

S Arabia invites PM
RIYADH (INP): Saudi Arabia has extended an invitation to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for Umrah, following a decision on a scheduled meeting with the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. According to sources, Prime Minister Sharif is expected to depart for Umrah after a meeting with Prince Mohammed bin Salman is scheduled.

 @thefrontierpost

First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

Court reserves verdict

ISLAMABAD (INP): A district and session's court on Thursday reserved verdict on an acquittal petition filed against PTI founder, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Sheikh Rashid, and other accused in the Azadi March case. Judicial Magistrate Malik Imran heard the final arguments and reserved the verdict. Sheikh Rashid appeared before the court and filed the petition for acquittal, along with other accused Ali Nawaz Awan and Sadaqat Abbasi.

Vol. XXXIXI No. 74 Regd. No. 241 RAMAZAN 25 1445 – FRIDAY, APRIL 05 2024 PESHAWAR EDITION 12 PAGES PRICE. 30



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting of federal cabinet.

IMF programme crucial for economic stability: Shehbaz

— seeks comprehensive plan for increase in revenue

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the government was planning to enter a new programme with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which he said, was very important to consolidate the country's economy. "With the new IMF programme, the international institutions will have more trust on us and we will be able to move forward on the agenda of development and prosperity with more confidence," he said while speaking with the participants of the cabinet meeting held here under his chairmanship.

He said the finance minister was going to Washington this month with a delegation to participate in the IMF spring meetings where he will also discuss details of the new programme with the IMF. He said although the terms of the new deal would not be so easy, but the government will shift the burden of the tough conditions from the less privileged to the wealthier.

The prime minister hoped that after the IMF board meeting, the last tranche of existing standby agreement worth \$1.1 billion will be disbursed to Pakistan this month. With regard to PIA's divestment, he said the privatization process of Pakistan Airlines was on track and the schedule set for the process would be fully implemented.

He said that for the outsourcing of the airports, a Turkish company was arriving Islamabad on April 6 which would negotiate the outsourcing process with the Pakistani authorities. About digitization of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), the prime minister informed that the consultants for the digitization process would be appointed by end of the current month.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said, he recently chaired a meeting of

Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in which details of various sectors including finance, investment, exports, Information Technology, agriculture, power and petroleum were discussed. "After a detailed meeting, it was decided that I will personally review the sector wise performance to solve out the problems faced by the sectors and to streamline the country's economy," he added.

The prime minister pointed out that the government had fulfilled its due responsibility with respect to the inquiry of the matter of letter by the Islamabad High Court judges by forming an inquiry commission led by former Chief Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jilani. Afterward, he said Tassaduq Hussain Jilani refused from the commission, subsequently the Supreme Court took a sou motu notice of the letter.

As regards of receiving letters by the judges with suspicious powder, the prime minister said the government was investigating the matter. "The government, with the sense of responsibility will also probe this matter to uncover the reality." With respect to the security of the Chinese workers and engineers, the prime minister said the government was evolving a fool proof system for the security of the Chinese workers.

The prime minister said the cabinet presented the finance division's Fiscal Policy Statement for the financial year 2022-23, the Debt Policy Statement for the financial year 2022-23 and the Year End Government Performance Monitoring Report in the meeting. The federal cabinet approved the submission of the above statements/report to the National Assembly under prevailing laws, he said. The meeting was told that the cabinet, on the recommendation of Foreign Affairs Division, allowed former Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi to

receive the "King Abdul Aziz Medal Badge of Honor of Excellent Class" on behalf of the Government of Saudi Arabia and "Darjah Kehaulwan Angkatan Tentera" on behalf of the Government of Malaysia.

On the recommendation of Human Rights Division, the cabinet approved the appointment of the members of National Commission for Status of Women. Likewise, on the recommendation of Ministry of Human Rights, it approved the abolition of the National Commission for Child Welfare and Development, the National Child Protection Center and the Implementation of National Line of Action for Children, which are offices working under the Ministry of Human Rights. All the employees of these departments who are civil servants would be included in the surplus pool of Pakistan, the meeting was told. The meeting was also told that under the National Commission on Rights of Child Act 2017, the National Commission on the Rights of Child had been established therefore all other departments had become unnecessary as all the work related to these institutions is done by this commission. Keeping in view the austerity policy of the government, it has been decided to close these institutions, the meeting was told.

Meanwhile, chairing a high level meeting on Ministry of Finance, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed that a comprehensive plan for increase in revenue should be prepared without putting burden on the common man.

He said in the next five years the tax to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would be taken to 15 percent. He said the federal government would strengthen the provinces and would hand over all the relevant ministries and departments to the provinces, under the 18th amendment, adding expenditure would be reduced to decrease the fiscal deficit.

‘Anthrax-laced letters’ CCTV cameras found malfunctioning

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Law enforcement agents investigating the suspected anthrax-laced letters sent to the judges of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) and Supreme Court revealed that most of the CCTV cameras around the post boxes were out of order when the envelopes were inserted into them, it emerged on Thursday.

The CTD team is racing against time to collect facts and ascertain the chemical nature of the powdery substance after the eight IHC judges received "letters containing suspected anthrax powder along with a threatening message".

According to sources, the case of suspicious letters is being investigated by the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of the

Islamabad police and a report on the progress made so far has been communicated to the Registrars of the Supreme Court and the IHC. Sources indicate that an examination of post boxes located within Satellite Town, Rawalpindi, is ongoing, with many CCTV cameras surrounding the post boxes found to be inoperative.

Islamabad police have expanded the scope of the investigation using alternative means, including questioning individuals working in shops and offices in the area of post boxes. Furthermore, all staff at the Satellite Town, Rawalpindi post office have been included in the inspection. According to sources, the letters were sent by a woman named Resham

without mentioning her address. They added that a staffer of a judge accidentally dropped the envelope containing the suspicious powdery substance and later felt extreme irritation in their eyes and burns on the skin around his lips.

Following the incident, Islamabad Inspector General (IG) and Deputy Inspector General (DIG) police were summoned to the IHC. All the suspicious letters were handed over to the police for further investigation.

It is noteworthy that initially, eight judges of the Islamabad High Court received suspicious letter, later judges of the Lahore High Court and even judges of the Supreme Court of Pakistan also got similar mail.

PTI announces launching movement after Eid

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has announced launching a countrywide movement against alleged rigging in general elections after Eid-ul-Fitr from Balochistan.

Addressing the media in Rawalpindi after meeting PTI founder Imran Khan in Adiala jail on Thursday, party leader Asad Qaiser said a first rally would be held in Pishin district as part of the protest movement and a meeting to review arrangements for the rally would be held at Balochistan National Party Chairman Akhtar Mengal's house on April 12 in Quetta. PTI leader and former information minister Shibli Faraz said the masses gave the PTI a full mandate which was stolen. However, he said, they had to continue their fight in the court.

"We must differentiate between the people possessing Form 45 and Form 47," he said adding that the influx of investment in the country was stopped and brain drain was taking place. Mentioning Senate elections' delay in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the PTI leader asked whether the KP was being victimised for giving a heavy mandate to a party.

He apprised media that a medical check-up of Bushra Bibi would be conducted to check for poisoning. Removing Sher Afzal Marwat and Umair Niazi, incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan has approved new names for his focal persons on Thursday.

PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan said Imran had appointed him, Shibli Faraz, Omar Ayub, Intazar Panjutha, and Barrister Ali Zafar as his focal persons.

The new list of focal persons issued by Gohar does not include the names of Marwat and Umair. The PTI chairman said the new focal persons were appointed in consultation with Imran. The PTI founder had on March 28 appointed Marwat and Umair as his focal persons through a list issued with Imran's signature by the Adiala jail administration. Later, talking to media in Rawalpindi, Ayub confirmed the new names for Imran's focal persons.

US Embassy team visits Adiala Jail

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: A delegation of US Embassy in Islamabad visited Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi on Thursday and held a meeting with Zahir Jaffer, who is in jail for murdering Noor Mukaddam, daughter of a former Pakistani diplomat.

According to details, three members of US Embassy staff met Zahir Jaffer in the office of Deputy Superintendent of the jail. The embassy requested the jail administration for a meeting with the accused as he was a dual national.

After meeting Zahir Jaffer, the US delegation left for Islamabad. On July 20, 2021, Noor Mukadam was found brutally murdered in Islamabad's F-7/4 sector. Following the discovery of her body, Jaffer was arrested as the prime suspect in the case.

27 die in militant attacks on Iran security forces

TEHRAN (Reuters): Suspected militants killed at least 11 Iranian security force members and suffered 16 fatalities in attacks on Iran's Revolutionary Guards headquarters in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, state media reported on Thursday.

The overnight clashes between the Jaish al-Adl group and security forces took place in the towns of Chabahar and Rask, state TV said. "The terrorists failed to succeed achieving their goal of seizing the Guards headquarters in Chabahar and Rask," deputy Interior Minister Majid Mirahmadi told state TV.

State TV said 10 other security officers were also injured in the fighting in the impoverished region. The area, which borders

Afghanistan and Pakistan, has long been the site of frequent clashes between Iranian security forces and militants as well as drug traffickers.

Iran is a key transit route for narcotics smuggled from Afghanistan to the West and elsewhere. In December, the militant group attacked a police station in the town of Rask, killing 11 security personnel.

Meanwhile, Pakistani Ambassador to Iran Mudassir said condemned the two heinous terrorist attacks in Iran. He said Pakistan expressed solidarity with Iran in fighting terrorism. "Pakistan strongly condemns 2 heinous terrorist attacks at police & security posts in Rask & Chabahar resulting in martyrdom of brave Iranian security forces. We stand in full solidarity with our

brotherly neighbour Iran in fighting terrorism & protecting its interests. Terrorism must be curbed," he tweeted.

Pakistan unequivocally condemned the heinous and dastardly terrorist attacks at police and security installations in the cities of Rask and Chabahar in Iran. In a statement, the Foreign Office said, "We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims and pray for the recovery of the injured. Pakistan stands in full solidarity with the people and Government of Iran in fighting terrorism."

"Pakistan condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and is deeply concerned about the growing acts of terrorism in our region. It is a regional and global threat that requires resolute response," it concluded.

Tarar urges parties not to politicize national economy

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday urged opposition and other political parties not to politicize national economy stabilized due to consistent efforts of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Addressing a news conference, the minister recalled the initiatives taken by PM Shehbaz Sharif led government during its previous tenure of 16 months. He was flanked by Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshed Alam. The minister gave credit to PM Shehbaz Sharif for successful negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that resulted into a standby agreement with the fund in the recent past.

He said such initiatives had ultimately stabilized rupee against dollar and brought an improvement in the exchange rate subsequently. The minister recalled the hardships faced by the exporters in the recent past due to the fast fluctuation in the exchange rate especially stemmed from the wrong economic policies of the

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf led government.

"There should be no politics on the economy and everyone should play their due role for economic stability," Tarar said while highlighting the positive indicators recorded with the arrival of PM Shehbaz Sharif's government in the country. He said Bloomberg had forecast a significant reduction in inflation in the country next year and simultaneously predicted an economic growth for Pakistan in the coming days.

The country moving in right direction as the economy had started to boom which was reflected from the positive economic indicators, the minister noted. He lauded the role played by the media in creating awareness among the masses regarding privatization process of the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) that recorded Rs 80 billion annual loss.

It was the common man who had been bearing the brunt of such economic losses, he said, expressing the hope that the privatization would not only generate revenue for the country but also remove extra burden from the common man. He said entire focus

was laid on economy and efforts were underway to digitalize the Federal Board of Revenue.

Tarar said PM Shehbaz Sharif attached great importance to Pakistan-China friendship and he himself visited Dasu and met the Chinese engineers to express solidarity with them over the attack. He said that the entire nation was united for the betterment of the economy and national interest.

The minister asked the people to have hope and faith in the system and the leadership that could solve every other problem. "Shehbaz Sharif is a name of hope who has delivered in the past in accordance with the aspiration of people." The action plan would be announced very soon to empower the youth, he said in response to another query.

In response to another question, he said that the problems of sports bodies would be resolved as a committee was being formed regarding the Pakistan Hockey Federation. With reference to Pak-Iran gas pipeline project, the Minister said that there was no discussion about it in the cabinet meeting.

Pakistan rules out talks with TTP

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has ruled out talks with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Responding to the queries of media persons at her weekly news briefing in Islamabad on Thursday regarding the suggestion

made by an Afghan Minister for talks between Pakistan and TTP, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan expects the Afghan authorities to take urgent action against the terrorist outfits and their leadership for the crimes they are committing and terrorist incidents they are responsible for in Pakistan.

She said Pakistan remains committed to fighting against all the terrorist outfits which have targeted Pakistan and the symbols of Pakistan-China friendship. She said that following the security audit and enhancement of security measures, the Chinese projects in Pakistan are functional.

The spokesperson vehemently condemned the terrorist attack in Iran. Expressing solidarity with the Iranian people, she said Pakistan would like to work with Iran to find joint solutions to terrorism. When asked about the Palestinians' fresh bid for the UN membership, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan recognizes the state of Palestine and will support any such move at the UN.

Condemning the ongoing Israeli atrocities in Gaza, she called for international accountability of Israel for its crimes against humanity. Expressing concerns over the Indian occupation authorities' decision to deny permission to hold Eid ul Fitr prayers at Eidgah in Srinagar, she urged the Indian authorities to respect the rights of the people of IIOJK to peaceful assembly and to freely practice their religion. She said Pakistan will continue to extend moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people for the just and peaceful settlement of Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

Hafiz Naeem elected new Jamaat-i-Islami emir

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Outspoken political leader Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman on Thursday was elected as a new emir of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan for the next five years. JI Central Information Secretary Qaisar Sharif said that over 45,000 members of the party cast their votes to elect the new emir during the recent intra-party elections.

"Naeem received over 80% of the votes and become the sixth emir of the party," he added. He would remain the party's chief till 2029, the party's information secretary added. As per the party's constitution, elections are held regularly at all levels in the JI, Sharif said, adding, "JI does not belong to any individual or a [certain] family but to every member and worker". Over 45,000 members of the JI countrywide elected the new emir via secret balloting, he added. The JI information secretary said that the JI Majlis-e-Shura, however, had proposed three



names for the post of the party chief to the party members.

JI incumbent Emir Sirajul Haq is completing his second term as the party's head on April 8 (Monday), he added. Naeem's political career began at 16 when he joined the Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba (IJT), the student wing of JI, in 1988. Already drawn to the religious political ideology espoused by JI founder Syed Abul Ala Maududi, he quickly rose through the party's ranks. His leadership qualities propelled him to become the "nazim" (president) of his college and later, the

head of IJT Karachi and Sindh. By 1998, he had reached the national level, becoming the Nazim-e-Ala of IJT Pakistan.

After completing his tenure as IJT chief in 2000, Hafiz meticulously climbed the JI hierarchy, starting from the grassroots level again. His dedication earned him the position of JI Karachi's deputy general secretary in 2005. He contested his first election in 2001 and won the seat of "naib nazim" in a Nazimabad union council. Hafiz's leadership since 2013 as JI Karachi's emir has been marked by a distinct strategy.

PM calls for end to Gaza attacks

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday strongly condemning the ongoing Israeli brutalities in Gaza that had continued relentlessly since October 7, 2023, called for an immediate end to the genocidal war against the brave and innocent Palestinian people.

He was talking to Ambassador of Palestine to Pakistan Ahmed Jawad A.A. Rabei who called on him here. He said Pakistan had a historic and close relationship with the brotherly State of Palestine and it had consistently supported the Palestine cause, at the UN, OIC as well as other international platforms.

He expressed deep condolences over the tragic death of over 32,000 Palestinians, including 17,000 children, as well as more than 70,000 injured by the brutal actions of Israeli security forces. The prime minister recalled the interim ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the case filed by South Africa and stated that Pakistan had also made a verbal statement in support of Palestine at the ICJ.

While welcoming the adoption of UNSC Resolution 2728, the prime minister expressed disappointment that Israel had chosen to ignore the resolution and continued to brazenly violate it. He assured the Palestinian Ambassador that Pakistan would continue to raise its voice at every international forum in solidarity with the Palestinian people.

Pakistan has so far, sent seven tranches of relief goods for the people of Gaza. Another tranche is planned soon after Eid. The Palestinian Ambassador thanked the Prime Minister and the people of Pakistan for supporting the Palestinian people, which was a source of strength for them at this difficult time. The prime minister thanked President of Palestine Dr. Mahmoud Abbas for his warm congratulatory message to him following his reelection.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur chairing a meeting of Irrigation Department.

