises said while misleading the gullible people in Waziristan. but, Actually, some sources are aware of the program of the opinion that money has come here. Tribal demand of high authorities in Islamabad and Peshawar should take notice.

According to the senior officials of Ehsaas Kifalat program, whoever has been given devices by Ehsaas Kifalat program, they are given a percentage by Ehsaas Kafalat. Taking deductions from women is a violation and bribery. Immediate action should be taken against such elements taking illegal deduction money from poor women.

In this regard, the users of Ehsaas Kifalat have demanded the provincial government to take actions against the said corrupt elements and take back the devices. otherwise, the users will be forced to protest in roads.

## Sialkot Airport to remain shut down

SIALKOT (INP): Sialkot airport will remain close for 13 days for all kinds of domestic and international flights. Sialkot Airport manager said that the airport will be closed from May 6 to May 18 for maintenance.

## Citizens face difficulty in getting their passport

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The overseas people belonging to the Lower Dir district on Wednesday complained that their visas were expiring due to a delay in getting a Pakistani passport for the last four months.

Talking to The Frontier Post here at Timergara, the district headquarters, the applicants complained that they were yet to get their passport despite submitting applications for an urgent passport some four months ago.

They said the passport seekers were being told that the concerned department was short of paper. The affected people including Hanifullah, Arshad Zaman, Ali Akbar and Muhammad Jalil said that several of the umera aspirants were also deprived of the opportunity due to delay in getting the passports in time.

One Izhar Ahmad Qazi, a resident of Qaziabad Timergara told this reporter that he had applied for a normal passport on Dec 12, last year with a fee of Rs 4500 but he had not been issued his passport yet. He said that he continued to visit the Timergara passport office for the last three months but to no avail. He complained that he failed to accompany his family to offer umrah.

According to previous practice the normal passport with Rs 4500 fee had to be issued in 12 days while the urgent one only in four days with a fee of Rs 7500 but now the applicants were yet to get their passport despite the passage of four months. The applicants pointed out that they had submitted their complaints to the concerned high ups but to no avail. The affected citizens demanded the Prime Minister Mian Shabbaz Sharif, interior minister Muhsin Naqvi and director general passport and immigration to take notice of the matter and resolve it as soon as possible.

**Teachers' warning:** Senior teachers waiting for their promotion to the posts of headmasters and subject specialists in basic pay scale 17 on Wednesday threatened to start a protest campaign against the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and authorities of the elementary and secondary education department for delaying the process. They made the announcement during a meeting held at Timergara which was attended by dozens of senior teachers who are expected to be promoted.

The meeting expressed anger and reservations on the deliberate delay in teachers' promotion from grade 16 to 17. Speaking on the occasion the teachers' representatives alleged that the matter was being delayed for unknown reasons. They said that senior secondary school teachers had

fulfilled all documentary responsibilities to get themselves promoted but their case was being delayed for several months.

The speakers said that about 1200 senior teachers were waiting for their promotion to the posts of headmasters and subject specialists in government schools and the delay had spread unrest and disappointment among the community. They said that several SSTs were retired before their promotion due to unnecessary delay from the concerned quarters.

The speakers said the provincial organization of teachers had recorded its protest regarding the promotion of SSTs in the month of February this year at the Peshawar directorate during which the incumbent directress had promised to speed up the process so that the deserving teachers could be promoted in March but to no avail. The speakers said that the meeting of the departmental promotion committee (DPC) was yet to be held. They said the teachers would launch a protest drive after Eid if their promotion was not ensured soon.

**Orphans provided with Eid shoes of their choices:** The Timergara assistant commissioner Dr Nida Iqbal along with district president of the Al-Khidmat foundation Hafeezullah Khaksar on Wednesday inaugurated Eid shoes' shopping for orphans at Timergara under the district administration's initiative of interaction with civil society organizations.

The orphans and their mothers were invited to the shopping wherein the children were gifted with shoes of their choice. Talking to local journalists on the occasion the AC Dr Nida Iqbal lauded the charity and welfare services of the Al-Khidmat Foundation and said the children would feel a sense of ownership by selecting and buying shoes for themselves. She said that other social services' organizations should also follow the example so that the orphans could feel real pleasure. She said the district administration would extend its cooperation to the AKF for helping and supporting orphans and widows in the district.

**Iftar dinner:** The Islami Jamiat Tulba, a students' wing of the Jamaat-i-Islami arranged a grand iftar dinner at Timergara here the other day. A large number of students and local citizens attended the dinner. The IJT provincial chief Wasim Haider and Timergara nazim Sadiqullah spoke on the occasion. They shed light on the importance of fasting in Islam and arranging of such dinners in this Holy month of Ramadan. The speakers said that such gatherings added to the brotherhood and friendship among different segments of society.

## KDA distributes Eid gifts among orphans

F.P. Report

LARKANA: Kanga Development Association (KDA) organized a program under the title of Ramadan Mehriban in relation to giving Eid clothes to poor orphans in Kanga village, on Wednesday.

During the ceremony Additional Deputy Commissioner Farzana Mirani, Child Protection Cell in-charge Naghama Mazari, Chairman KDA Khuda Bakhsh Kango, Saeed Ahmed Kangu and many others were present. On this occasion, Eid clothes were given to 150 poor, needy and orphan children. Addressing the program, Farzana Mirani said, "Congratulations to the entire team of KDA for laying the foundation

of the organization at the village level and conducting such social programs, and whoever organized this program with their own help.

Chairman of KDA, Khuda Bakhsh Kangu, said that for the first time in the history of village Kanga, a women's social program has been organized by the KDA Ladies Wing, for which we salute their hard work and courage.

Saeed Ahmad Kangu said that social work should be done in the village and poor people should be helped in this difficult time. Our team is working with limited resources. On this occasion, recognition certificates were also given to the leaders and members of KDA Ladies Wing in

the program.

DIG Larkana visited the injured SHO: Deputy Inspector General Police (DIG) Larkana Nasir Aftab Pathan visited SHO Tehana B Section Kandakot Molabakhsh Bugti, who was injured while performing his duties in district Kashmirore Kandakot, and after consultation with the doctors he is better. The injured police officer is being shifted to Aga Khan Hospital Karachi for treatment.

Speaking to the media on this occasion, DIG Police Larkana Nasir Aftab Pathan said that to protect the life and property of the people, police officers and We cannot forget the sacrifices made by the youth while the police department is proud of its brave youth.

## Father kills schoolgirl

LODHARAN (INP): A heartless father killed her 13-year-old girl in doubt of her love affair with a neighbouring boy in Lodharaan city, police said on Wednesday. The girl named Alizah Bibi was also tortured for a month and kept hungry and thirsty for a month as a punishment from her father.

According to the channel report, the girl was a student of class seven in a local school and she was killed by her father by putting a pillow on her face. Muhammad Shafiq, the maternal grandfather of Aliza Bibi, in his statement recorded to the police, alleged that his son-in-law killed his granddaughter for

honour killing as he had doubts about her love affair with a boy in his neighbour.

Grandfather Muhammad Shafiq alleged that Aliza Bibi was being tortured for a month and kept hungry and thirsty before her murder. The city police arrested the accused's father and shifted the body to the hospital for post-mortem.





Thursday, April 04, 2024

## Chancellor says Austria needs to deter Russian infiltration

VIENNA (AP): The arrest in recent days of a former Austrian intelligence officer on serious allegations of spying for Russia suggests that Austria needs to boost its security to thwart Russian infiltration, Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer said.

The allegations against Egisto Ott, who worked for a now-defunct intelligence agency and whose arrest was announced Friday, are "grave" and have prompted the chancellor to call a meeting next week of Austria's National Security Council, he said. Ott has denied wrongdoing. "On the one hand, these allegations have to be addressed by the judiciary. On the other hand, an evaluation and clarification of the security situation of the republic is needed," Nehammer said in a statement. "We have to avoid having Russian spy networks threaten our country by infiltrating or instrumentalizing political parties and networks."

Nehammer said he would convene the National Security Council of next week. The council, which consists of government ministers as well as members of all political parties, is a key advisory panel on matters of security and defense. The Vienna Criminal Court approved a 14-day extension for holding Ott in custody on the

charges against him. The Vienna public prosecutor's office declined to provide details about the spying allegations, but said that they relate to "abuse of office" and were "detrimental to Austria." According to a report in Austrian daily newspaper Der Standard, Ott is suspected of having handed over potentially sensitive data from the mobile phones of three former high-ranking Austrian interior ministry officials to Russian authorities back in 2022. The mobile phones were supposed to be repaired by IT specialists of the former Austrian domestic intelligence agency after they fell into water during a boat excursion on the Danube River in 2017. Instead, the data fell into Ott's hands who allegedly helped to pass it on to Russian security services. Der Standard also reported that Ott was arrested on Friday after authorities in the United Kingdom provided information about his case to their Austrian counterparts.

Britain has arrested five Bulgarian citizens last year and a sixth one in February and has charged them with allegedly being members of a Russian spy network working together with Jan Marsealek, the fugitive former chief operating officer of Wirecard, the German

payment processing company that collapsed in 2020. Joint reporting by Der Spiegel, German public broadcaster ZDF, the Austrian newspaper Der Standard and the Russian investigative platform The Insider said last month that Ott and another former Austrian intelligence officer are suspected of having spied on potential targets in Europe and having passed the information to Marsealek, who they allege has had connections to Russian intelligence since at least 2014.

They also reported that Ott and his colleague allegedly helped Marsealek secretly escape from Austria on a private jet in 2020 after the Wirecard collapse. Ott rejected the accusations against him as baseless in a recent interview with the German magazine Der Spiegel. There have been previous allegations against Ott. In 2017, Western intelligence agencies warned their Austrian counterparts about Ott potentially spying for Russia. Ott was suspended from his job at the BVT in 2017 and was briefly arrested in 2021, but was released again after a short period of time.

Austria expelled two Russian diplomats from Russia's Embassy in Vienna last month in what Austrian officials said was related to spying.

## 29 migrants rescued off small boat in trouble

ATHENS (AP): A group of 29 migrants was rescued off a crippled boat in the Mediterranean Sea south of Crete, Greek authorities said, on an increasingly busy migration route from North Africa to Europe. A coast guard statement said the boat was located about 23.5 nautical miles (27 miles, 43 kilometers) south of Gavdos, a small island off Crete's southern coast, by a passing merchant ship after passengers made a distress call.

The migrants were being ferried to southern Crete. No information was immediately available on their health, nationality or port of embarkation. Southern Crete and Gavdos, 27 nautical miles off the island, have seen a substantial increase in migrant arrivals this year. Most leave from the eastern Libyan port of Tobruk, having paid smuggling gangs up to \$5,000 each. According to United Nations data, more than 1,200 people have reached the area this year, out of a total of about 9,600 who arrived in Greece by sea. Another 74 people were rescued off a boat south of Gavdos, which is about 29 square kilometers (11 square miles) in size and has just a few dozen residents in the winter. Two of the people on the vessel were later arrested on suspicion of belonging to a migrant-smuggling gang.

## Thai court accepts case

BANGKOK (Reuters): Thailand's Constitutional Court on Wednesday said it had accepted a case seeking the dissolution of the opposition Move Forward Party, in another blow to a popular anti-establishment movement pushing major institutional reforms in the country.

The court agreed to take on the complaint filed by the election commission asking to disband Move Forward for its controversial campaign to reform a law that shields the powerful monarchy from criticism, under which at least 260 people have been prosecuted in the past few years. The case came after a January ruling by the same court that found Move Forward's plan to amend the law was unconstitutional and tantamount to an attempt to overthrow the system of government with the king as head of state. Move Forward has rejected that.

Move Forward pulled off a stunning feat in winning last year's election but was blocked from forming a government by lawmakers allied with the royalist military. It is the biggest party in the lower house with about 30% of seats. Its platform of institutional reform resonated among young and urban voters, including a plan to amend the law protecting the crown, which carries a punishment of up to 15 years jail for each perceived insult of the royal family. Thailand's monarchy is constitutionally enshrined to be held in a position of "revered worship" and many royalists see the law as sacrosanct. The palace typically does not comment on the law, which is among the strictest of its kind in the world.

If the court rules against Move Forward, it faces dissolution and lengthy political bans for its leadership, the same fate suffered by predecessor.

Future Forward, after it was dissolved in 2020 over a campaign funding violation. A similar complaint has also been filed with a Thai anti-graft body seeking life bans for 44 of the party's current and former lawmakers. Move Forward's agenda and bid to curtail business monopolies has threatened to upend Thailand's conservative status quo, and led to a once-unthinkable governing alliance between the populist Pheu Thai and parties backed by its bitter enemies in the military.

Activists say the lese-majeste law has been used to smear progressives and stifle institutional reforms. Move Forward has argued its campaign sought to strengthen the constitutional monarchy and prevent the law from being misused. Its former prime ministerial hopeful Pita Limjaroenrat last month told Reuters his party would "fight tooth and nail" for its future amid efforts to bring down the party, which he said showed paranoia by Thailand's conservative establishment over its push for reforms.

## Ukraine lowers combat call-up age to boost numbers

KYIV (BBC): Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has signed into law a bill lowering the military mobilisation age by two years from 27 to 25. Kyiv has faced heavy losses on the battlefield after two years of war, whereas Russia has benefited from a sizeable advantage in manpower.

The move will allow Ukraine to call up more people to replenish its reserves, after volunteer numbers dropped. Mr Zelensky said in December that 500,000 more soldiers were needed. Although the bill was voted through by MPs in May 2023, it did not come into force because Mr Zelensky did not sign it.

It was not immediately clear what prompted the president to sign the bill, however he has previously warned of plans Russia may have to launch a spring or summer offensive this year. Mr Zelensky's signing of the bill could signify Ukraine's effort to build up strong defensive fortifications in preparation for a Russian offensive. Ukrainian forces had hoped to take back swathes of territory gained by Russia as well as cutting off Russian supply lines to Crimea. But lacking air superiority and faced with formidable Russian defences, Kyiv's counter-offensive ground to a



halt at the start of winter and there are fears that Russian forces could outgun Ukraine.

Last year, Ukrainian Gen Oleksandr Tarnavskiy warned troops had already been forced to downsize some military operations because of a drop-off in foreign aid. Ukraine has relied heavily on Western supplies, particularly on deliveries of long-range missiles and air defence systems. However, billions of pounds of US and EU aid have been held up amid political wrangles. Russian President Vladimir Putin has said more than 600,000 of his troops are

fighting in Ukraine, but has not revealed how many have lost their lives there.

A classified US intelligence report released in December estimated that 315,000 Russian soldiers had been either killed or wounded since the war began - which it said was almost 90% of Russia's military personnel at the start of the invasion. In February, Mr Zelensky said 31,000 Ukrainian soldiers had been killed since the start of the war, but US officials have put the number of Ukrainian soldiers killed at least 70,000 and as many as 120,000 injured.

## Gaza infrastructure damages estimated at \$18.5b in report

GENEVA: The cost of damage to critical infrastructure in the first four months of Israel's continuing war on Gaza is estimated at about \$18.5bn, a new report by the World Bank and the United Nations has found. The report estimated that the damage was equivalent to 97 percent of the combined GDP of the occupied West Bank and Gaza in 2022.

"The level of destruction in the Gaza Strip since October 2023 is unprecedented," the Interim Damage Assessment Note released said. The continuing conflict has damaged or destroyed approximately 62 percent of all homes in Gaza, equivalent to 290,820 housing units, and more than a million people are without homes. Housing accounts for 72 percent of the total damage costs, at an estimated value

of \$13.3bn.

Public service infrastructure, such as water, health and education, account for 19 percent, while commercial and industrial buildings make up 9 percent. The energy, water and municipal sectors have suffered nearly \$800m in damages and the water and sanitation system has been significantly reduced, delivering less than 5 percent of its previous output. With 84 percent of health facilities damaged or destroyed, and a lack of electricity and water to operate the remaining ones, the population has minimal access to healthcare, the report found. The education system has collapsed, with all of Gaza's 625,000 students out of school. Damage to education infrastructure amounts to \$341m as an estimated 56 school facilities

have been destroyed and 219 partially damaged.

Additionally, 26 million tonnes of debris and rubble have been left in the wake of the destruction, an amount that is estimated to take years to remove. "To date, 80 percent of total damages were concentrated in the governorates of Gaza, North Gaza, and Khan Younis," the report said, noting that significant damage was also recorded in Beit Lahiya and Rafah governorates. "The municipality of Gaza alone accounted for US\$7.29 billion of total damage, with Jabalya following at \$2.01 billion, Khan Younis at US\$1.82 million, and Beit Lahiya accounting for US\$1.08 billion of the total," it said. Such costs "are expected to increase substantially along with the magnitude of damages as

the conflict continues. This is particularly true in the south of the Gaza Strip which has seen greater destruction in recent weeks," it added.