HBK-PPC Ramazan Sports Gala CCPO Peshawar hails PPC for holding Ramazan Sports Festival

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: City Police Chief Ashfaq Anwar Thursday hailed the management of the Peshawar Press Club for holding a healthy Ramazan Sports Festival wherein all its members are competing in six different Games here.

He also appreciated the support of HBK Hypermarket for the ongoing gala that entered into the final stage with some sensational competitions that can be seen as the attendees enjoying themselves very much. CCPO Peshawar Ashfaq Anwar was the special guest of the competitions being played here.

HBK owner Naeem Afridi, President Peshawar Press Club Arshad Aziz Malik, former President M. Riaz, General Secretary Irfan Musa Zai, Chairman Sports Committee Abid Khan, Sports Writers Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa General Secretary Shahid Afridi were present along with the members of the Peshawar Press Club.

Addressing the event CPO Ashfaq Anwar while congratulating the sports committee for organizing a successful sports gala said that such activities are very important for the motivation of journalists and for their mental and physical health.

Such events, he said, provide a new energy to journalists, which makes them ready to perform their professional duties with a new zeal. He said that Peshawar Press Club and all members and journalists should participate in such healthy activities. He said that journalists perform their duties in difficult situations and they have to work under strict deadlines.

He said that the journalists of Peshawar have seen very difficult situations and even in this difficult period, the journalist community has left no stone unturned in performing their duties properly and serving the province in their respective beats. He said that in the month of Ramazan, the large number of journalists participating in such healthy activities after evening is commendable.



Earlier, President Press Club Peshawar Arshad Aziz Malik thanked CCPO Peshawar Ashfaq Anwar and HBK owner Naeem Afridi for encouraging the press club. On the other hand, sensational and nerve-racking matches were played last night in the Ramazan Sports Gala, according to the results of which Abid Khan and Asmat Shah beat Ihtsham Bashir and Sheikh Ashfaq 2-0 in the Badminton event, while Irfan Musazai and Ali Sheikh defeated Adnan defeated Khan and Tanveer 2-1 and qualified for the next round.

Speaking at the event, Naeem Afridi of HBK said that journalism is the fourth pillar of our state and journalists play a very important role in the development of society and it is a matter of pride for us to cooperate with them. "I will also try to continue the series of healthy sports activities," he said.

Earlier, President Press Club Peshawar Arshad Aziz Malik thanked CCPO Peshawar Ashfaq Anwar and HBK owner Naeem Afridi for encouraging the press club. On the other hand, sensational and nerve-racking matches were played last night in the Ramazan Sports Gala, according to the results of which Abid Khan and Asmat Shah beat Ihtsham Bashir and Sheikh Ashfaq 2-0 in the Badminton event, while Irfan Musazai and Ali Sheikh

defeated Adnan defeated Khan and Tanveer 2-1 and qualified for the next round.

Similarly, in the first quarter-final of snooker, Faizan Qazalbash defeated Shahzad Rashid. The second quarter-final was played between Khurram and Shahid Afridi, in which Khurram won. Similarly, in the third quarter-final, Asif Raza was defeated by Kashan Awan, while in the last quarter-final, Kamran Ali defeated Zeeshan Liaquat and reached the semi-final.

Safeer defeated Zulfiqar and Shahzad Fahad defeated Qadir Khan to reach the final round, Qari Gul Rehman defeated Basir Qalandar, Tahir Waseem defeated Naeem Babar and Shahzad defeated Tariq Aziz in the final match.

Zeeshan Liaquat defeated Zulfiqar Shah 2-1, Abid Khan defeated Zulfiqar Shah 2-0, while Adeel Saeed got a walkover against Sheikh Irfan, Arif Akram, Bilawal Arbab, Shah Faisal, Tariq Aziz, Arshad Ali, Naeem Babar, Shahid Afridi, Aziz Buner, Nader Khawaja and Irfan Khan achieved success.

SACM for paperless Trader Testing Board

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Technical Education, Industries and Commerce Abdul Karim Tordher has stressed upon bringing complete transparency in the examination system of the provincial testing organization "Trade Testing Board" and also directed to make the entire process of obtaining certificates online for the convenience of students. He also directed to convert the traditional mechanism of the board towards paperless system.

He urged the Board to make the vocational certificates being provided under the Competency Based Training Program on proper grading while keeping in mind the respect and importance of the institution to make the examination and certification system in accordance with high standards in every aspect. The Special Assistant also directed the Board to take possible steps to improve its financial position and increase revenue.

Weather to remain partly cloudy in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The weather is likely to remain partly cloudy in the upper districts of the province, an official of the Meteorological Department said here Thursday.

Thunderstorms are likely in the districts of Upper Dir,

Chitral, Swat, Mansehra, Abbottabad and Kohistan and during the last 24 hours, the highest rainfall has been recorded in Chitral, 13 mm, 12 mm rainfall in Kalam, 7 mm in Balakot and Darosh and 6 mm in Malam Jabba, the official of the Meteorological Department said.

He said, during the last 24 hours, the lowest temperature in Kalam was minus 1 centigrade recorded with Malam Jabba 3, Dir 6, Darosh 7, Charat 9 while Chitral recorded 7 degrees Celsius, Peshawar recorded a minimum of 16 and a maximum of 27 degrees Celsius.



PESHAWAR: Kidney patients holding a placard during a protest in favour of their demands.

12 govt dept owes Rs7.436m of PESCO

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: PESCO on Thursday released Names of 12 government departments defaulters of Rs 7.436 million electricity bills.

According to official data, public food laboratory was found defaulter of over Rs 270,000, provincial anti-corruption more than 700,000, nursing colleges 700,000, human rights office 300,000, women hostel Rs 649,000, DG Excise and Taxation Rs 134,4000, Public Health Engineering Rs 840,000, forensic laboratory Rs 1900,000, Afghan Commissionerate Rs 600,000 and office of the Fall Manager Rs 153,000.

The spokesman of PESCO said here that on the instructions of Interior Ministry, a joint task force of PESCO and FIA conducted crackdowns against defaulter public entities and disconnected power supply. He said that initially public food laboratory paid Rs 150,000, Directorate of Human Rights Rs 153,000, office of Fall Manager KP Rs 153,000, Chief Engineer Public Health Engineering Department Rs170,000 and forensic lab paid Rs 1.1 million after which the power supply restored to these departments.

UoP writes letter to CM on financial issues

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Faced with financial issues, Convenor Coordination Committee, University of Peshawar (UoP), Dr Bakht Jehan has written a letter to the Chief Minister KP for looking into the matter.

According to the university administration, it has been written in the letter that University of Peshawar, Agriculture and Engineering University were faced with financial issues for the last couple of years.

The letter written by Dr Bakht Jehan said increases in employees' salaries and pension liabilities were among the reasons for financial restraints at the universities. The financial crises have jeopardized the existence of these universities, the letter said. However, the Secretary Higher Education in this regard said that universities were autonomous institutions and such issues should be addressed by the universities' administrations themselves.

Provision of free teaching books top priority: Minister

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Provincial Education Minister, Faisal Khan Tarakai has said that provision of free teaching books to students in priority of government and 58 percent of supply has been completed so far.

He was chairing a meeting to discuss free supply of educational books to students, here on Thursday. He said that 58 percent of supply has been completed through targeted and planned efforts and students would get course book timely.

The minister said that

significant amount of Rs. 1.5 billion has been released to printers while finance minister would be contacted for release of remaining payment. On the occasion, minister was told that 100 percent supply of nursery level books has been completed while full supply of books have been given to districts including Tank, Malakand, Hungu, Swabi and Kohat.

Education minister was informed that there are 453 primary level circles and 80 and cumulative supply of 50 percent has been completed in these circles. The

minister was also informed about enrollment drive of 2024. He was told that record of all students is available online. Faisal Tarakai directed to constitute teams of district education office and directorate to complete the supply of books and said that far flung areas should be given special focus.

The meeting was also attended by Secretary Education, Masood Ahmad, Additional Secretary, Abdul Akram, Chairman Textbook Board, Muhammad Faruqain and other concerned officials.



PESHAWAR: UNICEF Chief presenting keys of 100 motorcycles to KP Minister for Health, Syed Qasim Ali Shah.

Edu Dept for cancellation of all self-vacation to students

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Assistant Director (General) Directorate of Elementary and Secondary Education, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar has directed all the heads, principles of the government schools to immediate cancelled the self-vacations announced for the student's class 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th.

According to a letter issued by the Education Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, all the heads and principals of the government schools to immediately cancel the self-vacation practices and should start normal classes for the students of class 9th, 10, 11th and 12 respectively, otherwise stern action would be taken against the school management.

It has been observed through complaints that have been submitted from various quarters including parents, guardians regarding self-vacations are being observed by the majority of the schools of 9th, 10th, 11, 12 classes for the preparations of the examination which badly affects the education system as well as students' education health.

Therefore, the managements of these schools are asked to strictly direct all heads of government institutions to immediately cancel the self-vacations made by the students in the preparation of exams and continue teaching to those students in the schools. Furthermore such practice by the staff and students should be abolished once for all.

The Education Department

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also issued notices of self-inflicted holidays of the Matriculation and Intermediate students of Peshawar. It is worth mentioning here that the matriculation exams will be held on April 18 and many of the government schools have released children. Including the students of ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth classes.

As a result of freeing children from schools, their preparation is having negative effects, parents' complaints on this. Children are wasting the whole day in unnecessary activities instead of preparing for examinations. The holidays given to Matric and Inter children in schools should be terminated immediately, the official of the Education Department said.

FIA conducts 17 raids against electricity theft

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The FIA Peshawar Zone Circle have conducted 17 raids against people involved in electricity, gas thefts and involved in sales of fake medicines wherein arrested nine persons.

According to details given by the spokesman of the FIA Peshawar Zone Circle, the FIA authority has registered 9 inquiries against elements involved in the sale of fake medicines while eight cases against elements involved in electricity and gas theft, the spokesman said.

The raids were conducted by Composite Circle Abbottabad, Anti-Corruption Circle Peshawar and Composite Circle Mardan, the spokesman said. The accused were being supplied with electricity and gas directly from the main line to their shops, houses, tube wells and offices,

the FIA spokesman said.

Raids were conducted on Ring Road Peshawar, Takht Bhai Mardan, Charsadda Road Peshawar, Phase 3 Hayatabad and during the raids the PESCO and SNGPL authorities disconnected the illegal connections on the spot.

Cable and other equipment used for illegal electricity supply have also been seized, the spokesman said, adding, "During the inspection of government offices, Hayatabad Police Station and Sports Complex were liable for debts worth millions of rupees."

DSP Office Hayatabad owes more than 1.325 million while Sports Complex owes a total of Rs. 2.1 million. FIA has issued a notice to the concerned offices to pay dues within a week.

Actions on 8 medical shops involved in the sale of fake medicines was also taken wherein raids were conducted on medical stores located at New Kali Rustam Mardan, Katakht Bakhshali Mardan, Nasata Road Mardan, New Kralay Toru Mardan, Afghan Camp Haripur and Circular Road Haripur.

During the raids, samples of fake drugs and injections were obtained and handed over to the authorities for further investigation, FIA spokesman said. A case has been registered against all the arrested accused with further investigation has started.

Meanwhile, the FIA Cyber Crime Circle has arrested three suspects involved in online sexual harassment here on Thursday. According to details given by the FIA spokesman, the accused shared objectionable photos of women and minors on social media. The arrested accused Hasher Arshad shared objectionable photos of a young child on Facebook, the FIA spokesman said.

Performance of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif in one month

Muhammad Fazlur Rahman

PRIME Minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, has focused his attention during the past month on addressing economic issues, improving domestic and foreign affairs, and providing facilities to the public. His activities over the past month demonstrate a clear commitment to enhancing the country's economic situation. The new federal government has prioritized initiating reforms on an urgent basis, focusing on immediate improvement measures. Instead of mere verbal claims or loud announcements, written directives are being issued by the Prime Minister's Office, emphasizing the implementation of these directives by each ministry through the submission of written performance reports.

During the past month, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif held meetings with diplomats and other high-ranking officials from China, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the United States. These meetings aimed to strengthen economic ties, enhance defense and security cooperation, and promote peace among the nations. Discussions with the Chinese Ambassador included talks on projects under the China-Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC) and other investment opportunities. The Prime Minister accepted an invitation for a visit to China extended by the Chinese Ambassador.

In a meeting with the American Ambassador, special attention was given to the case of Dr. Afia Siddiqui. During the meeting with the Saudi Defense Minister, the Prime Minister appreciated Saudi Arabia's special cooperation in improving economic difficulties during the past sixteen months of the government. The meeting with the Qatari Ambassador focused on creating employment opportunities for skilled Pakistanis and strengthening relations with countries hosting Pakistani expatriates. Talks with the Turkish Ambassador also discussed achieving an annual target of \$5 billion in bilateral trade.

In the very first cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister made it clear that during the past sixteen months of governance, the country was saved from bankruptcy, and the current goal is to steer Pakistan away from the burden of loans from international financial institutions like the IMF and others. He emphasized that ninety percent of the resources of the country are in the grip of a handful of elites, a grip that needs to be loosened.

In the past month, government priorities included resolving the issue of circular debt in the power sector amounting to five trillion rupees, curbing electricity theft worth four to five hundred billion rupees, accountability of loss-making institutions, shifting from loans to investments from friendly countries, reducing government expenditures, improving agriculture live stock, advancing in information technology, reforming the tax system, and increasing productivity.

Concern was also expressed in courts regarding matters pending under the FBR involving two trillion seven hundred billion rupees. The federal government, particularly the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, was assured that their issues would be addressed on the same priority basis as issues of other provinces with coalition provincial governments. Pakistan ranks as the second-largest country in free-lancing globally, and the federal government has set a target to increase IT exports from three billion dollars to five billion dollars.

Due to climatic hazards, Pakistan ranks fifth among countries worldwide. In the past twenty years, Pakistan has suffered the loss of ten thousand valuable lives due to climatic

changes, estimating losses in infrastructure and other damages in billions of rupees. Practical measures are being taken to cope with this situation, with a target set to plant more than five crore trees across the country within a year.

In the Apex Committee meeting of the Special Investment Council, former Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar and his cabinet's services were appreciated, and a commitment was made to work as a team to strengthen the country's economy by keeping political differences aside.

The Significance and Benefits of the Rekodik Project

In a meeting with Birak Gold Company, discussions were held regarding the importance and benefits of the Rekodik project, highlighting Prime Minister's directives to resolve all issues related to the project. Talks were conducted on connecting Rekodik to Gwadar via road, including the railway line project to utilize minerals in Balochistan, particularly benefiting the district of Chagai. The Prime Minister instructed to complete the feasibility of the project by the end of the current year.

For the fiscal year, a tax collection target of nine trillion rupees has been set. The Prime Minister announced to confer national hero status to major

taxpayers, grant honorary ambassadorship, issue blue passports, and privilege cards. Restrictions were imposed on the use of red carpets in government events.

Information Minister Ataullah Tarar mentioned that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has set written targets for the performance evaluation of ministries for the first time. Due to the government's positive policies, the value of the rupee has stabilized, promising more good news for the public in the coming days. The tax net will be expanded, and additional taxes will not burden the lower-income class.

The Prime Minister emphasized on the Cabinet members to work tirelessly for the economic betterment of the country for the next five years. Goals have been set to reduce the burden of foreign loans, increase GDP, create job opportunities, promote agriculture and IT sectors, introduce reforms in the energy sector, and eradicate smuggling.

For the first time in history, each ministry has been given short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals in writing, with instructions to establish a system on modern principles for their supervision. Seventy pages of directives have been issued to all ministries by the Prime Minister, covering various sectors such as economic

my, trade, IT revenue, and industrial promotion.

The Finance Ministry has been tasked to increase GDP, loans, add billions of dollars to revenues from Gulf countries by December 2027, set goals for trade agreements with friendly countries, and facilitate business ease. The Education Ministry has clear targets for enrolling out-of-school children and increasing the enrollment of PHD students by 20 percent.

Efforts are being made to open offices of social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram in Pakistan to eradicate unemployment and create job opportunities. Targets have been set for the Interior Ministry to address issues related to illegal foreign nationals residing in Pakistan. To control fuel theft, the government is formulating a policy to introduce electric bikes. A policy is also being formulated to promote art films, provide financial assistance to good filmmakers, sponsor film festivals in Karachi, and improve TV programs. Measures are also being taken for the welfare of journalists.

The enthusiasm of Prime Minister Pakistan and his team in the past month gives hope that the country has indeed taken a step towards improvement, which will directly benefit the Pakistani people.



In brief

Travelling stopped at border F.P. Report

WANA: No one will be allowed to enter at Pak-Afghan border, Angoor-Adda gate except Ahmadzai Wazir Tribes without visa and passport, senior officials have issued orders. Hundreds of people, including children, elderly and women, have been waiting under the open sky for the past several days to cross the border at the Pak-Afghan border in Angoor Adda bazar. The officials told the local media that orders have been issued by the higher authorities that in the first phase the entry of Suleman Khel and Dotani tribes belonging to Toi Khullah tehsil without visa and passport will be stopped immediately. The official expressed fear that today, Ahmadzai Wazir tribes belonging to Wana tehsil will also not be allowed without visa because the ongoing treatment has created fear of stopping Ahmadzai Wazir.

Man kills wife in Mardan F.P. Report

MARDAN: A man murdered his wife and buried her body in the under-construction bathroom of his house in Sirband area of Mardan, police said on Thursday. After the gruesome murder, the man contacted his in-laws, informing them that his wife Samreen has run away from his house. Police on the complaint of the slain woman's father launched an investigation into the incident and recovered the body from the bathroom of the husband's house. Samreen was a resident of Swat and shifted to Mardan after getting married to M Naeem five years ago. The victim was mother of a three-year-old daughter. According to the neighbors, husband and wife used to fight each other over domestic issues. Mardan police registered an FIR against the husband and two of his brothers. Police said the two co-accused have been arrested while the main accused will be arrested soon.

DC directs to solve water problem F.P. Report

KOHAT: A meeting was held about solving water problems in the urban areas of Kohat district with Deputy Commissioner Kohat Dr. Azmatullah Wazir in the chair. The meeting was also attended by officials of PESCO, WSSC and other concerned departments to discuss ways and means for the solution of the water problem being faced by the people of urban areas. In the meeting, the problem of water as well as electricity load shedding in the urban areas of Kohat was also discussed and electricity load-shedding was also considered as a factor in the water problem, due to which the problem of closure of tube wells as well. The Deputy Commissioner directed that unannounced load-shedding should be avoided and the relevant authorities should meet and decide an action plan immediately to solve the problem of public water in the holy month of Ramadan.

Sleeping driver dies in mishap

BAHAWALPUR (INP): A tractor-trolley driver was killed and his two helpers injured when he fell asleep while driving in Bahawalpur on Thursday, rescue volunteers said. The tractor-trolley heavily loaded with chaff overturned near Karachi Morr in Bahawalpur after its driver fell asleep. The dead and injured were residents of Tehsil Kabirwala of Khanewal district.

Establishment of Special Education Complex for visually impaired children announced

Anees Takar

MARDAN: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Zakat & Ushr, Social Welfare, Women's Empowerment, and Special Education Mishaal Yousafzai announced establishment of Special Education Complex (SEC) for visually impaired children in Mardan district, on Thursday.

In a bid to prioritize education accessibility and inclusivity, the Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mishaal Azam Yousafzai has unveiled plans for a groundbreaking initiative aimed at providing educational facilities to visually impaired boys up to the metric level. The announcement was made during her visit to the Special Education Complex for Boys in Mardan.

During her visit, Mishaal Azam Yousafzai emphasized the importance of catering to the educational needs of visually impaired children by establishing a specialized educational complex dedicated to their advancement. This initiative is set to commence next year and aims to facilitate visually impaired children in continuing their education seamlessly up to the metric level. She stressed the significance of ensuring that no child is left behind in their pursuit of education, particularly those with visual impairments.



Furthermore, Advisor Yousafzai, in his capacity as the Advisor for Zakat and Ushr, Social Welfare, Women's Empowerment, and Special Education, highlighted efforts to address staff shortages in private educational institutions. By bolstering staff recruitment, these institutions are poised to enhance their operational efficiency, ultimately benefiting a greater number of students.

As part of this endeavor, plans were announced to enroll visually impaired students from the current academic year's fifth grade into the Special Education Complex in Peshawar, thus minimizing disruptions to their educational journey. She chaired a meeting attended by officials including Director Social Welfare, District Officer Social Welfare Jamal Shah, and representatives from the Special Education

Complex. Deputy Director Aniq Ahsan provided a briefing on the institution's establishment, detailing its inception in 1987 and subsequent expansion to encompass vocational training centers and institutes across 24 acres of land.

In addition to addressing the challenges faced by the Special Education Complex, Advisor Mishaal Azam Yousafzai embarked on a visit to a private institution catering to the hearing impaired. Here, she lauded the institution's commitment to providing education and vocational training to hearing impaired individuals since its establishment in 1985. She commended the institution's efforts and assured full support for its endeavors, underscoring the government's unwavering commitment to fostering inclusivity and accessibility in education across KPK.

Govt prioritizes public welfare in policy making

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Member National Assembly and Chairperson Chief Minister's Special Initiative Committee Saira Afzal Tara has said that present government is committed to address problems of people and Maryam Nawaz Sharif is taking practical measures to provide maximum relief to the people. She was talking to people at Sukheki Mandi after an Iftar Dinner hosted by prominent Rice Dealers Chaudhry Hamid Yaseen and Sheikh Ijaz Bashir.

Chairperson further said that fruits of Chief Minister's Initiatives would be started reaching to the people at their doorsteps shortly and with distribution of Ramzan Ration Package, the poor and less-resources people get relief in the great extent. She listened individual and collective problems of people patiently and assured that doctors would be appointed

at Rural Health Centre Sukheki shortly and other problems would also be addressed gradually.

MPA Mian Shahid Hussain Bhatti, Mujtiba Jamal Chaudhary, ex-District Naib Nazim Mian Zahid Hussain Bhatti, ex-Chairman District Zakat Committee Chaudhry Nasrullah Khan Bhatti, ex-Chairman Municipal Committee Sukheki Mandi Chaudhary Nasir Qayyum Bhatti, President Anjumman Tajran Sukheki Mandi Sheikh Tariq Mehmood and workers of PMLN also attended the function.

Rs2.9 million released for students: Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad Sundas Irshad has accorded approval to release Rs. 2916000/- funds for providing educational stipend to male and female students of Vocational Training Institutes working in the district Hafizabad.

This approval was given in a meeting of District Zakat Committee. District

Zakat Officer Mian Sanaullah, Principals of VTIs and other members attended the meeting. It was told in the meeting that amount would be disbursed among 172 under training students of Hafizabad, Pindi Bhattian and Kolo Tarar VTIs.

Meanwhile, DC Sundas Irshad also presided over a meeting of district heads of different department and review progress on cleanliness and Chief Minister's Publik Welfare Initiatives.

Taking notice of the worst unhygienic condition in Fruit and Vegetable Market Hafizabad, she directed the officers concerned to improve cleanliness in the market without any delay. She directed the officers of MC Hafizabad to shift filth depot from Gujranwala Road near defence road to another place immediately. She also directed the officers of Irrigation Department to clean all drainages in the district before Rainy season.

Govt commits for provision of quality education

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Education Toba Tek Singh Mian Tahir Mansoor said that getting education is necessary for every individual because getting education creates awareness. He further said that parents should pay attention to the education of their children so that these children can become permanent by reading and writing.

This he said while talking to The Frontier Post along with Saifurrehman Assistant Director (Admin), Sharif Ahrar Assistant Director (Budget i), Muhammad Javed Goraya Assistant Director (Budget ii) and Muhammad Aslam Assistant Director (litigation) at Toba Tek Singh.

The government is committed to provide better education in all schools of the district so that students can get good education and because of the efforts of all the schools are getting better. He said that students should pay special attention to get education so that these students can make their name, their parents and the country famous by getting education.

In the end, he said that daily visits are made to the government schools of the district, in which the attendance of the teachers was found to be 100%. This is the reason why education was promoted due to the hard work of teachers.

DC takes action against extra fare

F.P. Report

HANGU: Deputy Commissioner Hangu Thursday instructed the passenger vehicle owners not to charge more than the government fixed fare otherwise stern action would be taken against them including imposition of heavy fines as well.

In the light of the orders of the provincial government, on the special instructions of Deputy Commissioner Hangu Syed Haider Hussain, in order to ensure the implementation of the fares set by the government and the Regional Transport Authority in the last "Ashra" of the holy month of Ramadan, the relevant officials of the district administration have implemented public transport in Hangu.

The Deputy Commissioner also paid visits to various bus, coach stands and talked to the people regarding the fare charging by the passenger vehicles and directed the drivers and bus and coaches stands owners to collect the officially fixed fare from the passengers and avoid violation. He directed the administrative officers to also check the vehicles on the road and inquired about the fares from the passengers.

PTI MPA demands oath-taking on reserved seat as per law

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) backed Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Ifthikhar Ali Mashwani spoke out against the recent controversy surrounding the oath-taking on reserved seats as per the High Court verdict. He expressed deep concern over current situation creating constitutional hazards.

MPA reiterated his party's commitment to upholding the rule of law and ensuring the protection of constitutional rights. He emphasized that PTI would

not compromise on its constitutional obligations and vowed to take every necessary step to safeguard the constitution.

Referring to the mandate given by the public, Mashwani stressed that the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would spare no effort in ensuring the preservation of the constitution. He highlighted the significance of conducting elections within the stipulated 90-day timeframe, which, he claimed, had been disregarded, resulting in the controversial allocation of seats.

Mashwani lamented the

manipulation of inter-party elections, leading to the unjust usurpation of specific seats. He deemed such actions regrettable and called for a swift resolution to rectify the situation.

The MPA's statements come amidst growing concerns over the erosion of constitutional principles and the need for decisive action to uphold democratic norms. With the Supreme Court's silence on the matter, Mashwani's outspoken stance underscores the urgency of addressing the constitutional crisis and ensuring the integrity of the democratic process.

Need for comprehensive reforms in police system

Saleem Tariq Lone

ALL written work in police offices at the central level should be done in Urdu language. (Constitutional requirement). At the provincial level, it should be done in Urdu or the provincial languages. Urdu or the provincial language should be used in all meetings. There is a dire need to make the police service a professional institution like the Pakistan Army and other defense institutions.

The police service should be made a non-political institution. (a) The Inspector General of Police should be appointed for three years in accordance with the Constitution and relevant laws. And he should be given the real authority to run his service. Just like the Army Chief. He should be kept free from political influence.

b) Important point: In order to make the police service a true institution for the protection and service of the people, comprehensive reforms should be made in the following areas/ departments in the light of the recommendations of various police com-

missions: Recruitment in the police should be ensured in accordance with the rules, regulations and procedures.

A comprehensive system of education and training during service, in which Islamic awareness should also be created. Modern technology and societal needs should also be taken into accounts. A coordinated system of postings should be implemented in accordance with career planning. For effective prevention and investigation of crimes, all required human and legal resources as well as modern technology should be used professionally. All necessary resources should be provided for the effective functioning of police stations and a people-friendly environment should be created.

An effective system of real accountability of the police should be established in accordance with the law and regulations. So that the grievances of the people can be redressed. Practical steps should be taken for the welfare of police employees (during service and after retirement). Like the effective system existing in the defense forces. All required

resources should be provided on time so that the desired results can be achieved.

There is a great need to reform the entire criminal justice system, which has miserably failed to provide quick and cheap justice to the people. There are lakhs of cases pending in the district courts for years. No one to ask. Murder cases are decided in 15 to 20 years.

The main reason for this is the never-ending series of appeals, reviews and revisions. Whether justice is done or not is a different matter. By amending the law, the first trial of murder cases should be at the scene of the crime. It is imperative that appeals in criminal cases be limited to one appeal in the district courts.

The High and Supreme Courts should be kept separate from this process. According to a survey, 75% of the accused awaiting the death penalty after all appeals in murder cases said they did not commit the murder for which they have been awarded the final death penalty. This shows that justice is not available from the courts.

The writer is Retired Inspector General (IG) Police.

Teachers demand payment before Eid

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Lower Dir teachers on Thursday demanded the federal bureau of statistics and the finance department to ensure payment of their census duties before Eid ul Fitr. Talking to local journalists at Timergara the affected teachers including census supervisors and enumerators complained that only 56 percent of their payment had been made while they were yet to get the remaining amount despite the passage of one year.

The teachers said that nonpayment of their census duties had created a sense of deprivation among the community. The affected teachers said they worked as supervisors and enumerators for the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics in the 7th nation-

al census a year ago but their payment had not been made. They expressed the hope that the higher authorities would consider the matter sympathetically and ensure the payment of census compensation to the teachers in this Holy month of Ramadan.

One Muhammad Imran of Talash said that he had spent about half of his salary during the census duty but he was yet to be paid for that. He said the government had to pay Rs 26000 to the enumerators and Rs 52000 to supervisors. "I rented vehicles and spent on other expenses during the census duty but still I am waiting for the full payment", another teacher complained, adding the higher authorities should intervene to ensure the payment before this Eid ul Fitr.

The teachers said that

they not only imparted knowledge to children but also actively participated in national campaigns like elections, census, vaccination and mass awareness. They complained that despite their important role the teachers were voicing to get stipends for their census duties for the last one year. They said the census staff endured harsh winter and the month of Ramadan during their census duty but they did not receive due compensation from the government.

The teachers pointed out that the Lahore High Court in this regard had also issued its verdicts in favour of teachers who had performed census duties. They threatened to take to the streets and observe class boycott if the government failed to pay them their due compensation before Eid.

Financial support for girl treatment sought

F.P. Report

BUNER: A poor family seven years old Yusra of Jowkhela Pacha Pir Baba is suffering from congenital skin disease and inside the body more than half of the billy and back are black and other parts of the body that is forehead and hands too are gradually affecting and it is feared that the disease will affect the face as well.

The worried mother took the baby girl to the Buner Press Club and requested the media to convey the cordial to the administration, government, doctors and philanthropists. The weeping mother expressed deep concern adding who will marry her daughter with this disease. She is extremely worried future of her daughter, she again started weeping.

The mother told that she had been taking the baby girl to different hospitals and doctors for seven years

in continuous poverty, but the answer was the same. It is found that the disease is treatable, but the cost is fifteen to twenty lakhs, so she shared with media and started again crying.

Its pertinent to mention here that five minutes after the report was shared on social media, Deputy Commissioner Hamid Ali Khan assured immediate action through a message and ten minutes later issued a notification in which Dr. Kazim Ali Shah, MS of THQ Hospital Pacha a team consisting of skin specialist Dr. Mushtaq and child specialist Dr. Muhammad Arif has been formed and given instructions to immediately examine the affected girl. Meanwhile, after the report was shared on social media, doctors of many medical centers have also assured in the comments to cooperate in the treatment of the affected girl.

40 shops gutted

SAHIWAL (INP): Forty shops were gutted in a fire erupted after a short circuit. Initially, the fire broke out in a shop and it engulfed surrounding shops immediately, reducing goods worth hundreds of thousands of rupees to ashes.

The fire incident took place near Darbar Muhammad Panah in Kamir area. Having being informed, firefighters scrambled to the site. To see the intensity of the fire, they called more firefighters with vehicles. The rescue crew put out the fire after hectic efforts of several hours. Urs celebrations had culminated a day ago. People say if the fire had erupted during the Urs celebration, it could have claimed lives of devotees along with property loss.



FC hosts Quran recitation competition

F.P. Report

GHALANAI: Frontier Corps (FC) North proudly announces the successful conclusion of the largest district level memorization competition in Mohmand District, as part of the "Illm Tolo Da Para" campaign. Spanning from March 25th to April 4th, the competition witnessed enthusiastic participation from students representing various madrassas, government & private schools across the district.

The first phase of competitions featured inter-graduation contests, paving the way for district-level showdowns at Cadet College Mohmand, where top performers from Tehsil level competitions competed for honors.

The closing ceremony, graced by officials from Frontier Corps North, district administration, local dignitaries, and a multitude of students, marked a

momentous occasion of recognition and celebration.

The chief guest commended the exceptional performances and distributed prizes to students who demonstrated outstanding prowess in the competitions.

A staggering participation of over 500 students representing more than

150 madrassas and schools underscored the event's significance in fostering a culture of academic excellence and literary appreciation in the area. Local elders and students alike lauded the Frontier Corps North for its steadfast commitment to advancing education through innovative initiatives.



Friday, April 05, 2024



BANGKOK: A damaged building in Hualien, after a major earthquake hit Taiwan's east.