The assessment, conducted with support from the European Union, used remote data collection sources and analytics to provide a preliminary estimate of damages to physical structures in Gaza from the conflict. These initial findings are likely to be an underestimate of the real damages, losses and needs, which the organisations said would require a second analysis "as the situation allows". The report called for an increase in humanitarian assistance, food aid and food production, the provision of shelter and housing solutions for displaced people and the resumption of essential services. — Aljazeera

## Lopez responds to mayoral candidate's slaying

MEXICO CITY: Outgoing Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has offered condolences to the family of a slain mayoral candidate who was shot dead shortly after launching her campaign. The shooting was the latest in a string of violence against political hopefuls ahead of Mexico's June 2 general elections.

"These events are very regrettable because these are people are fighting to defend democracy," López Obrador said during his daily news conference. "They're out on the street, face to face." López Obrador's remarks came in response to the death of Bertha Gisela Gaytán, a candidate representing the left-wing party he founded, Morena. She was running to be mayor of Celaya, northwest of Mexico City.

The first day of her campaign, Gaytán rallied with supporters in the streets of San Miguel Octopan, a town just outside of Celaya. A short social media video from the shooting shows a cluster of people chanting and waving maroon flags in support of Morena, when suddenly gunshots ring out. A scream is heard in the distance. Multiple people were struck, including the city council candidate Adrián Guerrero. Several media reports indicated he

later died at a nearby hospital. The Associated Press news agency estimates that at least 15 political candidates have been killed since January as the general election approaches.

Observers say threats largely stem from organised crime and drug cartels that exercise sway over the Mexican political system through threats, bribery and corruption. Police, however, have yet to identify suspects in the shooting and arrests have yet to be made. In the aftermath, the governor of Guanajuato, the state where the shooting occurred, pledged to seek justice for the killings. "The cowardly attack that took the life of candidate Bertha Gisela Gaytán in Celaya will not go unpunished," Governor Diego Rodríguez Vallejo wrote. "With all firmness, I condemn this inhumane act and reiterate my full commitment that the state may coordinate with efforts at all levels of government in the electoral process and thereby assure the participants have the necessary protection."

On the day of her death, Gaytán held a news conference indicating that she had requested security for her campaign. "Assistance has already been requested through the state legal system in the party," she said,

according to Mexican media reports. "The citizens are on our side, but of course, we are going to have security protocols." The city of Celaya has one of the highest homicide rates in the world, with an estimated 109.4 murders per 100,000 inhabitants. But even elsewhere, violence has struck political campaigns in the run-up to the election.

For example, in February, two mayoral candidates were shot in Maravatío, in the western state of Michoacán. One hailed from the right-leaning National Action Party and the other was from the Morena Party. The last time Mexico held a nationwide election - in 2021, when state, local and national legislative seats were up for grabs - an estimated three dozen political candidates were killed. Mexico is currently in the midst of another high-profile election, this time with the presidency hanging in the balance. Presidents are limited to a single six-year term, meaning López Obrador is unable to run. But his protégée, former Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum, is leading the race, with a strong lead over Senator Xóchitl Gálvez. — Aljazeera

## Russia says explosives sent from Ukraine seized

MOSCOW: Russia's top security agency says it has seized dozens of kilos of explosives sent from Ukraine concealed in Orthodox Christian religious icons that had transited through the European Union.

The seizure took place, following an inspection of cargo in the northwestern Pskov region near the Latvian border, the Federal Security Service (FSB) said in a statement. There was no immediate comment by Ukraine, which has been fighting off a Russian invasion since February 2022.

The FSB said the cargo had passed through Romania, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, and comprised 70 kilos (154 pounds) of home-made explosives and explosive devices "hidden in icons and ready for use". One person was arrested, it continued, adding that it would seek to track down all those involved, including foreigners, who would then face legal proceedings in Russia. Separately, Russian officials said Ukrainian drones had

struck sites in Tatarstan, a highly industrialised area southeast of Moscow and about 1,300km (800 miles) from the front lines. One of the attacks, the deepest inside Russian territory since the war began, targeted Russia's third largest oil refinery, which has an annual production capacity of more than 17 million tons (340,000 barrels per day) A fire broke out at Tatneft's Taneco refinery that was extinguished within 20 minutes, the state RIA news agency said, adding that production had not been disrupted. Pictures from the scene indicated the drone hit the primary refining unit, CDU-7, at the Taneco refinery. The unit accounts for about half of the plant's total annual production capacity.

"A drone attack was carried out on one of the enterprises in Nizhnnekamsk," Ramil Mullin, the mayor of Nizhnnekamsk, said. "There are no casualties or serious damage." Tatarstan head Rustam Minnikhanov also said industrial zones in the cities of Nizhnnekamsk and Yelabuga had been targeted, adding that the "techno-

logical process" of the companies concerned had not been destroyed. At least six people were injured in the attack on a site in Yelabuga, the state-run TASS news agency reported, citing local emergency services. Videos on social media showed an aircraft-style drone flying into a two-storey building at a business park outside the city before exploding, sending a fireball into the air. Meanwhile, Ukraine's military said Russian drones targeted energy infrastructure in overnight attacks on Ukraine's central Dnipropetrovsk and Kirovohrad regions, hitting an energy facility in the latter. Nine drones were shot down over Dnipropetrovsk region where debris caused two fires in the regional capital of Dnipro, the governor said in a statement on Telegram, adding they had both been put out.

However, a drone hit a high voltage substation in Kirovohrad region, causing a fire there, the Ukrenergy grid operator wrote on Telegram. The governor said no casualties had been reported. — Aljazeera

## Anti-Assad Syrians lead protests against prison torture by rebel group

BINNISH: Despite the dangers of dissent, people in northwestern Syria have been taking to the streets in recent weeks to protest an armed group formed out of an al-Qaeda breakaway faction. The protests against Hay'et Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which controls a large portion of Idlib province, began on February 25 in Sarmada, near the Syria-Turkey border.

Prompted by the treatment of prisoners by the group's security arm, the General Security Service (GSS), protesters carry banners calling HTS prisons "slaughterhouses". Protests with hundreds of participants have now taken place across Idlib. In Binnish, 29-year-old Mohammed Ali Basha spent the night before an anti-HTS protest last week preparing flags and banners with his friends.

The activist painted three red stars on the green, white and black backdrop of the Syrian opposition's flag. A large banner being prepared displays the message Basha and his fellow protesters

want to put across: that the Syrian revolution - which began in 2011 - is not just against the country's President Bashar al-Assad, but against all "tyrants". "All of them means all of them," it says, a slogan long adopted by members of the Syrian opposition to indicate their opposition to autocrats of all persuasions. And for Basha, that includes HTS and its leader, Abu Mohamad al-Jolani. "Our protests against HTS resemble our early demonstrations against Bashar al-Assad and his regime because in both cases we have taken to the streets to denounce injustice and preserve our dignity and freedom," Basha told Al Jazeera. "Over the past few years, I have noticed the injustice practised against the people of the liberated areas [not controlled by al-Assad], and how the security branches affiliated with HTS have begun to commit the same criminal acts committed by al-Assad's security forces, such as killing under torture and arbitrary detention."

Ahmad Alhakim said he

knows all too well what can happen in an HTS prison. His brother, Abdulqadir, was tortured to death in one, he told Al Jazeera. Abdulqadir, 27, a father of three and a fighter in the Jaish al-Ahrar opposition group, was arrested by HTS last year on charges of dealing with foreign powers. "They abducted my brother for 10 months without us being able to know his whereabouts, any information about him, or even appoint a lawyer to pursue his case," Alhakim said.

In mid-February, Alhakim was told by a released detainee that Abdulqadir had died after being tortured in prison. His death was confirmed to Jaish al-Ahrar by HTS on February 22. "We demanded that the General Security Service hand over my brother's body, but they told us that they buried him and gave us the address of the burial place," Alhakim said, describing it as a large trench where many bodies were buried - a mass grave. "There were many graves without names, only num-

bered." It was Abdulqadir's death that sparked the protest movement, which quickly spread to Idlib's main towns.

In Binnish the next day, Basha and his fellow activists took their banners and flags and headed to the town centre to join the few dozen people who had gathered. Much of the anger was directed towards the HTS leader al-Jolani, with protesters calling for his removal in areas controlled by HTS and its affiliated Salvation Government, and its replacement by an elected body. "The era of slavery and tyranny ended with the start of the Syrian revolution in 2011, and the Syrian people, after paying dearly to gain their freedom and dignity, will not allow it to be taken away from them," Basha said.

It is a brave stance to take. Idlib province largely remains under the control of Syrian opposition fighters, dominated by HTS after it gradually forced out other opposition factions and monopolised governance of the region. — Aljazeera



## The Frontier Post

Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

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

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

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

## National stratagem and export-oriented growth

**P**RIME Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has directed the authorities to formulate a strategy aimed at a two-fold increase in the country's exports within the next five years. The Premier tasked the Ministry of Trade to compile a comprehensive mechanism in consultation with successful entrepreneurs and stakeholders that not only facilitates exporters in the e-commerce sector but also resolves the issues of Made in Pakistan brands. The government in consultation with relevant businesses was taking steps for maximum utilization of the export sector, with a specific focus on the promotion of IT, domestic use items, textiles, and other exceptional sectors. According to the Prime Minister, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) was the top priority of the government transforming challenges into opportunities and building the economy out of scratches.

Export-oriented industrialization (EOI) or Export-Led Growth, is a trade and economic policy that aims to accelerate a country's industrialization process by focusing on exporting goods for which the nation has a comparative advantage. The EOI capitalizes on a country's strengths in specific industries by identifying areas where the nation excels, it strategically promotes the production and export of specific goods. It involves opening domestic markets to foreign competition which increases the country's access to international markets. Tariff barriers are reduced, and policies are designed to facilitate exports. At the same time, governments support export-oriented sectors through subsidies, infrastructure development, and favorable policies to encourage growth in those areas. Export-led growth allows countries to earn hard currency through exports, which can then be used to import foreign goods affordably from abroad.

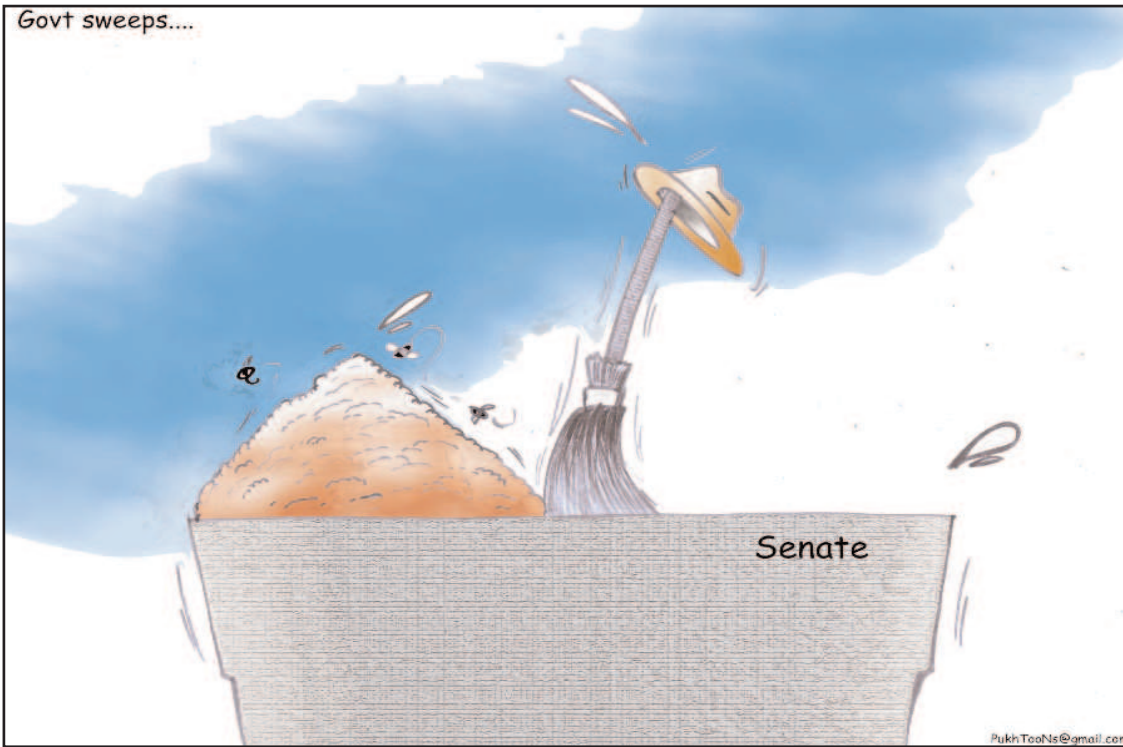
Pakistan's economy grapples with persistent trade imbalances, with imports several times greater than exports, scanty foreign reserves, and a lack of foreign investment together with the strong competition at the global level which largely shrunk the volume of the Pakistani exported goods in the global marketplace. Realistically, Pakistan, with its rich tapestry of resources and industries, stands at a pivotal juncture where the need for an export boom is more important than just traditional cartels-driven and politically influenced economic strategies. Currently, an export boom becomes imperative to recalibrate the country's economy, fostering a trade surplus that contributes to a more stable balance of payments. By leveraging an export portal for economic growth, Pakistan can strategically position itself to increase export volumes, bridging the trade gap and consolidating its economic foundations. The expansion of export-oriented industries, supported by a dedicated export portal for economic growth, translates into increased demand for skilled and unskilled labor. The job creation not only curbs poverty and alleviates unemployment but also injects vigor into the local economy, fostering a cycle of economic growth. In fact, growth, competitiveness, and an export boom are interdependent and directly connected. Continuous innovation, improvement in efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and adherence to international quality standards are important to thrive in the global marketplace. An export portal for economic growth becomes a catalyst for enhancing competitiveness by providing a platform where businesses can benchmark their products and services against global standards, ensuring they meet the expectations of discerning international consumers.

Historically, the Pakistani industry particularly the export sector faces serious issues relating to high energy tariffs, long power outages, competing quality standards, and acceptance in the global market. Meanwhile, energy generation and export boom are the recipes to resolve the long-held economic volatility of the South Asian nation. Hence, a robust export sector has the potential to alleviate the burden of foreign debt on Pakistan's economy. Increased export earnings, facilitated by an export portal for economic growth, generate additional revenue to facilitate debt servicing. Such approaches not only reduce reliance on external financing but also strengthen the Country's financial standing on the global stage. The Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) has played an adorable role in attracting foreign investment from friendly nations and forging a conducive environment for businesses and industries, yet there is a need for more procedural liberation and functional monitoring of the economy, to reduce bureaucratic red-tapism and promote transparency in economic affairs. At the time, only an export-oriented and sustainable economy is the linchpin in resolving Pakistan's unceasing economic woes and unlocking prosperity and affluence in the crisis-hit nation. As soon as this stratagem is realized on the ground, the nation will start translating into its long-held economic version of the Asian Tiger in the days to come.

## Electricity theft and moral depletion

**T**HE nationwide crackdown against electricity and gas theft is currently underway in all parts of the country. The yesterday's media specifically covered press releases issued by the Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Limited (SNGPL) Lahore Circle and Islamabad Electricity Supply Company (IESCO) claiming towary performances against massive theft of precious and highly needed power commodities by the habitual criminals. Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) during its ongoing gas theft crackdown, disconnected another 2,436 connections in Punjab, KP and Islamabad with Rs 28.73 million fine imposed. Where as, Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has claimed to have recovered Rs 80.83 million from electricity defaulters, registered 1186 FIRs, and sent 994 people to Adiala Jail in its ongoing drive.