Trump's events aren't drawing big protests this year

NEW YORK (AP): When Donald Trump first ran for the White House eight years ago, protesters filled the streets. His inflammatory rhetoric and often dehumanizing descriptions of immigrants spurred thousands to demonstrate outside his rallies. By this time in 2016, protesters regularly interrupted his speeches, sparking clashes and foreshadowing Trump's habit of encouraging violence against those he casts as his enemies.

"Knock the crap out of them, would you?" Trump once said as he egged on the crowd to go after protestors on their own - even promising to pay their legal bills. No longer. As he runs again with an agenda that is arguably more extreme than his two previous campaigns, mass protests at Trump rallies and appearances are a thing of the past. When Trump returned to New York last week for a hearing in one of his criminal cases, just a smattering of detractors turned up outside the courthouse. During a Midwestern swing, Trump was interrupted briefly by a protest in Green Bay, but otherwise encountered minimal opposition.

In a twist, it's now President Joe Biden who is facing a sustained protest movement, largely by those furious over the administration's support for Israel in its war against Hamas. During his first major rally of the year, Biden's 22-minute speech was interrupted no less than a dozen times by detractors calling for a ceasefire in Gaza. Protesters repeatedly disrupted his celebrity fundraiser last week with former presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton at New York's Radio City Music Hall, as hundreds more demonstrated outside. Nearly a decade after Trump launched his first campaign, organizers and others who participated in past protests describe a change in tactics as they focus their efforts on other issues or turning out voters in November. Some described a "Trump fatigue" after nearly a decade of outrage. Others say it's Biden's policy toward Israel that has them the most agitated and have turned their attention to protesting him. "All the people that would be protesting Trump, a lot of these people, a lot of that energy are now focused on protesting a genocide in Gaza," said Thomas Kennedy, an immigrant from

Argentina who participated in more than a dozen anti-Trump protests and rallies in 2016.

Kennedy still describes the former president as a "horrible threat." But for "a lot of people like me who would have been out there protesting Trump, it's just demoralizing and dispiriting. It's not worth my effort and my energy." That's a potential warning sign for Biden, whose campaign aims to energize its base by casting Trump as a threat and framing the election as a historic test of the nation's commitment to democracy.

"President Biden believes in the constitutional right of making your voice heard and treats protestors with respect and empathy - unlike Donald Trump," said Biden campaign spokesman Ammar Moussa. Biden campaign officials note that protest intensity hasn't correlated with recent election outcomes. Trump won in 2016 despite the fierce resistance, and President Obama won despite demonstrations in 2012. They also point to Democratic wins in recent elections, including the 2022 midterms. Some who organized protests against Trump in the past say the more muted approach this year is part of a deliberate effort to not elevate his comments and ideas.

Strongmen "need an audience and they need gas and wind in their sails," said Rachel O'Leary Carmona, executive director of Women's March, a group that began as a worldwide demonstration against Trump's inauguration in 2017. "The best thing that people can do to combat Trump in many ways is not to give him a platform and gas." It's a perspective, she said, that took hold during the 2020 campaign at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when many activist groups opposing Trump decided to "stand down." Instead, demonstrations turned to broader demands for racial justice following George Floyd's killing by police.

Annette Magnus, the former executive director of Battle Born Progress, a Nevada group that helped organize anti-Trump protests during the 2016 election, also described a strategic change. "People are very focused on turnout and going door-to-door and talking to voters, because that's what's going to matter," she said. "I will do everything I can to

make sure he is never elected again. It's just going to look different because it's a different election year and so much has happened since then."

There are also safety concerns, with some organizers concluding that demonstrating against Trump isn't worth the potential physical risk. Trump has encountered occasional protests at his events this year. In early-voting Iowa and New Hampshire, a small group of environmental activists interrupted all the major candidates, including Trump. But his response underscored how much things had changed. "It's amazing 'cause that used to happen all of the time. And I don't think it's happened in two-and-a-half or three years," he remarked after an interruption in Indianola. "It always adds excitement."

That "excitement" included assaults and arrests, as well as frequent scenes of protesters clashing with supporters as well as riot police. In March 2016, Trump was forced to cancel a rally in Chicago after raucous protesters packed the arena where he was set to speak. A day later, in Ohio, a man leaped over a barrier and rushed Trump's stage. US Secret Service mobilized to surround the candidate in a protective ring. Trump routinely responded to the protesters with mockery and insults, telling them to "Go home to mommy," or instructing security to "Get 'em out!" as his crowds erupted into chants of "Trump! Trump! Trump!" Eventually, organizers began playing an announcement ahead of his rallies with instructions for the crowd.

"If a protest starts near you, please do not in anyway touch or harm a protester," said one version. Instead, they were told to notify law enforcement by holding up rally signs and chanting Trump's name. This time it's Biden who is having to adjust to endless disruptions. Unlike Trump, the incumbent president has tried to defuse confrontations. During a recent event in Raleigh, North Carolina, promoting the administration's health care policies, Biden urged the crowd to, "Be patient" with those shouting concerns about Gaza. "They have a point. We need to get a lot more care into Gaza," he said, drawing strong applause.

Media feel pressure to tell 'positive' China story as party tightens grip

BEIJING: The first time 27-year-old Ong Mei Ching* came across the Chinese online magazine, Sixth Tone, it immediately caught her attention. For years, Ong had been interested in Chinese current affairs and had stayed updated about news from China, but she found that much of the coverage revolved around similar topics. Sixth Tone, which is published in English, was different.

"I found it refreshing because it was not about Chinese business or economics or politics - it was about people," Ong told Al Jazeera. She was captivated by the way the publication's journalists ventured beyond the usual spaces into lesser-known cities and provinces to report about social dilemmas such as the country's ageing population or its marginalised groups like single parents and children left with their grandparents by parents who had left for work in faraway cities. "I felt they were doing something quite meaningful, that they were changing the narrative of how an international audience saw China," she said.

Ong wanted to be a part of it. So, when she got the opportunity to work at Sixth Tone in 2019, she jumped at the chance and moved her life to Shanghai where the magazine has its headquarters. She became a part of an editorial team that she described as upholding high journalistic standards and

whose members were passionate about their work. However, the work could often lead to clashes with Chinese censors who objected to certain topic choices and story angles, which sometimes resulted in pieces getting killed before they were ever published or taken down just a few hours after they went online. "We were testing the waters with many stories to see whether they would pop the censors," she said. Regardless of the scrutiny, Ong found that Sixth Tone, which was geared towards a Western and internationally-minded audience, often had more leeway than media for more local audiences.

But its room for manoeuvre now appears to have shrunk. Former and current employees at Sixth Tone have recently given accounts of how articles have been removed and phrases censored on a massive scale across the outlet's archives. Editors have also been required to check in with censors every few hours and certain terminology has been changed to align with the preferred narrative of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) including referring to Tibet as "Xizang". Al Jazeera reached out to Sixth Tone for comment but did not receive a reply. Ong is not surprised that the grip appears to be tightening around Sixth Tone. "As Sixth Tone has grown, it has attracted a bigger audience making the government

want to increase its control over the content this audience is getting," she said.

"At the same time, there is a lot of pressure on Chinese media today to portray China in a solely positive manner." Under President Xi Jinping, the Chinese government has called for "telling China's story well" and spreading "positive energy". Such mantras have not always been reflected in Sixth Tone's many articles about the socioeconomic issues facing common people in China. The irony is that while Sixth Tone's reporting has drawn the attention of Chinese censors, the outlet is also considered state media because it is part of the state-controlled Shanghai United Media Group. According to Shaoyu Yuan, a scholar of Chinese studies at Rutgers's University in the US, state media in China serve as a mouthpiece of the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) with less emphasis on editorial independence and more focus on aligning content with party ideology and government policies. "This means that state media operate under the auspices of the CCP and contribute to the promotion of government objectives, enhancing national unity and supporting China's image domestically and internationally," he told Al Jazeera.

But although Sixth Tone had to balance credible reporting for an international audience with CCP ideology, Yuan is not convinced

the magazine was doomed to lose its edge. Instead, he argues that allowing Sixth Tone to pursue its own journalistic style was akin to a controlled experiment by the CCP. "Chinese citizens interested in such reporting most likely already knew how to bypass censorship and access foreign news outlets that already cover some of the same issues," he said.

"The Chinese government's support for Sixth Tone allowed for a subtle control over the tone and framing of such issues." Additionally, when Sixth Tone was founded in 2016, China was still transitioning from the less assertive governing style of Hu Jintao, who was China's president from 2003 until 2013. "Compared to eight years ago, it would be more unusual to see a media like Sixth Tone be founded today," Yuan said. Since Xi came to power in 2013, the media environment has tightened. Internet freedom has also declined.

In Freedom House's 2023 report on internet freedom around the world, China was rated "not free: with a score of only nine points out of 100, one point less than the year before. In RSF's World Press Freedom Index, meanwhile, China fell four spots compared with 2022, ranking second to bottom and just above North Korea. More journalists are currently in jail in China than anywhere else in the world. — Aljazeera

South Africa parliament speaker resigns

JOHANNESBURG (BBC): South Africa's Speaker of Parliament Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula has resigned after police raided her home during a corruption investigation. Ms Mapisa-Nqakula is accused of soliciting bribes in return for awarding contracts during her time as defence minister.

She has denied the charges and said her resignation was "in no way an indication or admission of guilt". She said given the "seriousness" of the probe she could not continue her role. The 67-year-old veteran of the anti-apartheid struggle became speaker in 2021. Before that, she served as defence minister for seven years. Last week Ms Mapisa-Nqakula's lawyers filed a request for a court order to prevent her arrest, saying it would infringe on her dignity.

Judges rejected her bid on the basis that the matter was not urgent and they could not speculate on an arrest that was yet to happen. Ms Mapisa-Nqakula is accused of making several demands for money, amounting to \$120,000 (£96,000), from the owner of a company to secure a tender to transport army equipment back to South Africa from elsewhere on the continent, the Business Day newspaper reports. The resignation comes ahead of next month's general election, which some believe could be difficult for the governing African National Congress (ANC). The party, which has been in power since 1994, has faced repeated allegations of corruption and mismanagement of public funds, which have become a key election issue.

Brazil hopes summit boosts ecotourism

BRASILIA (Reuters): Brazilian tourism officials are hoping to change the country's image as a mere haven for scantly-clad beachgoers by hosting UN climate talks next year in the Amazon rainforest city of Belem that will focus on environmental sustainability and ending deforestation to slow global warming. The summit is expected to boost Brazil's attractiveness as an ecotourism destination and increase travel to its Amazon rainforest and other biomes that offer the world's greatest biodiversity. Tourism Minister Celso Sabino said.

Only 9% of current visitors to Brazil are ecotourists, while almost two out of every three tourists come for sun and beach, he said in an interview. "Tourism is essential for the sustainability and preservation of forests, bringing needed economic development for the local inhabitants," he said. Drawing more environmental and adventure travelers is part of the government's plan to increase overall tourism in Brazil, which is low in comparison with other countries. Tourism contributes less than 8% of Brazil's GDP, compared to more than 20% in Spain, Portugal or the Dominican Republic, he said.

Sabino is working on expanding flights to Brazil and will be at the Seatrade Cruise Global fair in Miami next week to discuss increasing the number of cruise ship visits to Brazilian ports. All steps to raise foreign and domestic tourism are welcomed by private businesses complaining that the number of tourists remains stagnant and below the pre-pandemic level. "Brazil has a natural vocation for ecotourism given its unique biodiversity. There is an enormous potential to be tapped," said Marina Figueiredo, executive president of Braztoa, the Brazilian tour operators association.

Tourists worldwide are looking for new experiences with nature and wildlife, Figueiredo told Reuters. "COP30 next year will be more than just a conference. It is a very strategic event that will showcase Brazil as a country that protects the environment and preserves nature," she said.

Majority in Southeast Asia would choose China over US: Survey

TAIPEI: More than half of people in Southeast Asia would side with China over the United States if forced to choose, a survey has found, underscoring Beijing's growing influence in the region. In the State of Southeast Asia 2024 survey released this week, 50.5 percent of respondents said they would favour China, up more than 11 percentage points compared with last year.

The latest edition of the survey, conducted annually by the Singapore-based ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, is the first to show China being preferred over the US. Last year, only 38.9 percent of respondents preferred China, with 61.1 percent favouring the US. China was also chosen as the most influential economic power in the region by most respondents, with 59.9 percent of respondents picking it over the US. Despite acknowledging China's clout, respondents also expressed distrust of Beijing, with 67.5 percent of respondents saying they feared its growing economic influence.

Concern was highest in Vietnam, where worry was expressed by 87.7 percent of respondents, followed closely by Myanmar at 87.6 percent, Thailand at 80.3 percent and the Philippines at 75.8 percent. Just over half of survey respondents said they fear China might use its economic and military power to coerce countries in the region, while another 45.5 percent said they did not trust China. Japan, the US, and the European Union were chosen as the

most trustworthy regional powers by 58.5 percent, 42.4 percent and 41.5 percent of respondents, respectively.

Bonnie Glaser, managing director of the Indo-Pacific programme at the German Marshall Fund of the United States, said the survey reflected the region's complicated relationship with China. "The views of China reflect the complexity of most [Southeast Asian] nations with China," Glaser told Al Jazeera.

"They recognise China's growing clout, but at the same time, fear potential Chinese economic coercion, oppose threats to their sovereignty, and generally don't trust China to do the right thing. SEA countries seek diversity in their relationships." While the world's second-largest economy offers opportunities for trade and investment, Beijing has also provoked anger with its handling of issues such as the South China Sea, where it claims a vast expanse of maritime territory in violation of an international arbitration decision.

Ian Chong, a non-resident scholar at Carnegie China, cautioned that the survey results should be taken as a snapshot of how university-educated Southeast Asians felt during January and February of 2024. "It's not necessarily pro-China. It's anti-US sentiment tied to support for Israel's excessive actions in Gaza, and also the fact that support for Israel means the US is willing to veto and stall UN processes," Chong told Al Jazeera.

Despite geopolitical

tensions between the US and China, the economy trumped other concerns for those surveyed. Unemployment and the prospect of a recession were named the top concerns for the region by 57.7 percent of respondents, followed by climate change (53.4 percent) and "intensifying economic tensions between major powers" (47 percent). "The region continues to express fears of bleak economic prospects with the global economy in the state that it is. A majority of Southeast Asians fear unemployment and economic recession," the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute said in a report accompanying the survey.

Israel's war in Gaza was named as the most pressing geopolitical concern - with especially high levels of concern in Muslim-majority Malaysia, Brunei and Indonesia - followed by aggressive behaviour in the South China Sea, scam operations and the Russian-Ukraine War. Asked about the war in Gaza, 29.7 percent of respondents expressed concern the conflict could encourage religious extremism, while 27.5 percent said it would damage international law and the rules-based order.

"The ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict has emerged as a contentious issue in Southeast Asia, commanding significant attention in the region's domestic politics," the report said. "Despite its geographical distance, the conflict has reverberated strongly across this diverse multi-racial and multi-religious region." — Aljazeera

Man's Ukraine anxiety affected ex-partner: Judge

KYIV (BBC): A writer's anxiety about Russia's invasion of Ukraine "very plainly" had an impact on his ex-partner, a family court judge has ruled. The man was a member of an organisation known as the "North Atlantic Fellas Organisation" ("NAFO"), Recorder Simon Rowbotham heard. He worked with "NAFO" to "combat online Russian propaganda", a private family court hearing in Northampton was told.

Recorder Rowbotham said the man's obsession with "NAFO" was a "feature" of family life. Detail of the case has emerged in a ruling by the judge published online. The man and woman, who had lived together in Northamptonshire, are embroiled in a family court dispute over the care of their two children. Recorder Rowbotham said he had been asked to make rulings on a number of allegations the woman had made about the man's behaviour. The woman said she had been a victim

of "controlling and coercive behaviour". One of her complaints related to his anxiety about Russia's attack on Ukraine. Her ex-partner, a "writer and researcher", disputed allegations made against him. The judge said the children at the centre of the case could not be identified in reports of his ruling. Recorder Rowbotham upheld some of the woman's allegations and dismissed others. He said there was evidence of a "pattern of controlling behaviour" which was "subtle in places" but "nonetheless insidious". The woman had described her former partner's "ability to become obsessive" over certain topics. Recorder Rowbotham said he had formed the same "impression". "The main example concerns the father's anxiety around the Russian invasion of Ukraine and his involvement with an organisation known as the North Atlantic Fellas Organisation ("NAFO"), with whom it appears to be

common ground the father worked to combat online Russian propaganda," said the judge.

"He describes this as a group 'using humour to fight misinformation on Twitter'." Recorder Rowbotham said on one occasion the man had told the woman, at 03:00, that a Ukrainian power plant had been shelled. "The point here is not that the father was anxious about Russian aggression; he was certainly not alone in that," said the judge. "What troubles me is the impact this very plainly had on the mother." The judge said: "Having read and heard the accounts of both parties concerning the father's involvement with NAFO, I prefer on balance the mother's account that the father became obsessed and dedicated much time to this enterprise, at times drawing the children in." He added: "Even allowing for some exaggeration by the mother, this was a sufficient feature of family life that it was noticed by others."

Pro-Kurdish mayoral election winner reinstated

ISTNABUL: Turkey's election authority has reinstated a pro-Kurdish mayoral election winner in the eastern city of Van after the annulment of his victory provoked clashes. The Supreme Election Board (YSK) announced that it has overturned a decision by the regional election commission in eastern Turkey to remove Abdullah Zeydan, the candidate of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Equality and Democracy Party (DEM).

The reversal is viewed as another boost for the Turkish opposition following local elections, which dealt a blow to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Islamic-oriented Justice and Development Party (AKP), after their wins last year in the presidential and parliamentary elections. Zeydan had garnered more than 55 percent of the vote in the municipal elections, but the regional electoral commission claimed he was ineligible to stand due to a previous conviction, and handed the mayoral seat to a candidate from AKP who had won 27 percent of the vote.

Zeydan had been arrested and jailed in 2016 after criticising the Turkish army's air campaign against outlawed Kurdish fighters in the Kurdish-majority southeast. He was released in 2022. The removal provoked violent protests that lasted throughout the night across the province, which lies on Turkey's eastern border with Iran. The authorities cracked down. Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said 89 people were detained, for joining unauthorised rallies and chanting slogans in praise of a "separatist terror organisation", referring to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) that has been blacklisted by Turkey, the United States and the European Union. DEM has often been accused by the Turkish authorities of links to the PKK. The movement is the third-largest party in Turkey's national parliament.

However, DEM said the YSK had decided to reinstate Zeydan as the mayor of Van as "a result of the resistance of the Kurdish people". The YSK considered an appeal by DEM and ruled to

reinstate Zeydan, the state-run Anadolu Agency reported. The decision was taken by a majority of the board's members, the agency said. Over the years, Erdogan's government has removed elected pro-Kurdish mayors from office for alleged links to Kurdish fighters and replaced them with state-appointed trustees. Besides the victory in Van, DEM also claimed the mayorships of other large towns in Turkey's Kurdish-majority southeast, including Diyarbakir, the region's largest city. Before the election board's decision to reinstate Zeydan, Istanbul's re-elected mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, seen as a likely rival to Erdogan, called the events in Van a "total aberration".

"We will be following this meaningless practise of double standards from Van," Imamoglu, whose party backed the DEM in its battle against the Van ruling, told a crowd of about 500 supporters gathered outside Istanbul's main court after he was officially given a mandate to serve five more years. — 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

Judges allegations and third party's conspiracy

A surprising situation has emerged in the past few days after the eight honourable judges of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) authored a letter to the Supreme Judicial Council leveling allegations of interference and harassment of the top judges by the Intelligence Operatives of the National Intelligence Service. The matter has been viewed with great concern by the Chief Justice of Pakistan and the government. The federal government immediately ordered a high-power inquiry commission led by a former Chief Justice to ascertain the truth and mitigate the situation accordingly. The Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Qazi Faez Esa took suo moto notice of the issue and vowed to defend the sovereignty and independence of the judiciary at all costs by constituting a full court to hear the case on merit. Presently, all Bar Councils, the entire justice system, civil society, and the common public have a consensus on the single point that the sanctity of the judiciary must be protected and no quarter should be allowed to harass judges and use courts to implement its heinous agenda.

Amid such circumstances, the Chief Justice and the judges of Islamabad High Court (IHC) received anonymous letters having threatening signs and suspicious powder inside perceived to be deadly anthrax, a poisonous substance that causes lung infection and can lead to the death of a person. Meantime, the Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Qazi Faez Isa, and four apex court judges along with the LHC administration received the posted suspicious letters in the names of 4 judges that further hinted at the gravity of the situation. The letters were allegedly signed by a woman named Resham, the wife of Waqar Hussain. It has also been revealed that the woman who sent the letters to the judges did so without mentioning her address and leaving any clue to fail the investigation. According to the details, the Police have registered an FIR and investigations are currently underway to identify the sender, the nature of the powdery substance, and the real motives behind this criminal practice and conspiracy.

After the crucial election season passed smoothly and peaceful transition of power in the center as well as all four provinces marked the successful culmination of an important political and constitutional activity. The nation embraced the newest issue that brought two important state organs, the judiciary, and the military against each other. The situation is worrisome and merits a rational and principled approach from both institutions to reach the facts and resolve the issue amicably. The constitution of Pakistan does not permit any individual or institution to intervene in the court's hearing or meddle in the internal affairs of the judiciary. However, the mysterious efforts by the unknown elements to further widen the gap and create distrust among the concerned institutions is a well-thought strategy of anti-State and anti-Pakistan forces in the country or abroad. Such conspiracies create harassment and mold public opinion, blending intrigue and the allure of hidden truths behind fictional events. These pre-planned events create alternative narratives to official explanations, often involving powerful entities or individuals orchestrating events behind the scenes. Although these conspiracy events are harmless, they can fuel distrust, and misinformation, and support enemy propaganda against the state institutions, which is already at its peak in social media.

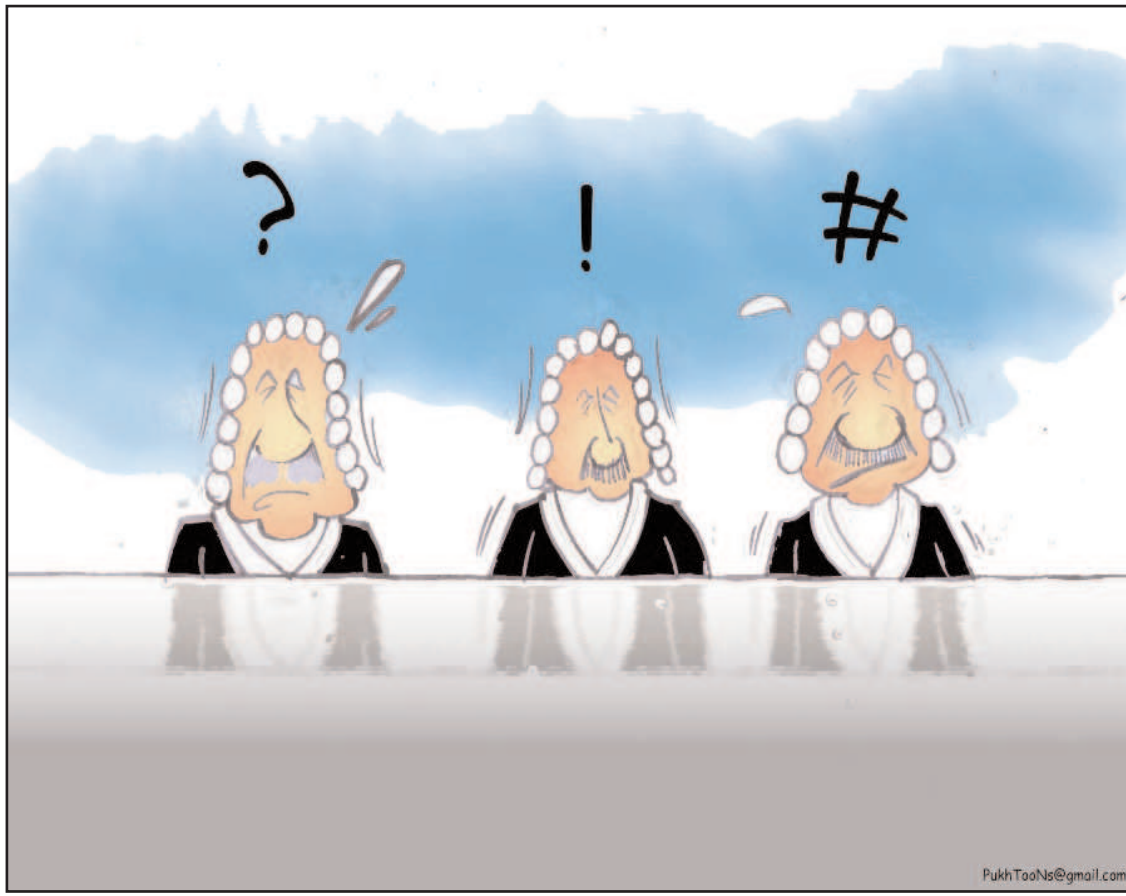
Presently, Pakistani society is highly polarized and split up. The selective approach of political leaders, social media propaganda, and hate campaign persistently spoil the political and social environment in the country. The National institutions including the military, courts, and adjudicators are the prime target of political hatred and defamation campaigns by the anti-state elements. The current situation merits the utmost due diligence and comprehensive investigation to reach the culprits and determine the true motives behind the ongoing conspiracy. The state's hierarchy is not only to protect the judiciary from outside intervention but also carefully nullify the enemy's psy operation and black propaganda against our valiant armed forces and state institutions which have flourished in the country in the recent past. It is time that the state reacts with full might to put the house in order with each state organ in its right place, each functionary and leader within its clothes, and strict implementation of the law. This is a one-point agenda to rule a nation and grasp success in the world.

Tackling drug abuse in Pakistan

THE Anti Narcot-ics Force (ANF) in a crackdown on drug supply in educational institutions of twin cities, seized 2.4 kg of hashish from an accused who was a student of BS Computer Science at a local university. During in-vestigation, the accused confessed to supplying drugs in different University campuses and hostels. There have been reports regarding growing use of drugs by teenagers, particularly college boys and University students across the country, however the educational institutions in twin cities have now become much more notorious from this perspective.

Drug smuggling is a significant concern in our society, wherein, the country's geographic location plays a crucial role in ever growing trade, trafficking and abuse of drugs. Pakistan's proximity with Afghanistan, the world's largest opium and heroin producer places it at the forefront of drug trafficking activities making it one of the most popular drug trafficking routes in the world. Drug addiction has grown in our society at an unprecedented speed, with 6.7 million users and over 4 million addicts, which is one of the highest numbers for any country in the world. The issue of drug addiction casts a shadow over the societal fabric of our country. Meanwhile, drug sales and use in educational institutions are a hindrance to educational attainment and cause serious harm to teaching activities and the environment in educational institutions.

Currently, drug addiction is seriously hurting Pakistani society with millions of drug users causing multiple issues ranging from health crises, social disintegration, economic challenges, law and order issues and a sharp rise in crimes. On the other hand, the drug trade is a significant source of income for organized crimes including terrorism, and fuels corruption in politics and governmental affairs. The menace of drug abuse has spread all over Pakistan while youth clubs, schools, and universities are prime targets of the drug dealers that pose a grave risk to our society. Addressing drug abuse requires a comprehensive approach that goes beyond traditional measures and simple law enforcement as a significant chunk of our population, particularly youth have fallen prey to this curse. There is need for the adoption of multifaceted approaches including prevention and awareness about the risks involved in drug use, the treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts, legislative and preventive measures, Intelligence sharing and coordination with neighbouring states along with strong policing and preemptive strategy of the LEAs. So, the menace of drug trafficking and drug abuse could be curbed sustainably in our society once and for all.



Russia's terrorism laws target everyone but real threat

Olga Abramenko

ANTI-EXTREMISM legislation, and anti-terrorism legislation even more so, are hardly unique to Russia. In many modern societies, they are presented as a sad necessity. However, against the background of Russia's war against Ukraine and the militaristic hysteria fomented by officials, such repressive legislation is expanding and tightening in scope. And worryingly, it is increasingly being applied in illegal ways.

Experts at the Sovva Center who analyzed sentences for extremist offenses in 2023 found an unprecedented 35% of people jailed for making "extremist statements" were wrongfully convicted, while previously their share was less than 15%. The penalties have also become harsher, with more people receiving prison sentences. The Sovva Center describes the situation in 2022-2023 as "rampant repressive law enforcement."

In recent years, the number of people convicted and prosecuted for extremist statements has been increasing. In 2016-2018, it peaked at more than 850 people (compared to over 400 in 2023). The Sovva Center believes the number of people administratively convicted for statements is kept at more than 5,000 people. Strictly speaking, the court (and the preceding investigation) in cases of public statements should apply the so-called six-part test developed by international experts and approved by the UN Human Rights Council under the Rabat Plan of Action.

The degree of public danger of the statement is analyzed according to the following criteria: content of the statement, its genre and style; the identity of the author and their authority for the audience;) the context of the statement (public or private, how painful the topic is for society, etc.);) presence of clear intent;) degree of public exposure, size and nature of the audience; likelihood of severe consequences.

It is clear that with proper application of these criteria, a huge number of these so-called extremist cases simply would never have been initiated. However, Russian authorities tend to see extremism and terrorism, or its justification, where it does not exist - and act with excessive cruelty.

The examples of this are well-known and numerous. A criminal case was initiated against 18-year-old student

Daria Kozyreva for repeatedly discrediting the Russian Armed Forces - punishable by up to five years of imprisonment - for sticking a poem by Ukraine's national poet Taras Shevchenko on a monument.

Under the same article, renowned human rights defender Oleg Orlov was sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment. For "justification of terrorism" and public incitement of hatred and hostility toward FSB employees - who are considered their own social group - activist Mikhail Krieger was sentenced to seven years. Sociologist and publicist Boris Kagarlitsky was sentenced to five years for "public justification of terrorism." Under the same Criminal Code article, a criminal case was initiated against theatre director Yevgenia Berkovich and playwright Svetlana Petriyuchuk, who had already been under investigation and held in custody for months.

Bashkir activist Fayil Alsynov was sentenced to four years in a prison colony because of an ambiguous statement in his native language that the court interpreted as incitement of hatred and hostility toward migrants. Russian law enforcement and courts are throwing increasing effort into suppressing public protest, freedom of speech and expression of opinions critical of the regime. At the same time, the threat from real terrorists is overlooked.

The recent tragedy at a Moscow region concert hall has made this oversight obvious. Russia's special services ignored US intelligence warnings of a planned attack, while law enforcement unprofessionally delayed emergency services' access to the burning building, demonstrably tortured the detainees and allowed the radical far-right to spread the footage on social media. Authorities are now trying to compensate for this blunder by going after people who expressed themselves carelessly on social networks, like St. Petersburg resident Nikolai Konashenkov. In the narrow sense, Russian anti-terrorism and anti-extremism legislation encompasses two laws: "On Countering Extremist Activity" and "On Countering Terrorism."

These so-called framework laws, do not outline direct actions but instead contain general principles for regulating anti-extremism and anti-

terrorism efforts and refer to other laws to establish sanctions for violations.

For example, the law on countering extremism states that the production, storage, or distribution of extremist materials constitutes a violation of the law. The law on countering terrorism states that terrorist activity includes, among other things, "the propaganda of terroristic ideas, the dissemination of materials or information that call for the conduct of terrorist activity or justify or validate the necessity of such activity." The sanctions for such actions are outlined in Article 205.2 of the Criminal Code.

Thus, in addition to the two mentioned laws, the discussed legislation includes the "extremism" and "terrorism" articles of the Administrative and Criminal Codes. No fewer than 13 articles of the Administrative Code are fully or partially dedicated to anti-extremism - from petty hooliganism and offending the feelings of religious believers to discrediting the Russian Armed Forces and the rehabilitation of Nazism.

In Russia's Criminal Code, there are no fewer than 35 articles fully or partially dedicated to extremism and terrorism. Separate provisions of several sectoral laws (on the media, public associations, freedom of conscience, citizenship, and others) also align with these efforts. More broadly, anti-extremist and anti-terrorism legislation can also include stipulations about "undesirable organizations," "foreign agents" and the responsibility of website owners, since the same repressive apparatus monitors their enforcement. In the public consciousness, all these designations are lumped together, as state propaganda essentially equates anti-war protest, environmental activism, and civic activity (including observing elections) with treason against state interests. From there, it is not a far leap to extremism and terrorism.

The reasons for arbitrary and improper application are already present in the laws themselves. Though the law on countering terrorism defines terrorist activity quite clearly, there is no official list of extremist acts or definition of extremism. There are also cases of complete unconstitutionality of the adopted amendments to the legislation. For example, recent

changes to Article 22 of Russia's Citizenship Law (2021) allow for people convicted of terrorist activity to have their Russian citizenship revoked, which is equated to providing false information about oneself when applying for citizenship. The retroactive force of this law - implying that a person has been hiding criminal intentions from the very beginning - contradicts Article 6 of the Russian Constitution, which states that citizenship cannot be revoked and that both natural-born and naturalized citizens have equal rights. In practice, there have been cases of deprivation of citizenship - both acquired and by birth - when they had no other nationality. This is how the environmental and anti-war activist Arshak Makichyan, who was born in Russia and never had any other citizenship, became stateless.