Illegal electricity theft and unauthorized use of power without proper metering or payment are widespread problems in the country. It causes billions of rupees in financial losses for the government and relevant power companies, contributing to power shortages, overbilling, or circular debt of the government entities. The volume and scope of the problems is so gigantic that concerned companies and LEAs are continuously cracking down against the culprits over the past almost six months but still pilferage and illegal use of electricity and natural gas continue in a majority of the areas. Realistically, the people who had been using free electricity and gas for decades, have now become habitual of theft and currently not ready to pay bills despite imposition of punishments and fines by the authorities. So far, all strategies and measures including the installation of smart meters, technical monitoring, public awareness campaigns, and legal prosecution and punishments of the offenders failed to stop culprits from theft of unbilled government resources. According to the reports, miscreants again started using the kunda system and illegal connection of electricity and gas despite paying a penalty for their crime and misconduct. Generally, our nation has lost the divine moral principles and high standards like honesty, truthfulness, nationalism and loyalty to the employer, organization, department and in broader terms patriotism with the country. Government property and national resources are being concerned as the everybody's possessions or heirloom from the grandparents. Meanwhile, theft, beggary, encroachment, corruption, misuse of authority and violation of the law are not being perceived as social evils, crime or misconduct in today's Pakistan. Such behaviour has turned the country into a heaven for beggars, corrupts, criminals and crooks who in turn, have destroyed each aspect of our national life. There is a need for the implementation of more harsh measures, including rigorous imprisonment and social boycott of the power pilferers so these people abandon their long held theft habit and stop animosity toward society and the country as well.



# Biden is still the best US president Israel could wish for

Faisal Kutty

**UNITED States President Ronald Reagan's order to Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to put an end to his "holocaust" in Lebanon is perhaps the best-known political anecdote from Israel's 1982 invasion. Less known, however, is the enthusiastic defence for that very same "military operation" - dubbed "Operation Peace for the Galilee" - offered by a young democratic senator at a private meeting where Begin was being grilled by US lawmakers over Israel's disproportionate use of force.**

According to Begin, 40-year-old Delaware Senator Joe Biden delivered "a very impassioned speech" in support of Israel during a closed Foreign Policy Committee meeting in Washington, DC and said "he would go even further than Israel" and "forcefully fend off anyone who sought to invade his country, even if that meant killing women or children".

Begin, a former leader of the Irgun, the notorious armed group that carried out some of the worst acts of ethnic cleansing during the creation of the state of Israel, including the 1948 Deir Yassin massacre, was by his own account stunned by Biden's chutzpah.

"I dissociated myself from these remarks," Begin later told Israeli reporters. "I said to him: 'No, sir; attention must be paid.

According to our values, it is forbidden to hurt women and children, even in war. ... Sometimes there are casualties among the civilian population as well. But it is forbidden to aspire to this. This is a yardstick of human civilisation, not to hurt civilians." It turns out, Biden's enthusiastic backing of Israel as it committed in Lebanon what Reagan deemed a "holocaust" was not a fad or anomaly.

Today, as president, Biden appears even more eager to legitimise and encourage Israeli aggression and international law violations than he was more than 40 years ago. Since October 7, the Biden administration vetoed three United Nations Security Council resolutions calling for a ceasefire. Despite consequent polls demonstrating growing public support for a ceasefire, and the death toll in Gaza passing 30,000, the Biden administration stood firm in its position against a ceasefire until March 22, when it finally introduced its own resolution. The resolution, which stopped short of explicitly demanding Israel

halt its campaign in Gaza, was vetoed by Russia and China for that very reason. On March 25, a revised version that included an unconditional call for a ceasefire was put to vote and passed with 14 votes in favour with the US abstaining.

The passing of the resolution calling for an "immediate ceasefire" for the rest of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan "leading to lasting peace" was interpreted by many as a sign that the pressure from the international community is finally getting to Israel's staunch ally in the White House. The resolution, however, was hardly a real threat to the continuation of Israel's war on Gaza. It not only failed to include a call for a "permanent ceasefire", as many UN members wanted, but also demanded the unconditional release of Israeli captives without even mentioning the thousands of Palestinians held without charges in Israel.

Furthermore, it was adopted under Chapter VI (Pacific Settlement of Disputes) of the UN Charter rather than Chapter VII (Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression). While Chapter VI resolutions are commonly described as legally binding, there is no consensus among legal scholars and jurists on whether they are legally enforceable. This allowed the US to dismiss the resolution as not legally enforceable and practically provided Israel with an excuse to completely ignore the ceasefire call from the UNSC. In the end, what some interpreted as the belated softening of Biden's pro-Israel position was nothing but smoke and mirrors.

In fact, while the world was busy discussing whether the US would finally allow the UNSC to pass a ceasefire resolution and whether that resolution could do anything to put an end to the devastation in Gaza, the Biden administration was working to push through another generous "relief" package for Israel. The weekend before the vote on the amended ceasefire resolution on March 25, while leading human rights groups, health organisations and UN agencies were sounding the alarm over the threat of famine looming over Gaza, Biden signed into law a \$1.2 trillion funding package which was approved by the US House of Representatives on

Friday and passed by the Senate on Saturday.

The massive financial package, which helped the US avert a partial government shutdown, did not include \$14.1bn in military aid for Israel the administration initially called for. Nevertheless, it provided Israel with concessions that are perhaps much more valuable to its war effort than any additional military aid would be. On top of fully funding the annual US "security commitment" of \$3.3bn for Israel, the bill banned US funding for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA), the main provider of aid and basic services to Palestinians in Gaza, until March 2025.

The US ban is tied to an unsubstantiated Israeli claim that about a dozen of the agency's 13,000 employees in Gaza participated in the October 7 Hamas attacks. UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini immediately terminated employees accused by Israel. He later called the terminations an act of "reverse due process" and admitted to having no evidence to support their firing. The six-page Israeli intelligence dossier on UNRWA employees' alleged involvement in the October 7 attacks, which several donor countries cited in explaining their decision to suspend funding for the agency, was also found to contain no concrete evidence when reviewed by the United Kingdom's Channel 4 and other news organisations. The European Union and countries including Canada, Sweden, Denmark, and Australia subsequently resumed funding, while other contributors, including Saudi Arabia and Ireland, increased their donations.

Just last week, Democratic US Senator Chris Van Hollen called the Israeli claims about UNRWA "flat-out lies". None of these, however, seemingly convinced the Biden administration to resume funding for the UN agency providing life-saving aid to more than a million besieged civilians, mostly women and children, facing famine and indiscriminate bombardment.

Biden's bill also includes a provision that would limit aid to the Palestinian Authority, which governs the occupied West Bank, if "the Palestinians initiate an International Criminal Court (ICC) judicially authorized investigation, or actively supports such an

investigation, that subjects Israeli nationals to an investigation for alleged crimes against Palestinians". This is shameless blackmailing of a people from pursuing their right to self-determination. The bill further withholds funds from the UN Human Rights Council for what it calls "anti-Israel" actions. Consistent with Israel's refusal to allow any independent investigations into its conduct against Palestinians, the bill also eliminates funding to the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory which has a mandate to investigate war crimes.

The UN and other international organisations funded in the bill are directed to assess and report on attempts to combat "anti-Israel" bias. Moreover, the bill puts new conditions on assistance to Gaza, such as coordination with Israel, prevention of diversion to the Palestinian resistance, and a requirement for third-party monitoring.

These measures appear to ignore the fact that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) found that Israel is plausibly committing genocide in Gaza, and the world's leading humanitarian agencies have sounded the alarm that the worst man-made famine in history may soon hit the besieged territory. It seems there is no crime Israel could commit, or humanitarian red line it could cross, that would turn President Biden against it.

Since the March 25 UNSC resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza, news in the US and Europe have been dominated by reports suggesting Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are now "on a collision course" and experiencing a "wartime low" in relations. This may as well be true, but the alleged dust-up between Biden and Netanyahu does not change the fact that the US president is still the same man who stunned Begin with his unconditional support for Israel in 1982.

The UNSC ceasefire resolution, or the many convenient media leaks that suggest Biden is "fed up" with the Israeli government's conduct in Gaza, should not fool anyone. Biden is still the same man who said he would have gone "even further than Israel" in Lebanon, and he is still the best US president Israel could have wished for as it continues with its "plausible genocide" in Gaza.

Aljazeera

# Surge in Islamophobia on Biden's watch is unprecedented

Corey Saylor & Farah Afify

**T**HE surge in Islamophobic bias in the United States in late 2023 horrifies the soul. Wade al-Fayoume, a six-year-old Muslim Palestinian boy, was stabbed to death in Chicago. A Georgia teacher threatened to decapitate a student for criticising an Israeli flag he put up in the classroom. A Maryland-based Muslim's routine donation to a place of worship in Ohio was reportedly delayed by PayPal "[i]n light of the ongoing national emergency in Israel".

In the last three months of 2023, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organisation, received a staggering 3,578 complaints about discrimination based on race, ethnicity, or religion. This number illustrates the alarming reality that, under President Joe Biden, Islamophobic bias has reached unprecedented levels, surpassing in some ways even the appalling track record of the previous administration.

By comparison, in the three months following then-presidential candidate Donald Trump's December 2015 campaign pledge to ban Muslims from entering the US, our organisation received 1,098 complaints. After Trump was elected, he issued an executive order enacting the ban on January 27, 2017. In the following three months, CAIR received an additional 1,813 complaints, bringing the total of the two surges to 2,911 complaints.

Trump's surges were fuelled by the intentional deployment of Islamophobic and anti-immigrant stereotypes. This started with the press release by his campaign announcing his pledge to ban Muslims, which referred to a deeply flawed and inaccurate survey by an Islamophobic organisation about Muslim Americans' purported beliefs about Islamic law and violence. The deliberate decision of his campaign to make the announcement of the Muslim ban pledge on Pearl Harbor Day also helped portray Muslims as "foreign invaders".

In the following year, until he became president and enacted the ban, Trump's campaign continued to use Islamophobic and anti-immigrant rhetoric, encouraging growing anti-Muslim bias. Violent incidents that took place after the ban included a break-in into the apartment of a Muslim couple in Virginia who came home after visiting family to find "F\*\*\* Muslims" written on a wall, their Quran torn to shreds, and all their valuables gone.

During his presidential campaign, Biden accused Trump of fanning "the flames of hate" in the country and promised to repeal what he called the "vile Muslim ban". After he took office, he did follow through on his vow. But Biden's rhetoric has changed sharply since the escalation of violence in Israel-Palestine in October. He and other liberal politicians have not only provided unconditional political and mili-

tary support to Israel amid accusations of genocide against Palestinians, but also repeated Islamophobic Israeli propaganda.

Biden's early dismissal of the Palestinian Ministry of Health's casualty reports, which a Department of State official later admitted may actually underestimate the true death toll, deployed a common anti-Arab and Islamophobic trope: they lie. The fact that he used numbers reflecting the ministry's data in his State of the Union speech on March 7 cannot undo the damage done. National Security Council official John Kirby, who with visible emotion has mourned the lives of Ukrainian civilians killed by Russian forces, has attributed mass Palestinian civilian casualties to the inevitability of war, mirroring the use of dehumanising Islamophobic rhetoric seen in Trump's administration.

Meanwhile, Biden's allies in Congress joined the Republican Party in throwing absurd allegations at the only US congressperson of Palestinian descent, Rashida Tlaib, and voted to censure her. Amid outrage at the growing surge in Islamophobia, the Biden administration made an attempt to intervene, but it fell short of inspiring any confidence.

In October, we urged President Biden to follow in the footsteps of past leaders, like President George W. Bush who visited a mosque in the aftermath of 9/11, which resulted in a noticeable drop in bias attacks on those perceived as Muslim. Yet, this simple request remains unacknowledged. While the president condemned the brutal murder of six-year-old Wade and announced plans for a national counter-Islamophobia strategy, these measures do little to address the root causes of the surge.

It is clear that we will not see an end to this round of violence against Muslims in the US until we see an end to the violence against Palestinians in Gaza. And yet the crucial step of calling for a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and acknowledging the decades of occupation and apartheid faced by Palestinians remains elusive. Instead, Biden has decided in recent days to approve yet another arms shipment to Israel worth billions of dollars. It is important to note here that our data does not paint the full picture. We are only able to report those incidents submitted to CAIR, usually by Muslims. We suspect that many more of those advocating for Palestinian humanity - a coalition that includes Christians, Jews, Arabs, Asian Americans, African Americans, and others - face hate crimes and other acts of bias at a dangerous scale.

President Biden's rhetoric may have improved from his initial unequivocal support for Israel, but the weapons continue to flow to Israel. He has yet to improve his intervention in domestic Islamophobic bias. Without meaningful action, the recent surge in Islamophobia will persist, casting a dark shadow on Biden's claim of pursuing justice and equality.

## By torturing Moscow attack suspects, Russia risks radicalizing future terrorists

Alec Bertina

**S**HORTLY after Russian law enforcement was captured the four suspects of the Crocus City Hall terror attack - now agreed to be the work of Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISIS-K) extremists - images indicating their torture surfaced for the whole world. To the joy of many pro-war and ultranationalist social media channels, a video of suspect Rajab Alizade having his ear cut off and being forced to eat it had surfaced.

Another suspect, Shamsiddin Fariduni, was pictured lying down with his jeans lowered and being electrocuted by wires attached to his genitals. By the time all four suspects appeared in court for their trial on March 24, and were found guilty two days later, it was obvious that all of them had undergone some level of torture since their capture.

It is unclear to what extent that torture was done at the behest of orders from the

Kremlin. However, there is no evidence of the responsible Russian law enforcement employees facing disciplinary action. Regardless, the decision to use violence towards the suspects so visibly is best explained by the desire to not only instill fear in other extremists considering committing any terrorist act inside Russia, but also to show that despite the terrible violence they committed, they are ultimately weak and vulnerable. Whilst some segments of Russia's population may be satisfied by this perceived act of vengeance, it will also turn the suspects into martyrs to be used in Islamic State propaganda. Furthermore, it shows that the Russian state may be trying to deflect from the fact that its global efforts to fight IS militants and its invasion of Ukraine have only made the country more vulnerable to such attacks in the future.

It did this by giving fuel and material that could be used to support the existing narratives those groups culti-

vated through their propaganda about the US, radicalizing recruits into joining their ranks. Indeed, IS-affiliated media has already released posters declaring that the torture of the Moscow attack suspects will only increase their thirst for the blood of Russian civilians and soldiers alike. When coupled with the increasingly hostile treatment in Russia of migrants from the suspects' home region of Central Asia, who are also the main target of recruitment by ISIS-K and other terrorist groups, this provides the needed conditions for a terrorist propaganda campaign to be successful.

Moreover, broader scrutiny of the US Central Intelligence Agency's Rendition, Detention and Interrogation concluded that torture was not effective at producing actionable intelligence for militaries and intelligence services to use. According to scholarly literature, the pain that subjects of

torture were put through not only undermined memory recall but also failed to alter the willingness of subjects to divulge valuable information. However, it did not help that many of the suspects held at black sites like Abu Ghraib were not even terrorists.

Despite the context of the torture inflicted by Russian law enforcement being different, it is clear engaging in such torture of the subjects was unlikely to provide valuable information that would help counter ISIS-K and IS central more broadly, whilst also calling into question the reliability of any evidence that the Russian state would wish to present based on the confessions of those suspects.

It is also indicative of how the Russian state often prioritizes a show of strength to the detriment of its security and internal stability. When coupled with unsubstantiated claims that Ukraine was involved in the attack, the showcasing of such torture

the Kremlin may be trying to show it is serious about combating the threat from IS without diverting military, intelligence, and financial resources from the invasion of Ukraine to deal with it.

Equally, the torture of the suspected attacker distracts from the fact that despite a sustained campaign to fight IS affiliates across Africa and in Syria, Russia has been unable to tackle the threat these groups pose to its soldiers and civilians. Islamic State-affiliated militants in Africa and Syria have inflicted losses against Russian military personnel and private military contractors through ambushes and IEDs. Additionally, in Sept. 2023, two members of staff at the Russian

embassy in Afghanistan's capital Kabul were killed in a suicide bombing.

ISIS-K and IS Central's calls for violence against the Russian state have only been getting more vocal, with ISIS-K going as far as alluding to the opportunity presented by its weakness in light of the Wagner mutiny. This makes it likely that if Russia continues to prioritize resources for the continuation of its continue its resources in Ukraine, the threat from the terrorist group will only get worse. Furthermore, it acts as a form of encouragement for any other extremist group seeking to conduct similar attacks in the future.

The Moscow Times

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# Watching the watchdogs: Israel's attacks on journalists are backfiring

Rami G Khouri

FOR the past six months, Israel has put a lot of effort into covering up its genocidal crimes in Gaza. One of the most brutal ways it does this is by routinely threatening, targeting and assassinating Palestinian journalists. The US-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) has reported that at least 90 Palestinian journalists have been killed since October 7 alongside two Israelis and three Lebanese. This is the highest death toll of journalists in any modern conflict that CPJ has monitored. Another 25 Palestinian journalists have been detained by Israeli forces, and four are missing.