The second aspect of the improper application of anti-extremism and anti-terrorism legislation is selectivity. People who disagree with the regime are often persecuted, while genuinely dangerous calls and actions by pro-government figures or people who otherwise reinforce the party line go unpunished. It is particularly alarming that repression - first legislative and then practical - is no longer just based on ideology or religion, but other collective traits. As soon as the "international LGBT movement" was declared an extremist organization last November, repression against specific LGBTQ+ individuals immediately followed.

Proposals have already been made to declare ethnic groups as extremist and deal with them the same way as with the LGBTQ+ community. Such rhetoric is not just characteristic of nationalist and xenophobic Telegram channels. State Duma Deputy Pyotr Tolstoy declared all national diasporas, compatriot associations and communities as "legalized mafias." Dmitry Medvedev - the deputy chairman of the Security Council - called for the execution of all terrorists and repression against their families. Medvedev and other officials have started campaigning to end Russia's moratorium on the death penalty. What legislative novelties are next? Could people united by common ancestry and visual characteristics be declared "extremists"?

The Moscow Times

Nuclear energy cannot lead global energy transition

Masayoshi Iyoda

ON March 11, 2011, a magnitude 9 earthquake and a subsequent 15-metre tsunami struck Japan, which triggered a nuclear disaster at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant. Three of the six plant's reactors were affected, resulting in meltdowns and the release of a significant amount of radioactive material into the environment. Today, 13 years later, Japan is still experiencing the impacts of this disaster. Immediately after the earthquake struck, more than 160,000 people were evacuated. Of them, nearly 29,000 still remain displaced.

Disastrous health effects due to exposure to radioactivity are still a serious concern for many, and environmental impacts on land, water, agriculture, and fisheries are still visible. The cost of the damage, including victim compensation, has been astronomical; \$7bn has been spent annually since 2011, and work continues. Last year, Japan's plan to start releasing more than a million tonnes of treated wastewater into the Pacific Ocean sparked anxiety and anger, including among community members who rely on fishing for their livelihoods, from Fukushima to Fiji.

Yet, Japan and the rest of the world appear not to have learned much from this devastating experience. On March 21, Belgium hosted the first Nuclear Energy Summit attended by high-level officials from across the globe, including Japanese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Masahiro Komura. The event was meant to promote the development, expansion and funding of nuclear energy research and projects.

The summit came after more than 20 countries, including Japan, announced plans to triple nuclear energy capacity by 2050 at last year's UN Climate Change Conference (COP28). All of these developments go against growing evidence that nuclear energy is not an efficient and safe option for the energy transition away from fossil fuels.

Despite advancements in waste-storage technology, no foolproof method for handling nuclear waste has been devised and implemented yet. As nuclear power plants continue to create radioactive waste, the potential for leakage, accidents, and diversion to nuclear weapons still presents significant environmental, public health, and security risks. Nuclear power is also the slowest low-carbon energy to deploy, is very costly and has the least impact in the short, medium and long term on decarbonising the energy mix. The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report pointed out that nuclear energy's potential and cost-effectiveness of emission reduction by 2030 was much smaller than that of solar and wind energy.

Large-scale energy technologies like nuclear power plants also require billions of dollars upfront, and take a decade to build due to stricter safety regu-

lations. Even the deployment of small modular reactors (SMR) has a high price tag. Late last year, a flagship project by NuScale funded by the US government to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars had to be abandoned due to rising costs. In addition to that, according to a report released by Greenpeace in 2023, even in the most favourable scenario and with an equal investment amount, by 2050, the installation of a wind and solar power infrastructure would produce three times more cumulative electricity and emit four times less cumulative CO2 compared to a water nuclear reactor in the same period.

And the climate crisis is not just about CO2 emissions. It is about a whole range of environmental justice and democracy issues that need to be considered. And nuclear energy does not have a stellar record in this regard.

For instance, uranium mining - the initial step in nuclear energy production - has been linked to habitat destruction, soil and water contamination, and adverse health effects for communities near mining sites. The extraction and processing of uranium require vast amounts of energy, often derived from nonrenewable sources, further compromising the environmental credentials of nuclear power. Nuclear energy also uses centralised technology, governance, and decision-making processes, concentrating the distribution of power in the hands of the few.

For an equitable energy transition, energy solutions need not only to be safe, but justly sourced and fairly implemented. While nuclear power plants require kilometres of pipelines, long-distance planning, and centralised management, the manufacturing and installation of solar panels and wind turbines is becoming more and more energy efficient and easier to deploy.

If implemented correctly, regulation and recycling programmes can address critical materials and end-of-life disposal concerns. Community-based solar and wind projects can create new jobs, stimulate local economies, and empower communities to take control of their energy future as opposed to contributing more money to the trillion-dollar fossil fuel industry.

Although the 2011 disaster in Fukushima may seem like a distant past, its effects today on the health of its environment, people and community are reminders that we must not be dangerously distracted with the so-called promises of nuclear energy. We must not transition from one broken system to another.

Wealthy countries have an ethical historical responsibility to support global finance reform and provide ample funding for renewable energy in lower-income countries. To keep our world safe and fair, not only do we need to tax and phase out fossil fuels immediately, but it is essential that we power up with renewable energy, such as wind and solar, fast, widely, and equitably.

Aljazeera

Concerns over Jordan's stability - view from Riyadh

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager

SINCE last week, tens of thousands of people have protested at the Israeli Embassy in the Rabieh neighborhood of Amman in Jordan. Tensions have mounted as demonstrations have continued to rock the capital over the past 10 days, with authorities expressing growing concerns over a potential Hamas influence in encouraging people's participation in these protests, after the former leader of the group's political wing, Khaled Meshaal, incited discord among Jordanian and Palestinian citizens in Jordan.

The protests in Jordan feature slogans supporting Hamas and its Al-Qassam Brigades military wing, with speeches from their leaders urging the people of Jordan to take action being played. This is despite the Jordanian leadership making increased

diplomatic efforts for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and the delivery of humanitarian aid. Saudi Arabia has been following these developments closely.

There is a unique geographical and deeply human connection between Palestine and Jordan, making the latter's security and stability essential for maintaining security in the Occupied Territories. However, external communications and calls have provoked the public into spreading chaos and contributing to disorder in the countries surrounding Palestine, including Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon. Some extremist Palestinian leaders, including some from Hamas, have unfortunately incited instability in Jordan, driven by misguided, dangerous and short-sighted calculations.

Jordan is particularly

sensitive because it represents, according to Israeli extremist calculations, an "alternative homeland" that the forces of Israeli extremism hope to target in facilitating the goal of the displacement of Palestinians and the seizure of their land.

Furthermore, Israel has an interest in a destabilized Jordan as the current Jordanian position stands firmly against its plans.

Saudi Arabia supports all measures already taken and to be taken by Jordan, particularly those aimed at preserving its security and territorial sovereignty from anyone attempting to seize the state, exert pressure or influence its decisions. The Kingdom's stance is clear: any harm to Jordanian stability or threat to its security is a red line. Riyadh will not tolerate any attempt to turn Jordan into an arena for

exporting tensions or fostering chaos and instability in the Arab world under the pretext of supporting resistance in Gaza.

Saudi Arabia, as a religious, political and ethical authority exerting substantial influence over the Arab world, is dedicated to maintaining Arab national security, including in Jordan. This is not a new development. In the past, Saudi Arabia has backed Jordan and supported any steps taken to uphold its security and stability. Notably, King Salman organized a summit in 2018 that extended an economic aid package to Jordan amounting to \$2.5 billion. This support highlighted Saudi Arabia's commitment to assisting Jordan in times of crisis. King Abdullah of Jordan has repeatedly expressed gratitude for the Kingdom's support and

acknowledged its role in addressing various challenges, including those that could potentially destabilize Jordan.

In conclusion, the Kingdom's concern for the security of Jordan amid the rise of extremist movements stems from its recognition of the intricate interplay between regional dynamics and national security. As a neighboring country, Jordan's stability is not only vital for its citizens but also holds significant implications for the broader regional security landscape. Saudi Arabia's proactive approach to addressing these challenges underscores its

commitment to fostering peace and stability within the region.

By engaging in strategic partnerships and diplomatic initiatives and implementing robust security measures, the Kingdom endeavors to both safeguard its own interests and contribute to the collective security of the region. Saudi Arabia remains poised to navigate the complex security environment and mitigate potential threats to Jordan's sovereignty and stability through continued vigilance, cooperation and a steadfast commitment to upholding shared values.

Arab News

Important Notice

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or teshil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.

Britain has always been a prime mover in NATO

BIG Brother ruling with an iron fist. Misinformation warping the truth. A population terrorised by the fear of the unnamed terrors in Room 101. Seventy-five years on since its publication, the gaps between George Orwell's masterpiece 1984 and Putin's modern-day dystopia are closing by the day.

Yet Orwell wasn't writing his magnum opus with a crystal ball in his pocket. He simply looked at the world around him. One year before 1984 hit the shelves the Kremlin was orchestrating a coup in Czechoslovakia, blockading West Berlin - cruelly cutting off food, fuel and basic necessities - and testing their first missile in space.

Things looked bleak for the West and they would have taken a turn for the worse, were it not for another event that occurred 75 years ago in Washington DC. There, in the Departmental Auditorium, the United States, the United Kingdom and 10 other nations signed the North Atlantic Treaty.

President Truman told a momentous gathering that "Men with courage and vision can still determine their own destiny". And Nato was born. Most of us have never known a world without Nato. Too often we take it for granted. But today it's time to give the Alliance the thanks it deserves. It was Nato's watchful vigilance that brought the Cold War to an end and toppled the Berlin Wall. It was Nato that underpinned the

peace and prosperity of the post-war world. When chaos came to the Balkans it was Nato that helped restore the peace. When the twin towers fell on 9/11, Nato stood by the United States - triggering Article 5 for the first time to support their operations. And when Stalin's 21st century successor Vladimir Putin launched his full-scale invasion of Ukraine two years ago, Nato again stepped up to ward off further aggression. Today the Alliance is not just stronger but bigger than ever having recently welcomed our 31st and 32nd members Finland and Sweden.

Britain has always been a prime mover in Nato. Its first headquarters was hosted in London in 13 Belgrave Square. Its first Secretary General was renowned war general Lord Ismay. And I'm proud that today we are maintaining that commitment. We are participating in every Nato mission. Our nuclear deterrent contributes to the nuclear umbrella that protects all alliance members.

And today we are providing the largest contingent in Exercise Steadfast Defender which is itself the biggest training operation since the Cold War. Recently I was in Poland and had the good fortune to see some of our 20,000 personnel in action. A truly impressive sight. Yet paying tribute to Nato's past is not enough. Today we must give urgent thought once again to the Alliance's future. We have

Grant Shapps

moved from a post-war to a pre-war world. Russia is menacing our neighbours. China is increasingly belligerent. Iran is using its proxies to cause regional havoc from the Middle East to the straits of Yemen. And North Korea is perpetually rattling its nuclear sabre. Increasingly these malign powers are aligning and our democracy is in their crosshairs. So we must do three things.

First redouble our efforts to support Ukraine. Their astonishing achievements in the Black Sea, where Russia's navy is now functionally inactive, demonstrates what Ukraine can accomplish with the right support. But this assistance cannot waver because Ukraine is defending the frontiers of freedom for us all. Should Putin succeed his near neighbours could be next on the menu. That's why we've provided over £7 billion in military support to Ukraine since 2022 and since 2014 have trained more than 60,000 Ukrainian personnel in everything from basic infantry skills to flight training.

Second, Alliance members must do more to pay their way. US taxpayers are not wrong to expect Nato allies to stump up more cash. The UK has always met our Nato spending obligations. With our defence budget at 2.28% of GDP and our commitment to increase it 2.5%, we will continue to be a leader in the Alliance. In the rest of Nato, things are also moving in the

right direction.

Nato's Secretary General expects at least 18 allies to spend 2% of their GDP on defence this year. Last year the number was 11. Poland is increasing its budget by 70 per cent since Russia's illegal incursion into Crimea. At the same time, it's 10 years since Nato allies agreed to meet 2 per cent and we must look beyond that target to shore up our defences. Yet some nations are still failing to meet even the 2 per cent. That cannot continue. We can't afford to play Russian roulette with our future.

Third, we must bolster our Euro-Atlantic defence sector. Russia is scaling its industry to match its military needs. We must do the same. That means investing in more ammunition and more stockpiles. Which is why, in recent months, I have not only signed a number of multinational defence procurement initiatives but helped boost Ukraine's reserves with a £245 million investment in artillery ammunition and announced a deal to make Britain Ukraine's largest drone supplier. Seventy-five years ago George Orwell painted a terrifying picture of a world without Nato. Today we live in a more dangerous age. Once more autocratic Big Brothers are seeking to divide us. But we have a big advantage. Today our Alliance is bigger, stronger and more experienced than ever. And as long as we stand together, we'll guarantee that the Orwellian ending never comes to pass.

The Telegraph

Legal case for imposing embargoes on Israel

IT has been almost six months since Israel launched its most recent onslaught on Gaza, which has now reached genocidal proportions. The Israeli army has killed more than 33,000 Palestinians, injured more than 75,000 and obliterated civilian buildings and infrastructure across the strip.

Israel is currently in violation of the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) provisional measures requesting the protection of Palestinian rights, and the UN Security Council's resolution calling for a ceasefire.

Its atrocities in Gaza are part and parcel of its settler colonialism which infringes on the most basic international legal principles and is a threat to international peace and security. In such a context, all statements of condemnation are empty of meaning if they are not followed by action. Under international law, when international peace is under threat and genocide is being committed, states and corporations have the duty to act. Among the measures they can resort to are embargoes as a form of economic pressure to stop violations of international law.

In the case of Israel, such measures are necessary to force the country to stop its violations and to protect the Palestinian people against further atrocities. When considering the legal case for embargoes against Israel, it is important to understand in what contexts they are applicable. Under international law, member states are required to act when there is a threat to international peace and security - that is, violations are taking place that cross the red line at the core of the UN Charter.

Since Israel's creation in 1948, which involved the dispossession and ethnic cleansing of the indigenous Palestinian people, armed conflict has not stopped. Israel's settler colonial project has resulted in constant grievances by the Palestinians and other populations of the region, causing geopolitical tensions and hostilities. Since the start of the latest Israeli assault on Gaza in October, there have been constant fears of regional spillover. Most recently, the risk of the proliferation of war was heightened by the brazen Israeli attack on the Iranian consulate in Damascus - a grave violation of international law.

It is, by now, more than clear that the prolongation of the illegalities committed by Israel is a threat to international peace and security. This position has been validated by the UN General Assembly, which has repeatedly noted that the continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a threat to international peace and security, including in Resolutions 67/23 of 2012 and 70/17 of 2015. In its 2004 decision on the Israeli "separation wall" case, the ICJ also declared that Israel's violations of international law pose a threat to international peace and security.

More generally, the crime of apartheid is a threat to international peace and security under the Convention for the Prevention of Apartheid (PDF). Genocide, aggression used to suppress a people's claim to self-determination, and colonisation are also considered threats to international peace and security. Israel has been repeatedly accused of all of these.

When faced with a threat to international peace and security, states have a duty to respond to protect the affected population by all means available, including economic embargoes against industries facilitating the dominating state's war economy.

As clearly laid out by the ICJ in its decision on the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina v Serbia and Montenegro (PDF), states have the duty "to employ all means reasonably available to them, so as to prevent genocide so far as possible". The provisional measures recently issued by the ICJ in the case of South Africa vs Israel act as a legal notice for states and other actors: the risk of genocide is here and your duties are activated.

The duty to prevent genocide is compounded with the duty not to be complicit in genocide, including by not selling weapons. This obligation is further fortified by the Arms Trade Treaty which

Shahd Hammouri

obliges arms exporters not to transfer weapons that could be used to violate international humanitarian law.

As recently ascertained (PDF) by the UN rapporteur on the occupied Palestinian territories, Israel's genocide is an integral part of a larger settler colonial policy of denial of the Palestinian right to self-determination. In the case of such denial, the complementary to the International Law Commission (ILC) Draft Articles on State Responsibility stresses that "Collective non-recognition [of the situation creat-

ported through a fourth. Countries as diverse as India, Canada, Japan, Belgium, Germany, Cyprus and others are involved in this process. Spare parts Israel needs for its US-made F-16 and F-35 fighter jets come from states like the Netherlands, Australia and the UK.

Each of these states has the capacity on its own to influence the Israeli state by imposing an embargo on arms and dual-use materials. Similarly, the continuation of Israel's overall system of domination through the grave illegalities of apartheid, de facto annexation, colonisation, and genocide rests on its capac-

Raw materials can come from one state, the weapons can be produced in another, they can then be exported by a third one and transported through a fourth. Countries as diverse as India, Canada, Japan, Belgium, Germany, Cyprus and others are involved in this process. Spare parts Israel needs for its US-made F-16 and F-35 fighter jets come from states like the Netherlands, Australia and the UK. Each of these states has the capacity on its own to influence the Israeli state by imposing an embargo on arms and dual-use materials. Similarly, the continuation of Israel's overall system of domination through the grave illegalities of apartheid, de facto annexation, colonisation, and genocide rests on its capacity to maintain a healthy positioning in the global market.

ed by the serious breach as law] would seem to be a prerequisite for any concerted community response against such breaches and marks the minimum necessary response by States to the serious breaches."

Non-recognition, referred to by the ILC, can take the form of any lawful means, including economic embargoes provided they safeguard (PDF) the human rights of the local civilian population. Per the 1948 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, such sanctions would not constitute a breach of international trade law as they are necessary to protect human life, public morals and security interests.

Further to this point, resolutions by the UN General Assembly issued in the decolonisation era clearly reiterate the member states' duty to act to bring about the end of colonisation and apartheid. Notably in Resolution 3236 of 1974, the General Assembly appealed: "to all States and international organizations to extend their support to the Palestinian people in its struggle to restore its rights, in accordance with the Charter." Such support was extended to the South African people in the form of embargoes against the apartheid government.

With regards to corporate responsibility, according to the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights, corporations have the duty not to benefit from or contribute to violations of international human rights law and humanitarian law. This duty was reiterated in relation to Israeli settlements in the documents leading to the UN database on businesses involved in Israeli settlements.

The UN Public Hearings for Transnational Corporations, and the Nuremberg trials among others demonstrate the possibility of serious repercussions for corporations which benefit from or contribute to threats to international peace and security. History has repeatedly shown that colonial states will only stop their subjugation of colonised populations when their domination is no longer economically and politically viable.

As Algerian political scientist Brahim Rouabah has pointed out, the French did not leave Algeria out of goodwill - they did so because their colonisation project became too costly. A more recent case illustrating this point is South Africa, where the apartheid regime fell after international sanctions threatened its economy.

Israel's ability to continue waging its war on Gaza hinges on imports of foreign weapons and ammunition, the production of which involves complex supply chains.

Raw materials can come from one state, the weapons can be produced in another, they can then be exported by a third one and trans-

ity to maintain a healthy positioning in the global market.

Israel has seen growth in the oil, gas, green energy and tech industries, as well as agriculture, which are deeply interrelated with the sustenance of its grave illegalities and are dependent on external trade. Taking out one element of the supply chain of any major industry could lead to a domino effect which can destabilise or debilitate the Israeli war economy. Embargoes ought to start with the industries which facilitate the war effort, such as the arms and the oil and gas industries. This is the lesson learned from the international legal struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa.

A General Assembly Resolution to this end would further encourage states to carry out their own international legal obligation. Local strategic litigation, political and shareholder activism, and parliamentary lobbying ought to focus on the urgency of enacting state and corporate obligations.

The wheels of this process are already turning. In late February, UN experts asserted that arms exports to Israel must stop immediately. This call was echoed by the representative of Palestine, Nada Tarboush, at the meeting of the Arms Trade Treaty Working Group in Geneva.

Individual countries have started to take action. Colombia has suspended all arms trade with Israel, the UK has stopped maintenance for Israeli F-35 fighter jets on its soil, the Canadian parliament voted to freeze new licences of weapons sale to Israel, and the Walloon regional government in Belgium has blocked the export licences for ammunition to Israel. The Norwegian government has advised against trade with Israeli settlements. Companies have also responded to international appeals and legal proceedings, such as the ICJ case against Israel. Itochu Corporation, one of the largest Japanese trade conglomerates, decided to cut ties with Israel's arms company Elbit.

A Palestinian coalition calling for an oil and gas embargo was recently launched, following the communication of cease-and-desist letters to oil and gas corporations looking to make a profit from the Israeli looting of Palestinian maritime resources. If we are to believe in a future with equal rights, self-determination, and reparations for the Palestinian people in line with the core principles of the UN Charter, these efforts need to be taken forward and expanded. The outcome of such efforts may not be visible in the foreseeable future, but as the cases of South Africa and Algeria have shown, if there is a will, there is a way - even in the darkest of hours.

Send missiles to Ukraine or stand accused of appeasing Russia?

A Social Democratic German chancellor lagging in the opinion polls vows adamantly not to join a war. Support for his SPD party rallies and he narrowly clings to power. By refusing to supply Taurus long-range cruise missiles to Ukraine despite an outcry among western allies, Olaf Scholz may be hoping that history will repeat itself and he can replicate Gerhard Schröder's 2002 stunt before the US-led invasion of Iraq when he refused to provide troops or money.

With Scholz's popularity at a record low, the economy likely in recession and his three-party coalition lurching from one crisis to the next, the chancellor appears to be trying to rally voters behind his rejection of calls from Kyiv, Paris and London to deliver the potentially game-changing weapons to the embattled Ukrainians. The SPD has proclaimed itself the "peace party" ever since the original Friedenskanzler (peace chancellor), Willy Brandt, knelt at the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising memorial in 1970 to atone for the Holocaust and Nazi Germany's rape of Poland. It was Brandt who launched Ostpolitik - the pursuit of east-west reconciliation through diplomacy and trade - which remains the SPD's proudest foreign policy accomplishment, for which many members are nostalgic today.

The party has always had a strong pacifist streak, reflecting Germans' angst about a return to war. After the second world war, the SPD initially advocated a neutral, reunified and demilitarised Germany, only embracing Nato membership in 1959. Recent opinion surveys show that more than half of Germans fear that Russia's war in Ukraine will spread to Nato countries and draw in Germany. Such fears can only have been exacerbated by images

of carnage from last month's terror attack on a Moscow concert hall, and President Putin's attempts to link Ukraine to the Islamic State gunmen who carried out the slaughter. Languishing at around 15% in the polls ahead of the 9 June European Parliament elections, the Social Democrats are tempted to play the peace card one more time, even though it was Scholz who declared a Zeitenwende (turning point) in German foreign and defence policy after Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine two years ago. He scrapped the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia to Germany, announced a 100bn (£85bn) special fund to bolster the country's rusting armed forces and, after lengthy hesitation, began sending weapons to Kyiv.

Now, the dour chancellor alternates between boasting that Berlin is Ukraine's biggest European arms provider, with 17.1bn in military assistance since the war began, and rejecting pleas from within his own coalition, the conservative opposition, western allies and from the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, to supply Taurus missiles. His public justification is that it would require German soldiers in Ukraine to help operate and target the missiles, bringing Berlin closer to war with Moscow. But when the UK's foreign secretary, David Cameron, proposed a way around that obstacle, saying that the UK could send more of its own Storm Shadow missiles to Ukraine if Germany gave London the Taurus, Scholz rejected the idea, declaring: "I am the chancellor, so that's it."

Scholz also rebuffed French president Emmanuel Macron's statement that sending ground troops to Ukraine could not be ruled out if the situation deteriorated, declaring flatly that "there will be no ground troops, no sol-

Paul Taylor

diers on Ukrainian soil sent there by European countries or Nato states." Scholz's party comrades have gone further, musing aloud about a ceasefire that would leave Russia in control of the swathes of eastern and southern Ukraine that it has seized since 2022. Rolf Mützenich, parliamentary leader of the SPD, asked this month: "Isn't it time that we not only talk about how to wage war, but also think about how we can freeze the war and later end it?"

Coalition lawmaker Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann of the liberal Free Democrats, and chair of the parliamentary defence committee, branded his speech a scandalous example of "SPD appeasement policy". Even inside the SPD, some prominent intellectuals have begun to criticise Scholz's line. A group of five Social Democratic historians, led by Prof Heinrich August Winkler of Berlin's Humboldt University, said in an open letter to party leaders that the SPD had failed to hold an honest reckoning with the errors of German policy towards Russia over past decades. They accused them of using "arbitrary, erratic and not infrequently factually false arguments" to justify restricting arms deliveries to Kyiv. And former European affairs minister Michael Roth announced he was quitting politics partly because he no longer felt comfortable with the SPD's policy on Ukraine.

The Social Democrats are struggling to win back lost working-class and young voters who now support either the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) or the newly created left-populist movement led by former communist Sahra Wagenknecht, both of which are strongly anti-war. Hence donning the "peace party" mantle may make tactical sense for the SPD. But there is another historical precedent that Scholz

should consider before seeking short-term electoral advantage at Ukraine's expense. In 1982, Social Democratic chancellor Helmut Schmidt was toppled by his FDP coalition partners after members of his party began to renege on the planned deployment of US medium-range atomic missiles in West Germany to counter Soviet SS-20 missiles targeted at western Europe. It was Schmidt who had originally called for modernising the US nuclear shield to maintain the credibility of Nato's deterrence.

The SPD's embrace of the anti-nuclear "peace movement", which had staged mass demonstrations, led to an election defeat the following year and consigned it to opposition for the next 16 years. Ironically, the Greens, who entered parliament for the first time in 1983 as a pacifist, anti-nuclear party, are now the most outspoken critics of Russia and supporters of arming Ukraine.

Scholz's positioning is making it harder for the FDP and the Greens to continue in coalition with the SPD, and could make it more likely that both parties team up with the conservative Christian Democrats (CDU) after next year's general election. The Taurus missiles may not be a sufficient casus belli to persuade Scholz's partners to jump ship now, but refusing to supply them could backfire on him in the long run if Ukraine was defeated for want of sufficient allied support. And this time, there may be no comeback for the SPD - Germany's oldest political party, but a shadow of its former self. Centre-left parties are in decline all over continental Europe, and close to extinction in France and the Netherlands. The German Social Democrats must choose whether they are the party of democracy, human rights and international law, or the party of appeasement.

The Guardian

It's not just true of Scotland - Britain is no longer a free country

THE bizarre goings on north of the border have been amusing to watch. Scotland's new Hate Crime Act played out like an April fools with no end. Police Scotland have been inundated - about 60 reports an hour - with thousands complaining of alleged hate crimes committed by JK Rowling and the First Minister himself. Someone even made a complaint in Siobhian Brown's name, Yousaf's minister for victims and community, leading her to suggest that her government's bill had caused "hysteria".

It's easy to point the finger at attacks on freedom of speech going on elsewhere. Ireland is similarly in danger of becoming a basket case for free speech. But those of us in England and Wales shouldn't get complacent.

Given the slew of censorious legislation passed in the last few years, it was perhaps unwise for Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to castigate his Scottish counterparts. He's right that England has "a proud tradition of free speech", but that tradition, fought for by the likes of Leveller Freeborn John, has always been contested. From the days of heresy and treason to modern concepts of "offence", freedom of speech has never been absolute - in fact, it's always been

in peril.

Scotland certainly didn't invent the idea of making "hate" an aggravating factor in the criminal law. In 2022-2023, 145,214 offences were recorded by the police in England and Wales "where one or more of the centrally monitored hate crime strands were deemed to be a motivating factor" - a steady increase year on year.

And we don't just record hate crimes, but "non-crime hate incidents". This tricky label is for those hate crimes where no criminal act has actually taken place - a means for snitches to get the police attention they require with nothing actually being done about it. More than 6,489 non-crime hate incidents were logged between June and November last year in England and Wales.

When she was home secretary, a speech made by Amber Rudd was reported as a "hate crime incident" by a professor at Oxford University. Far from the legal maxim "everything which is not forbidden is allowed", we now seem to live by the rule that everything you dislike can be illegal - if you complain loudly enough.

Does Sunak know the laws on his own country's statute books? After tweeting in celebration at the

death of national treasure Captain Tom Moore, Joseph Kelly was arrested under Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003. Under this legislation, expressing an opinion of a "grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character" can see you put behind bars. Sure, tweeting "burn auld fella, buuunnn" wasn't very nice, but should it be illegal?

The Online Safety Act, passed last year, effectively appoints unaccountable Silicon Valley millionaires to decide what we are and aren't allowed to say online. Worse still, it emboldens Ofcom to police what is acceptable discourse online. And I haven't even got to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, which bans protest that's too "noisy".

A nation governed by freedom lovers are not. In fact, politicians seem to spend most of their time searching out ways to limit and neuter open debate under the guise of public protection. Every so often one of our elected representatives suggests making misogyny a hate crime, a move that sounds nice and fluffy on the outside but only serves to further invite police intervention into our private lives and conversations.

Likewise the Equality Act -

Ella Whelan

much loved by keyboard warriors and workplace whingers - might claim to be a means to protect the vulnerable, but has been used as a justification for political censorship. Just take the gender wars - in which activists on both the trans and the gender-critical side use the legislation to cry You Can't Say That. As a result, public debate becomes coarsened, febrile and oversensitive.

JK Rowling's challenge to the Scottish government has been admirable - sometimes it takes a woman with big balls and an even bigger purse to call the petty censor's bluff. But our distrust in free speech - from censorious politicians to snitching citizens - won't be changed overnight by celebrity intervention.

Many think real freedom of speech, unfettered by legal restrictions or tech company oversight, would lead to bedlam - an orgy of hate crime and misinformation. I'm less misanthropic. The only way to fight bad speech - even hateful speech - is with more speech. We cannot ban hate - it is a necessary and sometimes powerful emotion. Scotland and Ireland have shown us what can happen when ordinary people get complacent about the necessity of free and open public debate. Let's not make the same mistake.



PSX continues with bullish trend, gains 660 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 660.75 points, a positive change of 0.98 percent, closing at 68,416.78 points against 67,756.04 points the previous trading day.

A total of 388,751,782 shares valuing Rs.17,882 billion were traded during the day as compared to

361,823,380 shares valuing Rs.11,901 billion the last day. Some 334 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 204 of them recorded gains and 108 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 22 remained unchanged.

In the future market, as many as 307 companies traded shares in the market, out of which 183 recorded gains, 119 witnessed losses where-

as the share prices of 5 companies remained unchanged. In PSX, the three top trading companies were PIAC(A) with 47,200,500 shares at Rs.26.19 per share, Cnergyico PK with 29,719,327 shares with Rs.4.60 per share and Pak Petroleum with 21,170,581 shares at Rs.110.17 per share. Hoechst Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.49.50

per share price, closing at Rs.1,300.00, whereas the runner-up was Shahmurad Sugar Mills Limited with a Rs.40.61 rise in its per share price to Rs.582.07.

Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.80.00 per share closing at Rs.8,200.00, followed by Nestle Pakistan Limited with Rs.33.44 decline to close at Rs.7,566.89.

Pakistan's total liquid foreign reserves reach \$13.379 billion

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$13,378.9 million while foreign reserves held by State Bank reach \$8,040.4 million in the week ended on March 29, 2024.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that foreign exchange reserves held by the central bank increased by \$19 million to \$8,040.4 million during the week under

review. Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at \$5,338.5 million, it added.

Total liquid foreign reserves held by the country, in the previous week ended on March 22, 2024, were \$13,427.6 million.

Among them foreign reserves held by the central bank were \$8,021.9 million while net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were \$5,405.7 million.

Unregistered sellers must register by April 30 for Trader Friendly Scheme: FBR

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Spokesperson on Thursday said that all unregistered wholesalers, retailers, dealers and all

shopkeepers must register by 30 April 2024 under Trader Friendly Scheme. He said that already registered shopkeepers don't need to re-register for the Scheme. The scheme is

open to all retailers, including Tier-1 retailers, said a FBR statement issued here. Income tax paid in monthly electricity bills can be adjusted at the time of payment under Scheme.

Minister, LCCI chief attend Eid gifts distribution ceremony

LAHORE (APP): Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Maal Department Punjab, in collaboration with the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry, organised an Eid gifts distributing ceremony at Social Welfare Training Institute Lahore and distributed gifts among the residents of social welfare institutions.