Israel also bans foreign media outlets from entering Gaza, forcing them to report from Tel Aviv, Jerusalem or southern Israel. On Israeli territory, they must comply with the rules and censorship of the Israeli Military Censor, which is part of the Israeli army and requires media materials be submitted for its review prior to publication or broadcasting. On Monday, the Israeli Knesset also passed a law allowing its government to shut down news networks. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to use the legislation to ban Al Jazeera. Killing journalists and censoring media operating in Israel are supposed to ensure that global coverage reflects Israel's spin on events or ignores aspects of its scorched earth conduct in Gaza.

But this strategy is failing for three reasons. First, because scores of highly motivated Palestinian journalists continue to brave Israeli bombardment and fire to report on events on the ground. Second, because ordinary Palestinians also document and share on social media their coverage of events.

Third, because international media increasingly question Israeli accounts of events and demand more verified facts. Worse for Israel, its behaviour to kill first, accuse the dead of terrorism and then not answer any questions is actually backfiring. It is generating greater global attention and media coverage of the assassinations of Palestinian journalists along with demands for Israeli political and legal accountability, which increased after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) proclaimed that Israel is "plausibly" carrying out genocidal acts in Gaza.

This backlash is increasingly apparent even in American mainstream media, which tend to slant pro-Israel. In an unusually bold article published on CNN's website on March 20, Oliver Darcy, the channel's senior media reporter, openly criticised the Israeli armed forces and government for the deaths of journalists in Gaza. "With each death, the world sees a little less from the war-torn region. It is incumbent on Israel, which is responsible for the conduct of its military forces, to fully explain its actions when a member of the press is killed. So far, however, the [Israeli military] has been less than forthcoming," Darcy wrote.

United States media outlets have also launched their own investigations into the assassinations of Palestinian journalists. The Washington Post, for example, investigated the killings of four Palestinian journalists - among them Al Jazeera's Hamza Dahdouh and Mustafa Thuraya - by an Israeli missile that hit their car on January 7 near Khan Younis. Its research raised significant doubts about Israel's explanation that the men were "terrorists" who threat-

ened Israeli troops. Representatives of major US media outlets - including NBC, CNN, The New York Times and The New Yorker - also signed a letter with other foreign media organisations calling on Israel to protect Palestinian journalists' rights and hold to account those responsible for their deaths.

Meanwhile, various nonprofit organisations have dedicated significant resources to covering the violations against and killings of Palestinian journalists. The CPJ, Reporters Without Borders and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), which represents 600,000 journalists in 140 countries, have issued regular reports on the situation in Gaza. On February 26, the IFJ observed the International Day for Palestinian Journalists and called on its affiliates to support and come out in solidarity with them. The Security in Context network of international scholars published a paper revealing how Israel restricts media "beyond detentions and assassinations, to target media institutions, resulting in the complete or partial destruction of over 60 local and foreign media institutions".

The United Nations has also extensively documented the plight of Palestinian journalists. In early February, five special rapporteurs of the UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights warned: "We have received disturbing reports that, despite being clearly identifiable in jackets and helmets marked 'press' or traveling in well-marked press vehicles, journalists have come under attack, which would seem to indicate that the killings, injury, and detention are a deliberate strategy by Israeli forces to obstruct the media and

silence critical reporting." They asked the ICJ and the International Criminal Court to pay special attention to crimes committed against Palestinian media workers.

Apart from extending solidarity within the profession, media professionals across the world are also concerned about the larger effect of the impunity with which Israel targets Palestinian journalists. Julia Bacha, award-winning producer of Boycott and other documentaries on Palestine-Israel, explained in a phone interview that beyond Israel's criminal actions and Palestinian families' grief, the targeting of Palestinian journalists endangers their colleagues elsewhere as well.

"This issue is critical because what happens here will impact journalism elsewhere for years. We cannot let this moment in modern history of the unprecedented rate of killing journalists pass without urgent action to protect the media during wars. It would send a very bad message to others in the world, especially autocrats who feel they can ignore laws and kill journalists as they wish. Journalists must be allowed to work safely because we can only hold people accountable for criminal deeds if we have the facts that only on-the-spot journalists can gather, verify and disseminate," she explained.

Indeed, by mass killing Palestinian journalists, Israel positions itself alongside other brutal regimes that deny or restrict media coverage of their actions, which further exposes the big holes in its democratic credentials that it tries to project to international media. By attacking Palestinian journalists and denying foreign media access to Gaza, it has shot itself in the foot and weakened its own credibility. Israel is clearly losing its war on truth.

# What happened when CIA tried to work with Russians to fight terror

Douglas London

AMERICAN officials have been warning of the Islamic State Khorasan Province's (ISIS-K) aspiration to conduct external attacks and likely capacity to strike the United States within six months since the chaotic US exit from Afghanistan in August 2021. But neither Russian leader Vladimir Putin nor Federal Security Service (FSB) Director Alexander Bortnikov made any mention of the Islamic State after the terror group claimed responsibility for the March 22 concert hall attack that left 143 dead.

Rather, both blamed the attack on "radical Islamists," with Bortnikov adding that it was "of course aided by Western services," accusing Ukraine, the US and Great Britain of facilitating the attack. As reported in 2018, then-CIA Director Mike Pompeo welcomed Russia's three principal intelligence chiefs to CIA headquarters for counterterrorism discussions. Sergey Naryshkin, the head of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service or SVR, then-Russian Military Intelligence (GRU) Chief Igor Korobov and Bortnikov all participated. But at the agency, we understood Pompeo's motive was to appease former President Donald Trump, who rejected the intelligence community's assessment that Russia interfered with the 2016 presidential election; the director had a mission to win over Trump by meeting almost every morning at the White House.

At the time, I was the CIA's counterterrorism chief for South and Southwest Asia, responsible for ISIS-K. Following the Washington meetings, Pompeo ordered my office to send a team of analysts who studied the Islamic State to Moscow for the beginning of what the director hoped would be a continuing dialogue. In response to shared concerns about the Islamic State's external capabilities, Pompeo reasoned that the Russians would be eager for help facing the threat of Central Asian ISIS members returning home from Syria and Iraq with newly acquired skills, battlefield experience and extensive jihadist networks.

The CIA would not permit me to explicitly address the behavior of our Russian interlocutors, nor what they provided. But I can say it was consistent with, if not indeed worse than, how several former colleagues captured Trump's initiative for a 2020 Washington Post opinion piece, when they said that "the effort to foster (counterterrorism) cooperation proved a failure. The Russian side never provided meaningful intelligence or information." The Russians have, however, produced and spread disinformation about ISIS. Former US Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul put it plainly, noting that Russian state-controlled media and bloggers had propagated the myth that the US founded the Islamic State under former President Barack Obama. Trump famously echoed the same falsehood publicly made by Russian and Iranian officials.

Russia knows it has a terrorist problem, despite its deflection and spin to preserve Putin's image, but his priorities are elsewhere. Terrorism is not an existential threat to Putin's rule. Such a regime-endangering threat could be a cascading set of crises owing to his war against Ukraine that may spark the critical mass of long-repressed fear, anger and wanting change into a popular uprising that overwhelms his security forces. And Putin believes some of his own rhetoric, tending to project his own behavior onto others. In late 2017, the US quietly shared actionable intelligence that enabled Russia to thwart a planned Islamic State attack in the Russian city of St. Petersburg, critical information sharing that Putin acknowledged by praising the CIA and personally thanking Trump.

On March 7, the US Embassy in Moscow made a public announcement, owing no doubt to its possession of credible albeit limited detail, concerning an "imminent" extremist threat in Russia. While the US shared such awareness with Russia in advance of

Middle East and Turkey, the gateway to Syria.

According to Turkish officials, at least two of the Moscow attackers were in Istanbul not long before traveling to Russia for the attack, moved freely between the two countries and boarded the same March 2 Istanbul-to-Moscow flight. ISIS-K can also look for support from an indigenous Muslim and Turkic-speaking population bearing the brunt of military conscription to fight in Ukraine. ISIS-K's Central Asians will have a more challenging time just securing US visas and overcoming screening procedures if

On the other hand, he understands that Western leaders will be distracted from addressing Russian aggression by dealing with the internal political consequences of such attacks on their home soil. Russian intelligence also suffers from systemic failings in recognizing, penetrating and dismantling terrorist cells, failings that stem from doctrine and a deliberately stovepiped structure that obstructs information sharing and agility. The Russian security apparatus applies the same scorched-earth tactics to intelligence as its military does on the battlefield. Patience, subtlety and stealth is not the FSB's style, nor is implementing a hearts-and-minds outreach to win the trust of Muslim and Central Asian Russian communities. Russians are likely to buy into the Kremlin's spin about the country's Muslim communities supported by images of FSB raids, some of which have been shared on social media. Pressure and theater are more expeditious than cultivating relationships, albeit inefficient, but do produce metrics on suspects detained or killed, misleading as they might be concerning the true impact of these operations.

fire to the hall.

ISIS is more likely to hit US targets abroad and take aim at the homeland by inspiring lone-wolf attacks. And the political consequences for the US from any attack would be more severe than those faced by Putin, for whom there's a net gain. Russians have no outlet for public outrage and Putin has shown with this and previous incidents that he can leverage his massive information enterprise to spin events to his advantage. On the other hand, he understands that Western leaders will be distracted from addressing Russian aggression by dealing with the internal political consequences of such attacks on their home soil.

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FSB officers will coerce, threaten and intimidate potential sources with diminishing returns that will only fuel ISIS-K recruitment and fundraising, which is no doubt seeing a surge from its Moscow attack. Russian intelligence will be left to depend on the unwilling, ill-informed or duplicitous. Operating in Russia, where Central Asians are ubiquitous, often speak the language and can blend in, provides valuable operational advantages for ISIS-K. And the terror group's operatives can come and go on daily regional flights as well as from across the

they choose to attack here in the US, especially those coming from Turkey and the Middle East. Central Asians have long held key ISIS leadership positions. At the Islamic State's height, Tajik Gulmurod Khalimov commanded its Iraqi capital of Mosul. Prior to May 2015, Khalimov led a special police branch under Tajikistan's Interior Ministry and received training in both Russia and the United States in this role.

In 2016, the Islamic State's minister of war was Tarkhan Tayumurovovich Batirashvili, better known as "Omar al-Shishani" and "Omar the Chechen." Batirashvili was a Georgian national with a Chechen background, who fought the Russians in Georgia as an army sergeant. He and Khalimov were both killed in US airstrikes. After conveying warnings to Iran of ISIS-K's January 3 Kerman attack, which killed 95 people in twin bombings, and then announcing in advance the group's plans to attack Russia, it stands to reason that US intelligence has something to offer even nations with whom Washington does not have warm relations in the interest of combating a common enemy. But Putin does not think like most Americans, nor do Iran's rulers, something American political leaders seem unable to appreciate.

Washington's extension of olive branches has reaped negligible intelligence returns and little influence on such Russian behavior as the Kremlin's March 2018 attack against former Russian intelligence officer turned British spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in Salisbury, England, coming on the heels of Pompeo's outreach. The US certainly has reason to worry about ISIS, as does Russia, but to different degrees. Practical reasons, apart from the legal "duty to warn" requirement and ethical considerations, will compel us to share knowledge even with adversaries because successful terrorist operations anywhere facilitate influence, fundraising and recruitment that these groups will likewise use against us. But doing so requires open eyes, regard for our sources and methods and overcoming the mistake of applying American logic to Putin and his intelligence services.

CNN

# Palestinians have a new government but no one is cheering

Osama Al-Sharif

A new Palestinian government was sworn in earlier this week in Ramallah, a few weeks after the resignation of former Prime Minister Mohammed Shtayyeh, who took over in 2017. Mohammed Mustafa, a 69-year-old Palestinian economist and a close ally of President Mahmoud Abbas, now heads a 23-member Cabinet of technocrats that is described as nonpartisan. It includes six ministers from Gaza, underlining two primary objectives of the new government: postwar reconstruction and restoring the Palestinian Authority's rule over the devastated enclave.

Mustafa's selection was welcomed by the US, pushing Abbas, 88, to bring a new and trusted face to the political arena to reform and revitalize the PA and eradicate corruption. But while the chatter in the US State Department centered on stripping Abbas of much of his authority in favor of the new premier, in practice, Mustafa, who served for some time as the president's economic adviser and was responsible for Gaza's reconstruction following the 2014 Israeli attack, is unlikely to challenge his boss.

On the face of it, Mustafa, a successful businessman who has served with the World Bank, may be able to restructure the PA to regain the trust of international financial backers. But he faces an uphill struggle, as the current far-right Israeli government is putting financial constraints on the PA, with Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich vowing to defund the Palestinian body.

Abbas has stressed that the new government will seek to rebuild war-torn Gaza, unify the Palestinians and prepare for the

holding of much-delayed legislative and presidential elections. But while he mentioned the elections, he also stated that such polls will never take place if the Palestinians of East Jerusalem are not allowed to vote. The last time legislative elections were held in PA territories was in 2006, when Hamas won more seats than Fatah in the Palestinian legislature, forcing Abbas to ask Ismail Haniyeh to form a Palestinian government. That experiment was short-lived and Haniyeh was fired a year later, prompting the bloody overthrow of the PA in Gaza and the Hamas takeover.

Facing pressure from within Fatah, Abbas, who disbanded the Palestinian Legislative Council in 2018 and consolidated his power by ruling by decree, announced that legislative and presidential elections would be held in 2021. But he heeded the advice of Arab allies and decided to postpone the elections indefinitely, arguing that Israel would not allow Palestinians in East Jerusalem to vote. Fatah was facing deep divisions, while opinion polls showed that Hamas was likely to score big in the West Bank.

Abbas also dodged pressure from the US and his Arab allies to name a successor. Opinion polls in the West Bank show that the majority of Palestinians want long-time prisoner Marwan Barghout to head the PA. Interestingly, Hamas also expressed support for Barghouti. His name is said to be top of the list that the group recently presented to mediators as part of the ongoing prisoner swap negotiations with Israel.

The announcement of the new government in Ramallah was met with skepticism and even cynicism among the Palestinians. Hamas,

fighting for its survival in Gaza, lambasted Abbas for failing to consult them and other Palestinian factions. Friction between Hamas and Fatah has spiked in the past few weeks, with both sides trading blame and accusations, especially about postwar Gaza and the PA crackdown on West Bank militants.

Meanwhile, Abbas' popularity among Palestinians continues to plummet. A wartime opinion poll published last December revealed that almost 90 percent wanted him to resign. That was up by 10 percentage points from last October. In the West Bank, 92 percent called for the president's resignation, with most viewing him as presiding over an administration widely seen as corrupt, autocratic and ineffective.

Israel's war on Gaza and the massive loss of civilian life there, as well as images of stern Palestinian resistance, have boosted Hamas' popularity, at least for now, among Palestinians in the West Bank. One also has to take into account the PA's inability to curb daily Israeli incursions into Palestinian cities and refugee camps in the West Bank, which have resulted in hundreds of killings and thousands of arrests, in addition to the systematic destruction of infrastructure.

And since Israel waged war on Gaza, the Tel Aviv government has accelerated the confiscation of Palestinian lands and the construction of new illegal settlements in the West Bank, all of which underlines the PA's failure to protect its people. The future of the PA is now intrinsically linked to the outcome of the Gaza war and the day-after scenarios. For now, the new government, like the defunct one, is hamstrung by a radical Israeli government that is

also waging a multi-fronted war in the West Bank and Gaza.

Added to all this is Abbas' complete reliance on US support. The Biden administration's position since the Oct. 7 Hamas attack has been characteristically pro-Israel, while offering lip service to Palestinian suffering in Gaza and the West Bank. Washington has failed to give the Palestinians a political horizon that would end the occupation and its timid verbal support of the two-state solution is treated with skepticism.

What the Palestinians need today is not a cosmetic change but a genuine drive to redraw the structure and context of the Palestinian national movement as it faces existential challenges not seen since 1948. The Zionist project is at a critical milestone as it ponders its push to colonize the rest of the Occupied Territories while canceling the Palestinian identity.

The future of the Palestinians and their just cause must not be decided in Ramallah and by Abbas alone - 30 years since the Oslo Accords delivered the Palestinians to this current sorry state. There is a strategic need to revive the Palestine Liberation Organization and all relevant Palestinian institutions, such as the Palestine National Council. Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and beyond must have a say on how to move on from the toxic legacy of Oslo while charting a new course. Hamas' popularity is largely the outcome of the failures of Oslo and the PA under Abbas. It is a reaction to Israel's ruthless policies and the genocidal war it is carrying out in Gaza. A trustworthy and credible Palestinian leadership must be restored. The current path lacks both.

Arab News

# UN accuses Russia of human rights violations against Ukraine

Lisa Schlein

THE UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights accuses Russia of serious violations of international human rights and humanitarian laws in its war against Ukraine. A new report by the OHCHR warns Russia's armed attack and occupation of Ukrainian territory will have long-lasting consequences for Ukraine and its population at a time when global attention on the critical situation appears to be waning.

"Despite harrowing stories of human suffering unfolding every day in Ukraine, I fear that the world has grown numb to this crisis," Volker Tu'rck, UN high commissioner for human rights, said Tuesday. In a bleak assessment of the situation, Tu'rck told the UN Human Rights Council, "It is now over two years since the Russian Federation launched its full-scale armed attack on the country. Two years of immense suffering, bloodshed, loss and grief. Countless families have been separated." He noted more than 10,500 civilians have been reported killed and more than 20,000 injured.

"The actual figures are likely significantly higher," he said. The report, which covers the period from December 1, 2023, to February 29, 2024, says the war continues to cause devastating civilian harm in large-scale attacks through "missiles and loitering munitions launched by Russian

armed forces across Ukraine." It says this is causing a spike in civilian casualties, "reversing the otherwise general downward trend in civilian casualties throughout 2023." This year marks 10 years since Russia illegally annexed the Crimean Peninsula, a period during which people in Crimea have been "charged and convicted ... for acts that are not crimes under Ukrainian law," according to the report. "Russian Federation citizenship has been broadly imposed," Tu'rck said. "Russian authorities have conscripted male residents of Crimea into the Russian armed forces, eventually forcing them to fight against their own country."

He said Ukrainian children have been deprived of an education in their own language and people have been denied the right to freely express their opinion. "The violations we documented in occupied Crimea foreshadowed what we now see evolving in Ukrainian territory occupied by the Russian Federation following its full-scale armed attack," said the human rights commissioner. "In the last two years, Russian armed forces have committed widespread violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, including unlawful killings, torture, enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention," he said, adding that these violations have occurred with impunity.

"There has been nowhere to seek justice, nowhere to turn for an effective remedy," he said. "The cumulative effect of these actions has been to create a pervasive climate of fear, which has allowed the Russian Federation to solidify its control." In the reporting period, OHCHR officials interviewed 60 Ukrainian prisoners of war who recently had been released from Russian captivity during a POW exchange. They said the POWs provided credible, detailed accounts of having been tortured, subjected to beatings, electric shocks, threats of execution, sexual violence and other harsh treatment. The OHCHR recorded 12 cases of executions of at least 32 captured Ukrainian POWs. It has verified three of these incidents in which Russian service members executed seven Ukrainian service members.

"In this same period, my office interviewed 44 Russian POWs in Ukrainian captivity," said Tu'rck. "While they did not complain about the treatment and conditions in established places of detention, several of them described instances of torture and ill-treatment in transit places after they were evacuated from the battlefield." The high commissioner said the tragedy in Ukraine has gone on for too long and called on the Russian Federation to cease its armed

attacks. "The violations of international humanitarian and human rights law by the Russian armed forces and administrative officials in occupied territory must stop at once," he said.

Russia boycotted the meeting and informed the council president that it "did not wish to take the floor as a concerned country," Ukraine's ambassador to the UN in Geneva had no such misgivings. Filipenko Yevheniia sharply criticized Russia and its "systematic deprivation of fundamental rights and freedoms in Crimea and occupied parts of Donbas and other Ukrainian territories." "By inflicting significant demographic changes through forced displacement and deliberate replacement of the population, Russia is purposely altering the fabric of the society to cement its occupation in gross violation of international humanitarian law," she said. "By torturing, arbitrarily detaining civilians, by abducting and indoctrinating Ukrainian children, Russia openly and shamefully commits war crimes and crimes against humanity." The Ukrainian ambassador called on UN member states "to condemn Russian terrorist attacks" and to send a clear message to the Kremlin "that the international community is not turning a blind eye to the invasion of a sovereign state, the killing of civilians and the destruction of critical infrastructure."

VOA





# PSX stays bullish, gains 869 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 869.77 points, a positive change of 1.30 percent, closing at 67,756.04 points against 66,886.26 points the previous trading day.

A total of 361,823,380 shares valuing Rs.11,901 billion were traded during the day as compared

to 239,650,377 shares valuing Rs.8,940 billion the last day. Some 340 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 208 of them recorded gains and 108 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 24 remained unchanged.

In the future market, as many as 307 companies traded shares in the market, out of which 212 recorded gains, 86 witnessed losses whereas the

share prices of 9 companies remained unchanged. In PSX, the three top trading companies were PIAC(A) with 38,235,500 shares at Rs.25.22 per share, Flying Cement with 21,459,500 shares with Rs.8.79 per share and WorldCall Telecom with 20,977,567 shares at Rs.1.38 per share.

Hallmark Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of

Rs.43.21 per share price, closing at Rs.619.28, whereas the runner-up was Lucky Cement Limited with a Rs.36.47 rise in its per share price to Rs.798.66. Hoechst Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.49.50 per share closing at Rs.1,250.50, followed by Shahmurad Sugar Mills Limited with Rs.28.54 decline to close at Rs.541.46.

## Turkmenistan Ambassador, Pakistan's minister discuss bilateral trade strategies

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan, Atajan Movlamov, on Thursday congratulate the Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, on his recent appointment and engaged in discussions aimed at bolstering trade relations between the two countries.

During the meeting, Minister Jam Kamal emphasized Pakistan's commitment to strengthening bilateral ties with Turkmenistan, particularly in trade, for the mutual benefit of both nations, said press release issued here.

The discussions centered on various aspects of Turkmen-Pakistani relations, highlighting cooperation based on principles of mutual respect and equality.

Both parties expressed interest in enhancing trade volumes, with a focus on exploring new routes and transit

trade agreements.

Ambassador Movlamov noted Turkmenistan's potential to offer cost-effective electricity compared to local production in Pakistan, while also highlighting opportunities for collaboration in energy sectors such as LPG and electricity.

Minister Jam Kamal expressed optimism about the imminent signing of a Transit Trade Agreement (TTA) between the two countries which is in its final stage and either shall be signed in Islamabad or Ashgabat Capital of Turkmenistan.

Both officials agreed on the importance of exchanging delegations to facilitate smoother coordination and hasten the finalization of the TTA, aiming to boost trade between Turkmenistan and Pakistan.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Six ships namely, Maersk Kensington, Kyparissia, MSC Spring, Mala Kado, Silver Heba and Al-Wajbah scheduled to load/offload Container, Cement, Palm oil and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, Liquid Terminal and Elengy Terminal respectively on report period.

A total of thirteen ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Al-Diab-III and Chemroad Journey left the Port on today morning while four more ships, Al-Areesh, Uog Sparta, MSC Spring and Maersk Kensington are expected to sail on today afternoon.

Cargo volume of 267,762 tonnes, comprising 222,987 tonnes imports cargo and 44,775 tonnes export cargo carried in 6,800 Containers (4,660 TEUs Imports and 2,140 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 5 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them two ships, Kyparissia and Chem Gallium & another ship, Alba Gas carrying Container, Chemicals and LPG are expected to take berths at QICT, EVTL and SSGC on 03rd April, while another Bulk cargo carrier 'Sea-Pearl' is due to arrive at Port Qasim on Thursday.



HYDERABAD: Workers busy in sorting and packing bangles at their workplace during upcoming Eid-ul-Fitr at Bangle Market.

## SACM directs speeding up digitization of all professional, general business

PESHAWAR (APP): Special Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Abdul Karim Tordher has directed to speed up the digitization of all professional and general business of the Directorate General of Industries and Commerce while emphasized upon improving the performance of department in terms of services delivery in consumer protection rights. He has directed that a resource mapping cluster of special resources and products belonging to different regions of the province should be created on the occasion.

On this occasion, the Special Assistant was briefed in detail about the department performance, achieved goals, professional responsibilities and activities. He was told that the department is providing its services through regional offices in 26 districts while 5086 cases have been disposed up regarding consumer rights in which fines of Rs 4700 million have also been imposed.

He issued these instructions during a briefing given to him regarding the department on the occasion of his visit to the Directorate General of Industries and Commerce on Wednesday.

DG Industries Kabir Afridi, Director Industries Muhammad Hanif and other officers were present on the occasion. On this occasion, the Special Assistant was briefed in detail about the department performance, achieved goals, professional responsibilities and activities. He was told that the department is providing its services through regional offices in 26 districts while 5086 cases have been disposed up regarding consumer rights in which fines of Rs 4700 million have also been imposed.

He was told that 58147 inspections have been conducted while 86% of the target of the financial year from July 2023 to March 2024 has also been achieved. He was further informed that the

rules of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Registration Godown Act 2021 has been finalized and forwarded to the concerned authorities for Cabinet approval. Similarly, the rules of the Industries Commerce and Trade Statistics Act have also been finalized. He was told that work is in progress to compile the resource mapping data and finalize it in the form of a report. He was also informed that 1932 firms have been registered with the department, while with the establishment of MIS system, the field activities of the department are put on the system and sharing with the department on dashboard.

## CDNS increase Savings Certificate, rates from March 19

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has increased the rates of return for its National Savings Certificates, marking amendments across different instruments from March 19th, 2024.

Return rates for Special Savings Certificates (SSC) have been adjusted upwards by 15.93 %, Defense Savings certificates by 13.36 %, Regular Income Certificates (RIC) now offer 14.76%, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Monday. The

new increases were also applied to Bahood Savings Certificates (BSC), Pensioners Benefit Account (PBA), and Shuhadas Family Welfare Account (SFWA), with each now yielding 15.60 %.

The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has attained a target of Rs 1210 billion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to April 1st. The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, he said. He said this was an Rs 200 billion

additional annual target than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22. Given the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target had been set to improve the savings culture further, he added. The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced. "At this time Automated Teller Machine (ATM) has also been introduced in CDNS which will provide enough facilities to the users," he added.

## Report about Walton Airport termed fabricated

### E.P. Report

KARACHI: A segment of the broadcasting media aired a fabricated and sensational news report at the request of a self-proclaimed organization called the Aircraft Owners and Operators Association (AOOA). This news report discussed a letter that the AOOA had previously written to a senior government official.

The letter discussed in the program concocts a fake and baseless story and is a desperate attempt to defame the leadership of the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority. Furthermore, it aims to undermine the ambitious Central Business District project initiated by the Punjab Government in Lahore.

2. There were serious safety concerns regarding the continuation of flight

operations from Walton Aerodrome. As a result, it was already proposed to the Federal Government to relocate the training and other operations to a more appropriate location.

The decision to move was prompted by the escalating risks posed by aviation activities to the large commercial and residential areas near Walton Aerodrome. Meanwhile in 2020-2021, the Punjab Government approached the Federal Government to handover the land of Walton Aerodrome to it for establishment of the Lahore Central Business District.

This was a Government to Government transaction undertaken by both the Federal and Provincial Cabinets in the year 2021. Pursuant to this, the Federal Government directed the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority to transfer the

land to the Lahore Central Business District Development Authority of the Punjab Government.

Both the Federal and Punjab Governments jointly approved this project wherein 52% ownership is with the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority and 48% with the Punjab Government/ Central Business District Development Authority.

3. It was in these circumstances that the land of former Walton Aerodrome was transferred to the Central Business District Development Authority of the Punjab.

The Central Business District Development Authority is responsible for development and execution of the project. On the other hand, Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority has purchased 480 acres of land in Muridke from the

Punjab Government to establish a new General Aviation Aerodrome which is in final stage of completion. It is evident that the author of the news item/ letter is trying to manipulate people into believing his concocted story, with some apparent malafide and malicious motives. The news report was aired/published without seeking stance/ version of the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority against the well settled norms of journalism.

4. The Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority does its best in maintaining and enhancing the civil aviation safety standards, and strives to ensure that all aspects of air travel within Pakistan adhere to the highest safety protocols within the framework of the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

HONG KONG (APP): Asian markets tumbled Wednesday as investors grow increasingly sceptical that the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates as much as hoped this year, while a massive earthquake in Taiwan added to the sense of gloom.

Traders have pushed equities higher for months, driven by optimism that the central bank will begin easing monetary policy this year as inflation comes back towards officials' two percent target.

But forecast-busting data on a range of indicators including inflation, factory activity and jobs has dealt a hefty blow to those hopes, and now expectations are beginning to wane.

The year began with expectations for six cuts in 2024 but that has slowly been whittled down to three, and some are now concerned that the Fed could even cut fewer than that. Two central bank officials said on Tuesday that they still saw three this year

but were in no rush to act too quickly.

Cleveland president Loretta Mester, however, warned that it was a close call on whether decision-makers make fewer reductions. She also lifted her outlook for the long term level of rates to 3.0 percent from 2.5 percent -- compared with the Fed's 2.6 percent. Rates are currently sitting at a 23-year high of between 5.25 and 5.50 percent. And San Francisco boss Mary Daly added that three cuts was "a very reasonable baseline" but added that economic growth "is going strong, so there's really no urgency to adjust the rate".

Better-than-expected figures on job openings and factory orders -- along with rising oil prices -- have added to the sense that more work will be needed to bring inflation down. "Our base case is that the Fed engineers a soft landing and starts to cut rates in the second half of the year," Gargi Chaudhuri, of

BlackRock, said.

"The downside risks to economic growth have diminished, so the risk of only two Fed rate cuts now appears higher than the risk of four cuts."

After a retreat on Wall Street, which has also been fuelled by profit-taking after a run-up that has seen the Dow and S&P 500 hit multiple records, markets across Asia struggled.

Tokyo sank around one percent, while Hong Kong, Sydney, Seoul and Manila were off more. Shanghai, Singapore, Wellington, Bangkok and Jakarta were also well in the red. Mumbai rose.

London fell at the open while Paris and Frankfurt were both higher.

Taipei fell after a deadly 7.4-magnitude earthquake just off Taiwan's east coast, which added to the regional uncertainty, though there was some relief that the threat of a tsunami had dissipated.

Still, traders were keeping tabs on the effects of

the tremor, which left several buildings collapsed and forced chip giants TSMC and United Microelectronics Corporation to halt work at their plants.

TSMC was down more than one percent and UMC shed one percent.

Gold prices briefly struck a fresh record high of \$2,288, building on its run this year that has been fuelled by hopes for central bank rate cuts as well as rising tensions in the Middle East, which has boosted its demand as a safe haven in times of turmoil.

Tokyo - Nikkei 225: DOWN 1.0 percent at 39,451.85 (close)

Hong Kong - Hang Seng Index: DOWN 1.2 percent at 16,723.69

Shanghai - Composite: DOWN 0.2 percent at 3,069.30 (close)

London - FTSE 100: DOWN 0.2 percent at 7,917.01

Dollar/yen: UP at 151.67 yen from 151.58 yen on Tuesday

## Business community demand boosting security around markets

RAWALPINDI (APP): The business community of the city has demanded that the Rawalpindi district administration boost safety measures around all marketplace areas as Eid shopping was gaining momentum with each passing day.

Expressing discontent over the security arrangements made for shopping areas, they said the deployment of police personnel was insufficient compared to the great hustle and bustle of visitors there.

Markazi Anjuman-e-Tajran General Secretary Tahir Taj Bhatti said there should be police officers in plain clothes present in susceptible areas and ready to converge on a single whistle in an emergency.

Besides, he said, many

beggars seek alms but were also involved in criminal activities like pick-pocketing and snatching different items from the people visiting the markets.

President of Moti Bazar Chaudhry Iqbal also asked the quarters concerned to beef up the security of city markets, especially during nighttime. City Police

Officer Syed Khalid Hamdani assured that fool-proof security arrangements had been made to provide a special cover to shopping areas so that customers and traders could feel a sense of security.

He said that traffic police had also deputed wardens in all city shopping centers for smooth traffic flow.

## Successful conclusion of the Federal Capstone Prize Distribution ceremony

### E.P. Report

KARACHI: We are pleased to announce the successful conclusion of the Federal Capstone Prize Distribution ceremony, held at PEC on 2nd April, 2024. The event aimed to recognize and reward outstanding achievements in the fields of Civil & Allied, Mechanical & Allied, Electrical & Allied, Mining, Agriculture, Chemical & Allied and Computer & Allied.

Distinguished guests, including Lt. Gen. Moazzam Ejaz, graced the occasion with their presence, underscoring the significance of the event. The ceremony commenced with



the name of Almighty Allah, followed by welcoming and appreciation remarks delivered by Engr. Azhar-ul-Islam, Vice President ICCI, GB member PEC.

A notable highlight of

the event was the address by Engr. Mir Masood Rashid, the Convener of the PEC Pakistan Development Committee, who provided insights into the ongoing efforts and initiatives fos-

tering growth and development within the region and extending a warm reception to all attendees.

The culmination of the ceremony was marked by the distribution of prizes, acknowledging the exemplary contributions and achievements of the recipients. Cash Prizes are given to 57 Students in 20 different Projects.

At the end, Registrar Pakistan Engineering Council, Dr. Nasir Mehmod extend heartfelt gratitude to all participants, organizers, and attendees for their invaluable contributions in making the Federal Capstone Prize Distribution ceremony a resounding success.



BAHAWALPUR: A worker applying piko on dresses in preparation of Eid-ul-Fitr.





## In brief

## India football executive suspended

NEW DELHI (AFP): India's football governing body has suspended a senior executive member after his arrest for allegedly hitting two women players while drunk. Deepak Sharma, executive committee member of the All India Football Federation (AIFF), was arrested and bailed by police over last week's incident in the coastal state of Goa. "The AIFF Executive Committee has decided to suspend Mr. Deepak Sharma from participating in any football-related activities until further notice," a statement read Tuesday. AIFF president Kalyan Chaubey said that the federation "was determined to promote women's football in a safe and enabling environment and will take all necessary steps to ensure this." "The incident in Goa during IWL 2, should not be amplified to undermine the AIFF's developmental efforts in women's football," he added. "The particular case has now been referred to the Disciplinary Committee and will be taken up emergently." According to Indian media reports, Sharma barged into the room of the two footballers and assaulted them. He has denied the charges.

## India to tour Bangladesh

DHAKA (Agencies): The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) has released the schedule for the upcoming home assignment against India later this month. India will tour Bangladesh for a five-match T20I series in April-May, starting on 28 April. Three out of the five matches will be day-night encounters, with all the games set to be played in Sylhet. The ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 is all set to be played in Bangladesh at the end of this year, and the series will play a crucial role in helping both teams prepare for the tournament. While Bangladesh will look to capitalise on the advantage of playing at home, India will aim to leverage their familiarity with the conditions to their advantage. In the ICC Women's T20I Rankings, India are placed at the No.3 position while Bangladesh are No.9. Harmanpreet Kaur's side qualified for this year's tournament after finishing as one of the top six teams in the last edition in 2023 in South Africa – they made the semi-finals before losing out to eventual winners Australia. Bangladesh earned direct qualification as hosts. India last toured Bangladesh in July 2023, when they played three T20Is, followed by three ICC Women's Championship ODIs. While India won the T20I series 2-1, the ODI series witnessed a dramatic shift in momentum.

## Singapore rules out hosting event

SINGAPORE (Agencies): Singapore has ruled out bidding for the 2026 Commonwealth Games as the search for a host continues. The Australian state of Victoria withdrew as the original host in July after rising costs. Malaysia was then offered a chance to host and £100m to help cover the costs, but it rejected the offer last month. In a statement, Commonwealth Games Singapore and Sport Singapore said they had "studied the feasibility" and "decided not to make any bid". Singapore has never hosted the Games. With just two years until the multi-sport event and no host confirmed, doubts continue over the future of the event that is normally held every four years.

# Bracewell back from injury to captain New Zealand on Pakistan tour

WELLINGTON (AFP): Michael Bracewell will captain New Zealand for the first time on their Twenty20 tour of Pakistan this month, with a host of top names missing because they are playing in the Indian Premier League. Pakistan host New Zealand for five Twenty20 internationals, starting in Rawalpindi on April 18, as both teams warm up for June's T20 World Cup in the United States and the West Indies. All-rounder Bracewell was named captain Wednesday on his return from more than a year out with a ruptured Achilles and broken finger in the

absence of regular skipper Kane Williamson, who is playing for Gujarat Titans in the IPL. The 33-year-old said that being informed he would captain New Zealand had capped a "golden three days" last month when he also took eight wickets for his club Wellington and had a hole-in-one playing golf. "It's three days that I'll never forget," Bracewell said. "I'm very excited, it's a huge honour just to be picked again for New Zealand and then on top of that selected as captain. I wasn't expecting that." IPL contracted players Trent Boult, Devon Conway, Lockie Ferguson,

Matt Henry, Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitch Santner and Williamson are all missing. New Zealand Test captain Tim Southee is being rested after a busy summer of cricket across all formats while Will Young, Tom Latham and Colin Munro are also unavailable. Big-hitting batsman Tim Robinson and fast bowler Will O'Rourke received their first T20 squad call-ups. "We have picked a squad with a lot of power and exciting bowling options," said New Zealand selector Sam Wells. New Zealand won 4-1 in a home five-match

Twenty20 series against Pakistan in January.

**New Zealand squad:** Michael Bracewell (capt), Finn Allen, Mark Chapman, Josh Clarkson, Jacob Duffy, Dean Foxcroft, Ben Lister, Cole McConchie, Adam Milne, Jimmy Neesham, Will O'Rourke, Tim Robinson, Ben Sears, Tim Seifert, Ish Sodhi.

## Junaid Khan disappointed over NZ top players missing Pakistan tour

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Former pace bowler Junaid Khan has expressed disappointment over the absence of top New Zealand players in the squad for the tour of Pakistan.

Earlier today, New Zealand Cricket (NZC) announced a 15-member squad for the upcoming five-match T20I series against Pakistan under the leadership of allrounder Michael Bracewell.

New Zealand's first-choice players Trent Boult, Devon Conway, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry, Daryl Mitchell, Glenn Phillips, Rachin Ravindra, Mitch Santner and Kane Williamson opted out of the tour due to their commitments in the IPL.

Junaid Khan took to his official X (formerly Twitter) account to voice concern over players missing out on an international series due to a franchise league.

"It's sad to see leagues are being prioritised over the team that gave them all the respect. 11/12 senior [New Zealand] players are not available for an international series," he posted.

Notably, Bracewell will lead New Zealand for the first time during the upcoming series against Pakistan.

He last played for New Zealand in March last year before suffering a ruptured right Achilles injury during the T20 Blast in June and then a broken finger.

He made his comeback during the Plunket Shield and claimed career-best bowling figures of 8 for 41 while playing for Wellington against Otago.

The squad also features uncapped batter Tim Robinson and fast bowler Will O'Rourke, who represented New Zealand in Test and ODI cricket earlier this season.

The Blackcaps squad will reach Pakistan on 14 April and will play three T20Is at the Pindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi on 18, 20 and 21 April.

Following that, the action will move to Lahore, where the remaining two T20Is of the series will be played on 25 and 27 April, respectively.

# Army chief Gen Asim Munir invites cricketers

RAWALPINDI (Monitoring Desk): Army chief Gen Asim Munir has invited the cricketers currently getting training at Kakul Academy for Iftaar dinner.

The national team's fitness training in the academy will conclude on April 7. The players will leave Abbottabad for Rawalpindi and have Iftaar dinner with the army chief. Earlier, Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Mohsin Naqvi visited Kakul on Monday to personally observe the

ongoing fitness camp being conducted by trainers from the Pakistan Army ahead of Pakistan's T20 series against New Zealand.

The visit aimed at gathering firsthand insights into the training camp and to extend gratitude to the army for their invaluable support in organising the camp.

The fitness camp has been instrumental in enhancing the physical capabilities of Pakistan's T20 players, ensuring

they are in optimal condition for the forthcoming cricketing assignments which also include ICC T20 World Cup in June this year.

The chairman also took the opportunity to interact with the players, personally commending them for their dedication and active participation in the camp.

He expressed satisfaction over the players' enthusiasm and commitment towards enhancing their fitness levels.

# Sri Lanka sweep Bangladesh Test series with crushing win

CHITTAGONG (AFP): Lahiru Kumara finished with 4-50 to help Sri Lanka thump Bangladesh by 192 runs in the second Test and sweep the two-match series 2-0 on Wednesday.

The fast bowler dismissed last man Khaled Ahmed to wrap up a one-sided contest before lunch on the fifth day in Chittagong.

Hosts Bangladesh, chasing a mammoth 511 in their second innings, added just 50 after resuming on 268-7.

Mehidy Hasan Miraz staged a lone fight to stay unbeaten on 81 after completing his sixth Test half-century.

With a Sri Lankan triumph all but inevitable when the day began, Mehidy played some positive strokes to bring up his fifty off 68 balls.

He lost overnight partner Taijul Islam for 14

when the batsman drove off-spinner Kamindu Mendis to Nishan Madushka at gully.

Kamindu finished with 3-32 to go with his unbeaten 92 with the bat in the first innings, earning him the man of the match award.

He was also named player of the series after scoring a hundred in both innings of the first Test.

"The bowlers did their basics on this wicket and the batters did their job as well," Sri Lankan captain Dhananajaya de Silva said.

"The batters were a bit disappointed about not getting runs in the first Test, but we have experienced players. I was confident they would get runs," he added.

"There wasn't a lot of spin on offer. So I thought about reverse swing as a way to get wickets. The pacers were really on the spot," Sri Lankan pacers

accounted for 33 of the 40 Bangladesh wickets to fall, a rare feat on Bangladesh's generally spin-friendly pitches.

Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto said the home side's poor showing for the red-ball series would provoke some soul-searching.

"If you look at our batting, everyone got set but didn't get a big score. That's something to think about," he said. "If you get set, you have to make a score. We have to play more first-class cricket."

Sri Lanka won the first Test in Sylhet by 328 runs. They also triumphed in the three-match T20 series 2-1 but lost the one-day international series by the same margin.

Bangladesh will host Zimbabwe for five T20s in May in their next international engagement, ahead of the T20 World Cup starting in June.

# Klopp dismisses talk of Liverpool as title 'favourites'

LONDON (AFP): Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp is unconcerned his side have been installed as favourites to win the Premier League title.

Sunday's win over Brighton, allied to Manchester City's goalless draw with Arsenal, took the Reds back to the top of the table with nine matches remaining. But with Liverpool just two points clear of Arsenal, and more games to come in midweek and at the weekend, Klopp is taking nothing for granted ahead of Thursday's match at home to basement club Sheffield United.

"The situation is, for us, Sheffield United, and not who is the favourite," Klopp told a pre-match press conference on Wednesday. "I am pretty sure when we lost at Arsenal (on February 4) we were not favourites after that -- maybe rightly so --

but I don't know and I don't care," added the German, who will leave Anfield at the end of the season.

"One of the most important things to get through this period is to ignore the outside 'mess' as it goes up and down and is emotional."

"We have to be professional -- be emotional but in the right way -- and be the best version of ourselves, play the best football we can play and then let's see what the outcome is."

City and Arsenal will both be in action on Wednesday but Klopp has no plans to watch either match. "I told you one story, years ago, I watched a game and wanted Leicester to win (against Manchester City in 2019) and it didn't happen," he said.

"That was the last time that I did that. That's when you learn from the past. When they play, my heart-rate doesn't go up. "We need to get our points in,

win our football games."

Sheffield United have conceded 77 goals in 29 league matches so far this season and have a goal difference of minus 50 after managing just three wins.

But Klopp said his focus would remain firmly on the Blades, rather than the seemingly more difficult task of trying to win away to Manchester United -- who knocked Liverpool out of the FA Cup three weeks ago at Old Trafford -- on Sunday.

"If I would think now about Manchester United, our people (fans) would have a right to think I am already too long in the chair," he said.

"It makes no sense. You cannot win football games not respecting the opponent. I have no chance of influencing the Manchester United game at the moment... Sheffield United deserve our full respect and they will get it."

# Shadab Khan reacts to Umar Gul's apology

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's all-rounder Shadab Khan praised Umar Gul as the former pacer and coach apologised for accusing him of hiding behind injury during the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023.

For the unversed, Shadab was substituted due to concussion during Pakistan's must-win World Cup 2023 clash against South Africa as he sustained a blow to the head while fielding. Reacting to the substitution, Gul accused that the all-rounder made the concussion rule an excuse to save himself.

"We don't know what kind of injury he has sustained, but questions arise when you fall, claim to have a concussion, escape from the team, and go outside. The physio checks you, and then after a while,

you come out.

"There, you chat with people and then leave. When the match gets tight, and you realize it is going in our favour, you sit outside in the dugout, cheering."

"It means you've made an excuse; you've saved yourself. So, people will definitely question it," Gul had said. However, in a recent interview with a local cricket website, Umar Gul revealed that he apologized to Shadab Khan after the Pakistan Super League (PSL) season nine.

"After the PSL, I approached him [Shadab] immediately because the real story was that he had suffered from concussion twice in a year, and the third time it occurred during the World Cup. The doctor advised rest to prevent any serious consequences," Gul said.

"When I found out about it and when I met him for the first time in the training camp, I went straight to him and apologised. I said, 'Shadab, it was never my intention to hurt you, and obviously being a Pakistani, I felt at that time that the team needed you.' So, for the team's requirement, I said this, otherwise Shadab is a great guy and we have good relations, our families have good relations too, but obviously I felt by the statement I had given, and I apologised to Shadab for it," he added.

Meanwhile, Shadab Khan spoke highly of Umar Gul for accepting his mistake and wished the latter well for his future.

"It takes a brave man to accept his mistake. Respect you Gulli bhai. Always stay happy," Shadab wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

# Joel returns from injury as Philadelphia 76ers beat Oklahoma City Thunder



NEW YORK (Agencies): Joel Embiid said a two-month injury lay-off was "mentally" tough as he returned to help the Philadelphia 76ers pick up a 109-105 win against the Oklahoma City Thunder in the NBA.

Embiid, 30, suffered a knee injury in a 119-107 defeat at the Golden State Warriors on 31 January.

The Cameroonian marked his return to the court at Wells Fargo Center with 24 points, seven assists and six rebounds. "This one took a toll mentally. I just wanted to

come back," Embiid said. "I'm only going to get better but this one has been the hardest by far, especially mentally."

The 76ers lost 18 of their 30 games while Embiid was sidelined and are eighth in the Eastern Conference, dropping into the play-in positions after previously sitting in the automatic post-season spots.

Elsewhere, Nikola Jokic scored 42 points with six assists and 16 rebounds to help the Denver Nuggets to a 110-105 win against the San Antonio Spurs.

The victory moved the Nuggets to the top of the Western Conference at the expense of the Oklahoma City Thunder, who drop to second after a second loss in four.

The Dallas Mavericks' seven-game winning streak came to an end with a 104-100 defeat against the Golden State Warriors in San Francisco.

Canadian Andrew Wiggins top-scored for the hosts with 23 points to make it five wins on the bounce for Golden State.

The Los Angeles Lakers sealed a 128-111 victory against the Toronto Raptors, consigning the Canadian franchise to a 14th successive loss.

D'Angelo Russell scored 25 points with seven assists, while LeBron James added 23 points.

Domantas Sabonis extended his post-merger NBA record of consecutive double-doubles, having achieved that feat in 58 successive games, with 22 points and 20 rebounds as the Sacramento Kings beat the Los Angeles Clippers 109-95.

# Timber Wolves win All Pakistan Ramazan Cup Basketball Club title



ISLAMABAD (APP): Timber Wolves Islamabad defeated YMCA Lahore in a decisive showdown to win the club category final of All Pakistan 3x3 Ramazan Cup Basketball Tournament here at Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad on Tuesday night.

In the final of the club category of the six-day tournament, organized by the Federal Basketball

Association, YMCA Lahore dominated in the final till mid of match with 10-6 points but Ali Hamza Kazmi exhibited some impressive performance in the last two minutes to help six consecutive points for Timber Wolves team and changed the game in their favour by winning the final with 18 points against 14.

Kazmi scored 14 points

and Sher Shehzad scored four points for the winning side while Khalid Saadi scored seven points and Muhammad Salman scored five points for YMCA.

President Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF), Brigadier (Rtd) Muhammad Iftikhar Mansoor, who was the chief guest at the closing ceremony appreciated the efforts of the tournament organizing secretary Ouj E Zahoor and all other members for ensuring the best arrangements for the tournament. He said the Pakistan Basketball Federation would continue their efforts to promote basketball in the country. We will organize more such events in the future to provide the youth an opportunity to showcase their potential," he added.

# Rubiales arrested at airport over alleged federation graft scandal

MADRID (AFP): Spanish police on Wednesday briefly arrested disgraced ex-football chief Luis Rubiales in connection with an alleged graft scandal at the RFEF football federation when he was president.

The 46-year-old was detained at Madrid's Barajas airport shortly after flying in from the Dominican Republic but released shortly afterwards, a Guardia Civil police spokesman said.

Sources close to the probe said he disembarked from the plane under a police escort before being questioned inside the airport.

His arrest came two weeks after investigators searched 11 locations, including the RFEF's Madrid headquarters and Rubiales' house in the southern city of Granada, as part of a probe into alleged corruption and other crimes.

The March 20 raids were part of "an investigation linked to presumed crimes linked with corruption in business, fraudulent administration and money laundering", judicial sources said. Spanish media reports said investigators were looking into RFEF contracts signed since 2018, including one signed by Rubiales to take the Spanish Super Cup to Saudi Arabia.

The Super Cup contracts are worth 40 million euros a year (\$43.3 million) with the deal brokered by Kosmos, a company owned by former Barcelona and Spain defender Gerard Pique. According to Cadena Ser radio, Guardia Civil police flew



to the Dominican Republic and on Monday searched the premises where Rubiales has been staying, seizing a laptop and a mobile phone following an order by the investigating judge.

Contacted by AFP, the Guardia Civil refused to comment on the report. A day after the March 20 raids, the RFEF sacked its legal director Pedro Gonzalez Segura, head of human resources Jose Javier Jimenez and terminated its contract with GC Legal, the law firm of the federation's external legal adviser Tomas Gonzalez Cueto. All three had been arrested by police during the raids.

'Work and savings'

Rubiales was forced to step down as RFEF boss in September after forcibly kissing Women's World Cup star Jenni Hermoso following Spain's triumph in the Sydney final in August. The move sparked global outrage, with Rubiales set to be tried

for the non-consensual kiss which under Spanish law can be classed as sexual assault.

Prosecutors had in 2022 opened an investigation into the Super Cup deal after audio recordings between Rubiales and Pique were leaked in which they spoke of multi-millions value commissions.

Rubiales has always defended the legality of the deal to take the Super Cup to the oil-rich Gulf state, and in April 2022.

In a short preview posted online of an interview with private Spanish television channel La Sexta recorded before his arrest which will be broadcast late on Wednesday, he denied any wrongdoing.

"The money in my bank accounts is the result of my work and my savings," Rubiales said, adding he did not know what police have investigated him for.

He also told the station that he had not erased any data from the mobile phones which police seized earlier this week. Pique has also insisted that everything was "legal", saying he was "proud" of the deal.

The Spanish Super Cup took place for the first time in Saudi Arabia in 2020. It returned to Spain a year later due to the Covid-19 pandemic but the subsequent three competitions have taken place in Saudi.

Pique had played twice with Barcelona in Spanish Super Cups in Saudi Arabia before retiring from football in November 2022.





## In brief

### ANF seizes 133 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations across the country managed to recover 133 kg of drugs and arrested three accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed, that in two operations at Islamabad Airport, 1 kg heroin was recovered from the possession of two passengers going to Sharjah and Jeddah. 236 grams of weed was recovered from two parcels sent from the UK at a courier office in Rawalpindi. 125 kg Ice was seized in Gwadar while 2 kg opium and 5 kg hashish were recovered from an accused arrested in Tandojam, Hyderabad. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

### IRSA releases 74,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 74,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 110,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1420.68 feet and was 22.68 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 26,100 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1092.80 feet, which was 42.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 39,800 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 36,200, 32,700, 29,900 and 7,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 28,100 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 11,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### World Cloud Security Day observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): World Cloud Security Day was observed on Wednesday. The day has been celebrated every year as a way to raise awareness about the importance and techniques of securing data and information stored in the cloud. This day seeks to bridge the gap between data clouds and online safety.

### Two dacoits killed in police encounter

RAWALPINDI (APP): Two alleged dacoits were killed in an intense exchange of fire with the police in Westridge area here on Wednesday. According to police spokesman, the police gave a signal to suspected motorcycle riders to stop. The suspects, identified as Farooq Saeed and Qaribullah Khan, turned violent, opened indiscriminate firing on the police party. Amidst the chaos, two of the dacoits were killed by their own accomplices. Both the gunned-down dacoits also had a criminal record with involvement in over 30 cases across different districts of Punjab, including robbery and house robbery. Police have also recovered weapons used in crime. The senior police officers rushed to crime scene. City Police Officer (CPO) Khalid Mehmood Hamdani commended the bravery and valor exhibited by the officers involved, including SP Pothohar, SHO Westridge, and the entire police team. The criminal activities will not be tolerated and the other accomplices of the dacoits will be arrested soon and will be punished, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iran H.E. Dr. Raza Amiri Moghaddam calls on Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resources Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain.

## Eid shopping gains momentum in city markets

RAWALPINDI (APP): With Eid-ul-Fitr just around the corner, shopping has started to gain momentum in city markets with a large number of people, particularly women and children, flocking to main city markets, bazaars and malls.

A festive environment in shopping was noticed at the busy markets including Saddar, Lalkurti, Commercial Market, Moti Bazar, Tench Bhatta, Peoples Colony, Raja Bazaar and various other markets of the town.

Several local and international brands have begun displaying their latest Eid editions of dresses, shoes, and other essential accessories to attract buyers and gain maximum profits.

With less than a week before Eid-ul-Fitr, the residents can be seen thronging shopping malls and other city markets. People are seen rushing to buy dresses and household items.

The shopkeepers have decorated their shops with colourful lights to attract customers. The shopping frenzy is expected to reach its peak during next two to

three days. Families come out for shopping soon after iftar and seen buying shoes, cosmetics, ready-made garments, eye-catching artificial jewellery, multi-coloured bangles, and other items for the upcoming festival of Eid ul Fitr.

Women are busy in buying clothes, footwear, cosmetics, henna, bangles and other items. Big crowds of girls were witnessed on Saturday night on bangles and henna stalls in various areas of city.

Taking advantage of the shopping rush, some shopkeepers have also started to fleece the shoppers with both hands. A bangle seller said, "The number of customers is gradually picking up and hopefully it will go further up as Eid ul Fitr approaches." A customer said, "I have completed shopping for my kids and I have bought clothes and matching shoes."

Hawkers are also making brisk sales of clothes, footwear, cosmetics, and other goods as these products are generally purchased by low-income people ahead of Eid, said

another citizen.

Temporary stalls selling ready made clothes, bangles, earrings and cosmetics have also sprung up throughout the city.

Several Eid shoppers also complained of overpricing, especially of women's and kids' clothing. They said that only the people with deep pockets could afford to complete their shopping lists as it is difficult to buy clothes, footwear and other accessories during these inflationary times. "The prevailing price-hike is limiting me to be content with buying clothes only for my children," said Amina, a visitor to Chota Bazaar Saddar. Sobia, a visitor to the Commercial Market, said buying bangles and henna were always one of the greatest Eid thrills.

She complained that the shopkeepers were exploiting the Eid shopping frenzy and overcharge the customers. A shopkeeper at Raja Bazar said a great number of shoppers were thronging markets and that he was having a good business.

## HEC announces Master, PhD scholarships for Romania

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has invited applications from Pakistani/AJ&K nationals for the scholarship offer of the University of Politehnica for the academic year (2024-25), launched by the Romanian Government for Master's and PhD studies in the fields of Engineering and Information Technology.

According to the official sources, Master's studies are offered by the University of Politehnica Bucharest, Romania in programmes including Chemical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Energy Engineering, Electronic Engineering, Telecommunication and Information Technology, Aerospace Engineering,

Transportation Engineering, Computer & Information Technology, System Engineering, Industrial Engineering, Applied Engineering Science, Engineering and Management. As per eligibility criteria, applicants with incomplete degrees on the closing date of application are not allowed to apply.

Applicants for Masters program must have a Bachelors degree (16 years) and be under the age of 35 at the time of application. Similarly, applicants for PhD/Doctoral program must have a Masters degree MS/MPhil (17/18 years) and be under the age of 40 years at the time of application. However, all applicants are required to provide a valid HAT test score. HEC reserves the right to change

or modify the nomination criteria. The students are encouraged to apply online at <https://scholarship.hec.gov.pk/> and after registering and filling out your profile, please select "University of Politehnica Scholarship". Submit online application at the National University of Science and Technology Politehnica Bucharest web portal at <https://apply.upb.ro/?>.

The deadline to submit the online application on the HEC portal is 3rd May 2024. The students are asked to visit the following link <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1CH3kvgv6z7iTZDE0D0VH9Astqi-44rPb> for additional instruction and other requirements as prescribed by the University POLITEHNICA Bucharest.

## ANF continues crackdown on drug supply in educational institutions of Twin Cities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) in a crackdown on drug supply in educational institutions of Twin Cities, seized 2.4 kg hashish from an accused who was a student of BS Computer Science in a local university.

The accused was arrested with drugs near Waheedabad Colony on Lahtrar Road. During investigation, the accused confessed to supplying drugs in different hostels. Drug use and sale in educational institutions are a hindrance to educational attainment and the agency is vigilant and always in the search of those involved in this heinous crime, said the press release.

There are also threats to the future of youth. It is unfortunate that students are involved in drug peddling, said the note adding that the ANF continues its relentless efforts in the fight against drug trafficking. Stopping the spread of the scourge of drugs is not possible without the cooperation of parents and teachers.

In order to maintain the sanctity of the educational institutions, it is necessary for the administration to keep a close watch

on the student and residential hostels.

In another operation against drug trafficking the agency recovered more than 716 kg of drugs and arrested 6 accused. ANF recovered 745 grams of ice from a passenger going to Doha at Peshawar Airport and 200 grams of cocaine was recovered from the parcel sent to Karachi at the cargo office in Lahore while 150 kg of heroin and 166 kg of morphine were recovered from Chaman 110 kg of heroin and 52 kg of morphine were recovered from Yaro Pishin, 100 kg hashish recovered from RCD Road Lasbela, 70 kg hashish and 6.2 kg opium were recovered from two suspects in Pindi Bhattian, Hafizabad, 50.4 kg hashish was recovered from the accused in North Bypass Karachi, 30 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects near Burhan Interchange Attock and 11 kg hashish recovered from Orakzai.

Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act were registered against the arrested accused and investigation was started.

## Pakistan wants to further strengthen trade ties with UAE: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister of Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Wednesday that under the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan wanted to further strengthen trade and business ties with brotherly country United Arab Emirates (UAE).

During a meeting with the UAE Ambassador to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi here, he said that there was a need to create a common road map for the improvement of the economy.

During the meeting discussion was held on issues of mutual interest including bilateral relations, promotion of cooperation in various sectors.

The minister said that Pakistan and the UAE enjoyed strong ties based on common heritage and multilateral cooperation.

People of Pakistan consider UAE as their second home, the minister said adding the first flight of Emirates Airline was flown by a pilot of PIA, which was a great example of cooperation between the

two countries.

He said that late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan had very close relationship with the leadership and people of Pakistan. The minister briefed the UAE ambassador about the economic initiatives of the present government.

He said that tax reforms were being brought in Federal Bureau of Revenue and efforts were being done for digitalization of the economic sector.

Ambassador Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi said that according to the vision of the leadership of both countries, the UAE believed in the further development of bilateral relations. The UAE has always helped Pakistan in difficult times, stands by Pakistan's economic development, he remarked. The ambassador strongly condemned the recent terrorist incident in Bisham. Attaullah Tarar appreciated the vision and efforts of the UAE leadership for the development and transformation of the country.

## Nazia Hassan remembered on her birth anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 59th birth anniversary of the most iconic figure of Pakistan Nazia Hassan is being observed around the world on Wednesday.

Nazia, alongside her brother Zohaib Hassan, revolutionized the music scene in Pakistan and India with hits like "Disco Deewane" and "Boom Boom." Born on April 3rd, 1965, Nazia burst onto the music scene at just 15 with her mesmerizing rendition of "Aap Jaisa Koi" for the Indian film Qurbani, introducing the disco genre to the subcontinent. Her debut album, "Disco Deewane" in 1981, soared to international fame, charting in fourteen countries and becoming the best-selling Asian pop record of its time.

Teaming up with her brother, Nazia continued to captivate audiences with their unique blend of music composition, vocals, and captivating performances throughout the 80s.

Nazia's talent transcended borders, with her English single "Dreamer Deewane" earning her a spot on the British charts, made her the first Pakistani singer to achieve such a feat. Her remarkable achievements were duly recognized with numerous national and international accolades, including the prestigious Filmfare Award at the age of 15, making her the youngest recipient of the award to date. She was also honored with Pakistan's highest civilian award, the Pride of Performance.

## Police accelerate operation against electricity theft

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police on the instructions of Chief Minister Punjab, have accelerated their ongoing operation against electricity theft.

According to a police spokesman, Rawalpindi district police had registered 186 FIRs against electricity theft this year.

He informed that more than 80 accused were sent behind bars. This week, 63 cases were registered in the crackdown against electricity thieves, he added. The arrest of the accused involved in electricity theft would be ensured at all costs, the CPO said adding, that those involved in electricity theft are national criminals who do not deserve any exemption.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, a senior leader in the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), criticized the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Wednesday for attempting to influence the superior judiciary and other national institutions to achieve their desired outcomes.

Speaking to the media alongside MNA Barrister Aqeel Malik, he expressed his disapproval of PTI's actions, stating that the same group of disgruntled people, through their social media campaign, was attempting to pressure the judiciary and certain institutions to serve their nefarious designs.

He stated that the PTI social media team had initiated a slanderous campaign against Justice (Retd) Tassaduq Hussain Jilani without any relevance to the overall matter. Moreover, there are now

objections raised by PTI regarding the composition of the Supreme Court's larger bench concerning suo moto proceedings regarding interference in judicial matters.

The Supreme Court is handling the suo moto proceedings concerning complaints against Islamabad High Court (IHC) judges with utmost transparency. PTI should refrain from interfering in the matter as it will be resolved by the judiciary in a fair manner. The judicial verdict will be accepted by all parties involved. He encouraged PTI to steer clear of violence in politics and instead engage in competition with PML-N within the political realm. The governing party is prepared to engage PTI politically, and their tendency towards bickering is deemed unacceptable.

He said despite reservations, PML-N joined the system in 2018 as his party

believes in supremacy of constitution and promotion of democratic traditions.

Speaking on the occasion, Barrister Aqeel Malik, MNA, expressed his disapproval of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) for engaging in undemocratic behavior and making baseless accusations against the institutions. He called on PTI to refrain from meddling in matters related to judges' complaints, asserting that they are not directly involved in the issue. Malik criticized PTI for attempting to sensationalize a case that is under judicial consideration, emphasizing the need to steer clear of the politics of unfounded allegations. He highlighted that PTI's portrayal of the judges' letter is misleading, stating that selective justice is unacceptable.

Additionally, he stressed that PTI cannot expect to be exempt from the law and its consequences.

## Youth engagement fundamental to combat 'Open Solid Waste Burning'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The speakers at a stakeholders' dialogue on solutions to open waste burning demanded the government and all quarters concerned to come up with enhanced mobilization efforts focusing on youth engagement to stir solutions for open waste burning leading to serious health issues.

The Institute of Urbanism with the support of the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAE) and Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) held a dialogue titled "Ending Open Waste Burning in Islamabad: A Dialogue on Sustainable Urban Waste Management" here on Wednesday. Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI said there are ample examples of waste-to-energy projects in the developing countries across the globe who are capitalizing on solid waste as a resource at par with the developed world. He said

Pakistan is energy deficient and could optimize waste-to-energy opportunities that will help manage energy security and resource management within one intervention.

Dr Suleri underlined that waste management in the peri-urban and town areas of the country was difficult. However, Islamabad has been chosen for the dialogue to highlight the woes of waste mismanagement in urban areas that can help understand the extent of mismanagement in the solid waste sector across the country. A strong local government system was crucial to tackle this problem as it was the local body system after the municipal authorities that was responsible for waste management, he added.

Dr. Ejaz Ahmed, Senior Program Fellow, IoU said there is hardly any waste disposal system across the country, whereas the issue of smog is basically due to

the burning of rice stubble. He said the industrial National Environmental Quality Standards (NEQS) implementation is important as hazardous hospital waste is not being dumped properly, and electronic or E-waste is another area emerging in the country over time. "Islamabad is better but only its 60-70% waste is being managed while the rest is burnt in streets and open places which is highly injurious to health due to dangerous emissions from plastic burning and other materials," he said.

Syeda Shazia Adeel from the National Institute of Health (NIH) said waste burning resulted in the spewing of carcinogenic fumes and pathogens causing serious diseases. However, the Institute could contribute to data sharing, surveillance, research, organize workshops, and build comprehensive plans to cope with it and develop policy plans.



RAWALPINDI: IESCO staffer installing new electric cables on pole at Minhas chowk in the city.



#### Japan provides aid to Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations Coordination Office for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has announced that Japan has donated \$600,000 to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund. OCHA thanked Japan for its contribution in a statement published on its official Twitter account on Tuesday. Previously, the World Food Programme (WFP) had announced Japan's \$13.5 million assistance to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund.

#### NPC approves 24 projects

KABUL (ARINA NEWS): The National Procurement Commission, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, has approved the contracts of 24 projects worth approximately 11 billion afghanis, the Islamic Emirate said in a statement. Some of the key projects are finishing the reconstruction of the Kabul-Kandahar highway, the rehabilitation of Kunar-Nuristan road segments, various undertakings with Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS).

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

## Over one million Afghan refugees forcibly expelled from neighboring countries



KABUL (Khaama Press): The Deputy of the Prime Minister of the Taliban stated in a meeting with representatives and ambassadors of countries in Kabul that in recent times, over one million Afghan migrants have been forcibly expelled from neighboring countries.

According to a statement issued on Tuesday, Abdulsalam Hanafi, the second deputy of the acting Prime Minister of the Taliban, raised this issue during an iftar dinner held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs headquarters. Referring to the negative

impacts of the forced expulsion of Afghan citizens from various countries, he mentioned that this action does not contribute to bilateral and neighboring relations.

As per the statement, officials and representatives from various countries, diplomats, and UNAMA officials attended this iftar dinner.

Hanafi urged all regional and extra-regional countries in this meeting to curtail drug trafficking and ensure stability in Afghanistan to prevent the migration of youth to other

countries. He emphasized aligning major development projects such as the Afghanistan Trans, Herat-Bulldak, Chabahar Port, Lajward Road, Khan Corridor, and TAPI investment in Afghanistan to achieve this goal.

He emphasized that security in Afghanistan is not only important for the country's citizens but also crucial for the interests of all regional countries. Therefore, investment in various sectors is essential for the continuation of stability in Afghanistan.

However, since the

Taliban took over the country, they have imposed several strict restrictions resulting in the violation of human rights and women's rights and have failed to form an inclusive government.

The Taliban's oppressive policies have led to a dire humanitarian crisis in the country. According to UN reports, over 28 million people needed aid assistance in 2023, and the ongoing crisis has been exacerbated by the forced deportation of Afghan migrants by neighboring countries.

## US concerns about health of detained citizens in Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The US State Department expresses concern about the health conditions of citizens currently detained by the Taliban government in Afghanistan.

Matthew Miller, a spokesperson for the US State Department, recently stated in a press briefing that despite assurances from the de facto administration regarding the health-care of American prisoners, concerns remain. He reiterated ongoing efforts to secure the release of American citizens from Afghan prisons.

Miller refrained from commenting on questions regarding the surveillance of unmanned aircraft in Afghan airspace during the press briefing.

The Taliban government also recently confirmed the detention of two American citizens.

Zabihullah Mujahid, a spokesperson of the group, told the media that the two Americans were detained for violations of their "laws."

Since the Taliban



seized control of Afghanistan, many countries have refused to recognize the regime, leaving the country isolated. This lack of recognition has plunged Afghanistan into a dire economic crisis. Additionally, the return of refugees and migrants adds further

strain to the already struggling economy.

In addition to restrictions on women, the Taliban's policies also severely impact education in Afghanistan. The group's strict interpretation of Islamic law has led to the closure of numerous schools, particularly

those catering to girls. Co-education is banned, and the curriculum is often heavily influenced by Taliban ideology. As a result, access to quality education has become increasingly limited, exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation in the country.

## Sales drop for women's crafts in Western Afghanistan

Hakim Bigzaad

Several female traders in the province of Badghis say that although women's interest in handicrafts has increased after the de facto administration took over, production in this sector has significantly decreased.

Women in this province have recently turned more towards handicrafts such as embroidery, weaving, pottery, and producing local clothing. However, they complain that their handcrafted items are not selling. Safiya Sadat, one of the female traders in the women's market of Badghis, says she has been active in producing handicrafts such as leatherwork, weaving, clothing, and both hand and machine embroidery in this province for about eight years.

About 50 girls work as employees and apprentices in Safiya's workshop. She mentions her goal in establishing this workshop as providing job opportunities and training for girls who have dropped out of school.

On the other hand, Ms. Sadat complains about the decrease in product sales and the lack of a suitable market for selling and marketing her products, and she does not consider her income satisfactory.

Among them are also

women who, due to the economic weakness of the people and the absence of a sales market, have been forced to abandon their profession and become housewives. Humaira Barumand, another determined woman who used to produce handicrafts before the political changes in the country, has now lost her work due to limitations, economic weaknesses of families, and many other challenges, and has become a homemaker.

In an interview with Khaama Press, she said, "Because most women have become housewives and their economy has become stagnant, I also lost

my duty. That is, my handicraft business closed, and I became an unemployed housewife."

On the other hand, Atiya Tokhi, the head of the Women's Market and the head of the Handicrafts Union of Badghis Province, describes the production and economic activities of women in this province well, but also talks about the lack of stable contracts and the decrease in product sales. She said, "Female traders in Badghis have access to production facilities, but due to the lack of job market and the poor eco-

nomical situation of the people and the inability of citizens to buy, they face many challenges."

Despite this, women's economic activity in Badghis Province is only in the field of handicrafts, but the existing challenges have led to a decrease in product sales and the closure of some of these women's workshops. Nevertheless, women continue their economic activities and demand serious attention from the government and responsible institutions in the economic and handicraft sectors of this province.

Khaama Press



## Acting Mines Minister emphasizes 100% copper processing inside the country



KABUL(BNA): In a meeting with officials of the Mes Aynak Copper contractor company, the Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum stressed the importance of processing hundred percent of extracted copper inside the country. During a meeting, chaired by Sheikh

Shahabuddin Delawar, the Acting Minister, discussions were held with officials of the Mes Aynak Copper Contractor Company on recent project advancements, said the Ministry in a statement, today Tuesday.

The meeting focused on establishing a copper pro-

cessing factory, power generation resources, and plans for near-future implementation. Delawar also urged the contracted company to fulfill its commitments and carry out 100% domestic copper processing.

The officials of the contracted company reassured

the acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum that the practical work on this project would commence shortly according to their commitments.

Worth mentioning that the process of extracting the Mes Aynak copper has been contracted with a Chinese company.

## Govt salaries to be paid despite 1403 budget approval pending

KABUL (TOLONews): Based on the decree of the leader of the Islamic Emirate on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr, the advance payment of government employees' salaries will be made without the approval of the 1403 (solar year) budget.

The officials of the caretaker government said that the

draft budget for the year 1403 has been prepared and sent for endorsement to the leader of the Islamic Emirate. Ahmad Wali Haqmal, a spokesman for the Finance Ministry, said: "The fiscal year 1403 budget has not been endorsed yet, and Eid al-Fitr is approaching, the Ministry of Finance will implement the advance pay-

ment for the month of Hamal based on a special order from the leader of the Islamic Emirate."

Meanwhile, a number of analysts said that for economic growth in the country, more attention needs to be paid to infrastructure projects in the current solar year budget. "The more we

can allocate a budget for moving development and expansion projects in the country, or to allocate it to the government, undoubtedly, it can lead to economic growth," Abdul Nasir Reshtia, an economic analyst, told TOLONews.

"For a government, it is actually a guarantee of its movement next year. In this regard, I think we were observing a budgetary gap in the past year and these two or three years in Afghanistan, and this budgetary gap consists of a developmental or expansionary budget," said Syed Masood, another economic analyst. This comes as since the return of the Islamic Emirate to power in the country, the budgets for the solar years 1401 and 1402 were covered by the country's domestic revenues, and only in the year 1401, about 231 billion Afs were allocated for the regular and developmental budget.

## WFP warns food insecurity in Afghanistan is growing daily

KABUL (Ariana News): The United Nations World Food Program (WFP) said in its 2023 annual report on Afghanistan's strategic plan for 2018-2025, that the food security crisis in the country continues.

The report states that 15.8 million Afghans, which is about 40% of the country's population, have faced severe food insecurity

from November 2023 to March 2024, including 2.8 million of them in emergency levels of food insecurity. The report added that from late 2021 to early 2023, large-scale humanitarian food aid contributed to a partial improvement in the situation in Afghanistan, but with the reduction of this aid in 2023, the food security

situation of Afghans is expected to be even worse in 2024.

The World Food Program says that in 2023, it will cater to 18.6 million people in Afghanistan, 80% of whom are women and children. According to this organization, in 2023, Afghanistan is facing a serious humanitarian crisis, along with an economic crisis,

climatic adversities, political problems, an increase in returning migrants and internally displaced persons, which is affected by the political and social guidelines of the ruling authorities, on women's rights, and girls, has been aggravated, as a result, 9 out of 10 Afghan families have had problems in providing enough food.





## Humayun Khan

The counsel Syed Sikandar Shah argued that Azhar's wife and brother enlisted in ECL as they neither charged in any case nor booked First Information Report. The petitioners pleaded for withdrawal of their names from ECL as they are going to

## F.P. Report

The officials informed that fines in lacs as well as First Information Reports in hundreds have been registered against profiteers and hoarders across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. A progress report has also submitted before PHC regarding actions taken for controlling inflation during Ramzan. A specialised plan has been developed to ensure fair fares during Eid season in public transport for passengers, the officials claimed before PHC. However, Justice Waqar Ahmad directed for dissemination of contacts of concerned officials on print, electronic and Social Media for larger public interest to uphold their grievances with competent authority. More than 1000 samples of milk were collected from different point across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in which 906 were found healthy for human usage while 155 were adulterated as per laboratory reports, the officials informed. PHC's divisional bench comprising of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Waqar Ahmad ordered Secretary Food, Director Transport and Director General Halal Food Authority for submission of report regarding steps taken for public facilitation on next hearing.

PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice SM Attique Shah and

Justice Syed Arshad Ali issued notice to FIA for submission of reply in this regard while adjourned further hearing after initial arguments.



## F.P. Report

The newly appointed DSPs tasked with these responsibilities are Ghafoor Khan, Saeed Yaqoob, Arif Javed, Muhammad Arshad, Raja Mahmood, and Muhammad Rafeeq. DSP Galyatay deputed as DSP Diaman Bhasa dam, DSP Havelian Saeed Yaqoob has been deputed as DSP Dassu dam, DSP Javed has been assigned the duty of DSP security private projects.

There was also strong shaking felt on Taipei's subway system, which closed briefly to evacuate passengers though service resumed soon after on most lines. Japan's weather agency, which put the earthquake's magnitude at 7.7, said several small tsunami waves reached parts of the southern prefecture of Okinawa. The Philippines Seismology Agency issued a warning for residents in coastal areas of several provinces, urging them to evacuate.

It later added that those evacuated were beginning to return to their workplaces. Taiwan's benchmark share index, TWII, largely brushed off the impact of the earthquake, closing down 0.6%. TSMC's Taipei-listed shares ended down 1.3%. Taiwan's official central news agency said the quake was the biggest to hit the island since 1999 when a 7.6 magnitude tremor killed around 2,400 people and destroyed or damaged 50,000 buildings in one of Taiwan's worst-recorded quakes.

The political pundit says the authorities concerned are coerced to pay heed to the complaints of Mr Hidayat as he has now become the elected member of the constitutional assembly.

Some of Israel's closest allies, including the United States, condemned the deaths, which led the World Central Kitchen and other charities to suspend food deliveries to Palestinians on the brink of starvation, citing the dire security situation in Gaza. Cyprus, which has played a key role in setting up the maritime corridor,

"It was a direct attack on clearly marked vehicles whose movements were known by the (Israeli military). It was also the direct result of (the Israeli) government's policy to squeeze humanitarian aid to desperate levels," Andrés wrote. Israel has severely restricted access to northern Gaza, where experts say famine is

World Central Kitchen said it had coordinated with the Israeli military over the movement of its cars. Three vehicles moving at large distances apart were hit in succession. They were left incinerated and mangled, indicating multiple targeted strikes. At least one of the vehicles had the charity's logo printed across its roof to make it identifiable from the air, and the ordnance punched a large hole through the roof.

## (Continued from Page 1)

Judicial Council (JC) members, regarding attempts to pressure judges through the abduction and torture of their relatives as well as secret surveillance inside their homes. The letter was signed by judges Mohs Akhtar Kayani, Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri, Babar Sattar, Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan, Arbab Muhammad Tahir and Saman Rafiq Imtiaz.


A day later, calls emerged from various quarters for a probe into the investigation, amid which CJP Isa summoned a full court meeting of the SC judges. On Thursday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met CJP Isa, where the two decided to form an inquiry commission, which was later approved by the federal cabinet.

However, lawyers and civil society members — in a joint letter — had urged the top court to take “cognisance of the matter in its jurisdiction under Article 184(3) of the Constitution as this issue eminently relates to public interest and to the enforcement of fundamental rights”.

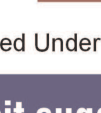
On Monday, ex-CJP Tassaduq Hussain Jillani — tasked to head the one-man inquiry commission —

At the outset of the hearing, Hamid informed the court that he had requested to be made a respondent in the case. At this, the CJF Isa remarked, "Gone are the days when it was the chief justice's will. We have constituted a committee to fix cases [for hearing]." He noted that the court had not received Hamid's petition, adding that the committee would decide on the matter once the plea was received. The CJF further said it was "inappropriate" that petitions were reported in

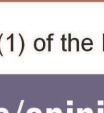
Justice Isa recalled that he met the IHC judges the day he received their letter. "If we had not given importance to this matter, then could this meeting not be held after Ramazan?" he asked. At one point during the hearing, the CJP said, "If there is any kind of attack on the judiciary's independence, I would be at the frontline [in defending judiciary] and for sure, my fellow judges would be standing with me in this. And we never accept interference."



**The Urban Unit**  
Urban Policy Planning & Management Development Division



**Better Planning, Better Urban Life**



# PUBLIC NOTICE

Published Under section 17(1) of the Land Use and Building Control Act, 2021

## To solicit suggestions/opinions/objections on the Draft Master Plan (2042) of Jamrud and Landi Kotal Urban Centers (NMDs)

The Land Use and Building Control Authority of the Local Government, Election and Rural Development Department (LGE and RDD), Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has undertaken a significant initiative by developing Master Plan for the planned growth of Jamrud & Landi Kotal Urban Center in District Khyber (NMDs). These master plans aims to comprehensively address a range of critical urban issues, including Housing, Public Transport, Environment, Water Supply, Sanitation & Solid Waste Management, Industry & Trade, as well as the Conservation of Agricultural land & Cultural Heritage.

In this regard, The Urban Policy and Planning Unit (UPU), Planning and Development Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have developed comprehensive master plans for Jamrud and Landi Kotal Urban Centers by hiring well-reputed and experienced consulting firms (The Urban Unit Punjab and HP Consultant Planners, Peshawar). Draft of the Jamrud and Landi Kotal Master Plans 2042 are available on the UPU website: [www.urbanpolicyunitgkp.pk](http://www.urbanpolicyunitgkp.pk)

In order to further improve the proposed Master Plans, The Land Use and Building Control Authority requests the General Public, Government, Semi-Government, NonGovernment, and Civil Society Organizations, and Private Sector Institutions, to send their suggestions/opinions/ objections (if any) to the UPU by letter, email, or phone/ WhatsApp 0334-9157932 within 15 days of publication of this advertisement for consideration

## All representations shall be reviewed and accordingly incorporated in the proposed draft Master Plans 2022-2042 of Jamrud and Landi Kotal Urban Centers (NMD's)

**For more details please contact:**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Adnan Salim</b></p> <p><b>Project Director Master Plan Project (MPP)</b> Urban Policy and Planning Unit (UPU), Planning and Development Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.</p>	<p><b>Tel:</b> 091-9330301</p> <p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:Pdmasterplan@gmail.com">Pdmasterplan@gmail.com</a></p> <p><b>Address:</b> House, 37-D Circular Lane, University Town, Peshawar Khyber Pakhtunkhwa</p>
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