Provincial Minister for Social Welfare Punjab Sohail Shoukat Butt, LCCI President Kashif Anwar, Secretary Social Welfare Punjab Iqbal Hussain and Director General Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Maal Punjab Amna Munir spoke while LCCI Executive Member

Rizwan Haider and others were also present.

DG Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Maal Punjab Amna Munir thanked the LCCCI for continuous support and collaboration in uplifting the community and making a positive impact on the lives of vulnerable persons.

Provincial Minister for Social Welfare Sohail Shoukat Butt said that Social Welfare Department is striving to bring positive change in the lives of the weaker segments of society. He also announced provision of pharmacy and other medical facilities at the Social Welfare Complex. LCCI President Kashif

Anwar said, "We must actively participate in acts of kindness." He added that apart from pursuing its main objective of promoting and protecting interests of trade and industry, the LCCI carries out corporate social responsibility quite actively. Such activities include donations to hospitals and educational institutes and participating in relief activities as and when needed. Secretary Social Welfare Punjab Iqbal Hussain stated that the Department of Social Welfare is working on several new projects including economic well-being of persons with disabilities (PWDs).

Gold rates up by Rs.2,200 to Rs241,100 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold witnessed an increase of Rs2,200 and was sold at Rs241,100 on Thursday as compared to its sale at Rs238,900 on the previous day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold increased by Rs1,886 and was sold at Rs206,704 against the sale price of Rs204,818 and 10 gram 22 karat gold also increased to Rs189,480 from Rs187,750, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola silver increased by Rs.40 to Rs2,650 from Rs.2,610 whereas that of ten gram silver went up by Rs.34.29 to Rs.2271.94 from Rs.2,237.65. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$21 to 2,311 from \$2,290, the Association reported.

SBP announces Eid holidays from 10 to 12 April

KARACHI (APP): All the banks and financial institutions will remain closed from April 10 to 12, 2024 on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here, announced that the central bank will "remain closed from 10th to 12th April, 2024 (Wednesday to Friday) being public holidays on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr." Subsequently, all the banks, Micro Finance Banks and other financial institutions will also observe Eid-ul-Fitr holidays from 10 to 12 April, 2024.

Pakistan, Azerbaijan aim to boost economic ties, seeking finalization of PTA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Azerbaijan on Thursday aimed to boost economic and trade ties by seeking finalization of a bilateral Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) to increase the bilateral trade between both of countries.

Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, and Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov, met here on Thursday to discuss bolstering economic cooperation between the two

nations, according to a press release issued here.

Minister Jam Kamal reiterated Pakistan's commitment to strengthening commercial and economic ties, emphasizing the importance of people-to-people contact and the signing of the PTA to bolster trade volume and create new business opportunities.

Highlighting the historical, political, and economic ties shared by Pakistan and Azerbaijan, Minister Jam Kamal emphasized the

need to extend bilateral trade to its true potential by addressing trade-related issues. Minister Jam Kamal noted the increase in exports to Azerbaijan from US\$ 9.70 million in 2021-22 to US\$ 12.08 million in 2022-23, alongside a significant rise in imports primarily due to fertilizers.

Both countries are actively negotiating a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), with finalized drafts.

Ambassador Khazar

Farhadov stressed the importance of high-level visits to enhance bilateral relations and elevate trilateral cooperation with Türkiye. He emphasized the resumption of LNG supplies from Azerbaijan to Pakistan and the potential for mutual investments, particularly in energy and IT sectors. Notably, Azerbaijan exempted Pakistani rice from import customs duty until December 2027, signaling a gesture of goodwill.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries & Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain chairs a meeting of the Sugar Advisory Board (SAB).

Spices exports increase 21.10% to \$78.107 mln in 8 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports of spices witnessed an increase of 21.10 per cent during the first eight months of the financial year 2023-24, as against the exports of the corresponding months of last year. The spices exports from the country were recorded at US \$78.107 million during July-February (2023-24) against the exports of US \$64.497 million during July-February (2022-23), according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

In terms of quantity, the exports of spices also surged by 83.02 per cent going up from 14,486 metric tons to 26,512 metric tons, according to the data.

Meanwhile, year-on-year basis, the exports of spices witnessed an increase of 42.86 per cent during the month of February 2024 as compared to the same month of last year. The exports of spices from the country during February 2024 were recorded at US \$11.147

million against the exports of US \$7.803 million in February 2023. On a month-on-month basis, exports of spices also surged by 16.69 per cent during February 2024 when compared to the exports of US \$9.553 million in January 2024, the PBS data revealed.

It is worth mentioning here that the exports from the country witnessed an increase of 8.93 percent during the first 9 months of the current fiscal year

(2023-24) compared to the corresponding period of last year, PBS reported.

The exports from the country increased up to \$22.914 billion during July-March (2023-24) as against the exports of \$21.036 billion in July-March (2022-23), showing a growth of 8.93 percent.

On the other hand, imports into the country declined by 8.65 percent to \$39.944 billion this year against the imports of \$43.724 billion last year.

Govt to provide policy support to industrial sector in upcoming Budget

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce and Industry Jam Kamal Khan on Thursday said that the government will provide economic and trade policy support to the business community and their suggestions will be implemented in the upcoming budget.

The government is fully aware of its responsibilities for economic and industrial competitiveness and productivity and in this regard, full support will be provided to the industrialists. The Minister for Commerce said this while addressing the Pre-Budget 2024-25 seminar arranged by Ministry of Commerce here. The Seminar was aimed at creating awareness on tariff rationalization for Trade bodies and associations, exporters, and

public sector stakeholders from Ministry of Industries and Production, Federal Board of Revenue, National Tariff Commission, Ministry of Finance, and Board of Investment among others.

The seminar was also attended by representatives by the key chambers of commerce and industry, product associations and sector specialists from all over Pakistan. In his keynote address, the Federal Minister for Commerce, Mr. Jam Kamal termed the tariff rationalization process as a critical function of the government to enhance trade competitiveness and foster economic growth. He said the government will further improve the economic environment for confidence building of businessmen and industrialists and priorities and measures have

been initiated in this regard.

He stated that by simplifying and streamlining tariff structure, the Ministry of Commerce aims to reduce costs for domestic industries, boost exports and attract foreign investment.

The Secretary Commerce, Saleh Ahmed Faruqi highlighted that the Pre-budget seminar was organized to provide a platform for stakeholders for engaging in a meaningful discourse on the benefits and implications of tariff rationalization. He informed the participants that the pre-budget exercise was an opportunity for stakeholders to gain insights into the tariff rationalization initiatives, learn their impact on various sectors and provide inputs to aid the process of making strategic changes to the existing tariff structure.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Two ships namely, Chem Gallium and Alba Gascarrying Chemicals and LPG, berthed at Engro Terminal and Sui Southern Gas Terminal respectively on Wednesday.

Meanwhile another gas carrier 'Lian Song Hu' also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on today morning. A total of eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Kyparissia and Silver left the Port on today morning while two more ships, Al-Wajbah and Chem Gallium are expected to sail on today morning. Cargo volume of 113,525 tonnes, comprising 66,256 tonnes imports cargo and 47,269 tonnes export cargo carried in 2,623 Containers (503 TEUs Imports and 2,120 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

Asian markets lifted by US data and fresh rate cut hopes

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian markets rose Thursday after US data provided a fresh indicator that inflation was easing and Federal Reserve boss Jerome Powell soothed worries about the bank's plans to cut interest rates this year.

An equities rally that started at the back end of 2023 has stuttered in recent weeks after a string of reports suggested the economy was too strong and price too sticky for officials to begin easing monetary policy this year.

Warnings from decision-makers that they were worried about bringing down borrowing costs too soon have also played on investors' minds, causing them to pare back expectations for how many -- if any -- were coming before January. But those concerns were allayed somewhat Wednesday when Powell said he still saw cuts coming this year.

He told a conference in California that rates, which are at a two-decade high, were doing their job but said moving too soon could be "quite disruptive" for the world's top economy.

But if the economy continues to evolve as expected, most Fed participants still expect it will be "appropriate to begin lowering the policy rate at some point this year". Evercore's Krishna Guha said: "Powell says recent data has not materially changed the picture. "We read this as confirming that the spasm of concern in markets that the economy might be too

strong for the Fed to cut in June was overdone -- and the base case remains June and three cuts this year."

Confidence among traders was given an extra lift by figures showing a slowdown in growth in the services sector and a sharp drop in input costs during March, suggesting an easing of inflation.

That contrasted with a stronger-than-expected reading of US manufacturing and prices paid earlier this week, which sparked questions about the Fed's rate-cutting timeline.

A report pointing to a further slowdown in euro-zone inflation gave confidence an extra boost. The S&P 500 and Nasdaq rose on Wall Street, and most of Asia followed suit. Tokyo, Sydney, Seoul, Singapore and Jakarta were all in the green, though there were small losses in Manila and Wellington.

Hong Kong and Shanghai were closed for holidays. Traders are now looking forward to the release of US jobs data, which is due Friday, and could have a bearing on the Fed's plans. A big miss on the downside could boost hopes for a June rate cut, though a forecast-beating read would likely spark a sell-off in markets.

Gold hit another record, \$2,304.96 per ounce, according to Bloomberg News, after Powell's remarks, with geopolitical concerns fuelled by the Middle East crisis and Ukraine war.

And oil was sitting around five-month highs owing to worries about

Israel's battle with Hamas and Iran's warning to retaliate over a blast at a consular annex in Damascus that killed seven Revolutionary Guards, including two generals. Tehran blames Israel.

A call by OPEC+ call for its members to maintain its strategy of reducing output also helped push up prices.

Tokyo - Nikkei 225: UP 1.7 percent at 40,101.82 (break)

Hong Kong - Hang Seng Index: Closed for holidays
Shanghai - Composite: Closed for holidays
Dollar/yen: DOWN at

151.68 yen from 151.70 yen on Wednesday

Euro/dollar: UP at \$1.0843 from \$1.0837

Pound/dollar: UP at \$1.2652 from \$1.2650

Euro/pound: UP at 85.72 pence from 85.64 pence

West Texas Intermediate: UP 0.3 percent at \$85.69 per barrel

COURT NOTICE

In The Court of Marshal Latif C.J-IV Kohat

Suit no.205/I Date of hearing.27-05-2024

Titled:- Sheikh Altaf Vs Tahir Mahmood(etc)

Notice against:- (1)Tahir MahmoodSon of Umar Hayat presently R/o(in

Abroad Post Box no.67 Dubai UAE OB#

+971505767161 Bilding no.20 Benyas Road Alwaja Area Deira Dubai office no

+97142215555 (3)Musrat (4)Nusrat (5)Nazrat

(8)Faiza Dughters of sheikhUmer Hayat Late R/o Mohallah Masjid

Abubaker BilliTang District Kohat

(Defendants) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a civil suit against you

Defendants in which date of hearing 27-05-2024 is fixed for your appearance

Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode

therefore you Defendants is intimated through this publication to appear

before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed

27-05-2024 otherwise court shall be proceeded in

accordance with law.order Issued on.04-04-2024

(Court of CJ-IV Kohat)



LAHORE: In preparations for Eid-ul-Fitr, women selecting bangles to buy.



In brief

Nadal withdraws from Monte Carlo

BARCELONA (AFP): Rafael Nadal withdrew from the Monte Carlo Masters on Thursday, where the 22-time Grand Slam winner was expected to make his ATP Tour comeback. "Unfortunately I have to tell you that I am not going to be playing in Monte Carlo. My body simply won't allow me," said the 37-year-old Spaniard on social media. The record 11-time Monte Carlo winner missed virtually all of the 2023 season through injury and has only played at the Brisbane International this season, where he felt a hip injury flare-up. He lost against Carlos Alcaraz in a Las Vegas exhibition in March before pulling out of the Indian Wells Masters, where he had first intended to make his comeback. "Even if I am working hard and making the maximum effort every day with all the will to play and compete again at tournaments that have been very important for me, the truth is that I can't play today," Nadal continued. "You have no idea how hard this is for me to not be able to play these events." "The only thing I can do is to accept the situation and try to look at the immediate future keeping the excitement and will to play in order to give me a chance for things to get better."

South African footballer shot dead

JOHANNESBURG (Agencies): South African footballer Luke Fleurs has been shot dead in a car hijacking, police say. The shooting took place at a petrol station on Wednesday night in the Johannesburg suburb of Florida. The 24-year-old Kaizer Chiefs star was waiting to be attended to when he was approached by unknown gunmen, who ordered him to get out of the vehicle. One of the suspects is reported to have fled the scene with Fleurs' car after the shooting. "The suspects pointed [at] him with a firearm and took him out of his vehicle, then shot him once on the upper body," Gauteng police spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Mavela Masondo told local media. Kaizer Chiefs, one of the most popular clubs in the country and 12-time league champions, described his death as "tragic". The club said police were handling the matter and further details would be communicated in due course. Sports Minister Zizi Kodwa said he was "saddened that yet another life has been cut short due to violent crime". Defender Fleurs joined Kaizer Chiefs last year, having previously played for SuperSport United. The former Under-23 international represented South Africa at the Tokyo Olympics in 2021. He had not yet played for the senior national team but was reported to be nearing his debut. On their website, Kaizer Chiefs describe Fleurs as a "classy defender" with "great technical abilities". He began his career in 2013 in the Ubuntu Cape Town Academy, according to local media. The Premier Soccer League said a moment of silence will be observed at all top-flight and second-tier games this weekend in memory of Fleurs. "We woke up to the heart-breaking and devastating news of the passing of this young life," South African Football Association president Danny Jordaan said in a statement. "This is such a huge loss for his family, friends, his teammates and football in general." Football fans have taken to social media to mourn him.

“Always tried to keep Shaheen away from captaincy,” claims Shahid Afridi

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Former Pakistan captain and star all-rounder Shahid Afridi once again opened up on Shaheen Shah Afridi's removal as T20I captain, stating that he always tried to keep the pacer away from the role. "I want Shaheen to focus on his own cricket," stated Afridi, adding that the pacer did not need his advice against accepting captaincy of Lahore Qalandars. "I always tried to keep Shaheen away from captaincy," Afridi added. The former captain then backed his statement with a claim that many former captains, including himself had a dis-

mal end to their reigns. Earlier this week, Shahid Afridi revealed that he was surprised by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) decision to change a captain ahead of the T20 World Cup. He also backed wicket-keeper batter Mohammad Rizwan to be the best choice for the role. "I am surprised by the decision by very experienced cricketers in the selection committee. I still believe that if change was necessary than Rizwan was the best choice!," said Afridi in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter. However, he said, that he extended full support to

Babar Azam after his reappointment as the white-ball captain. "Since now the decision has been made I offer my full support and best wishes to team Pakistan and Babar Azam," Shahid Afridi added. Notably, Babar Azam's first assignment during his second tenure as Pakistan captain will be a five-match home T20I series against New Zealand, commencing on April 18 in Rawalpindi. The star batter had previously led Pakistan in white-ball cricket from 2019 to 2023 before stepping down following the team's dismal performance in the ICC World Cup 2023.

Paris 2024: Russia seeking to undermine Games, says Macron

PARIS (Agencies): Russia is running a disinformation campaign to undermine the Paris Olympics, according to French President Emmanuel Macron. At the inauguration of a new Olympic swimming centre, reporters asked if he thought Russia was targeting the Games. "Without a doubt," he said, "including in the field of information." "Every day (Russia) is putting out stories saying that we are unable to do this or that, so (the Games) would be at risk." The French government says Russia has recently stepped up propaganda attacks on France, using fake accounts on social media to spread rumours and disinformation. It follows Mr Macron's switch to a more hard-line policy on the Ukraine war, to which he no longer refuses to rule out eventually sending French troops on the side of Kyiv. France believes Russian intelligence was behind the daubing of Israeli Stars of David on Paris walls after the October 7 Hamas attacks, in what was interpreted as a bid to stir up divisions in France. A network of Russian-created websites named Portal Kombatt is accused of spreading made-up stories, such as claims that French mercenaries are already serving in Ukraine,



or that Mr Macron cancelled a trip to Kyiv because of fears of an assassination attempt. After the Crocus City Hall terrorist attack near Moscow, the French and Russian defence ministers had a rare telephone exchange on Wednesday. According to Mr Macron, this was because France had intelligence information that could help the Russians know more about the alleged attackers, from the Afghan section of the Islamic State group. In his account of their conversation, French Defence Minister Sebastien Lecornu said he told his counterpart Sergei Shoigu that France was concerned about Russian claims that Kyiv was behind the Crocus City Hall attack - claims for which France said there was no evidence. But in his account of the phone call, Mr Shoigu said: "The Kyiv regime does nothing without the approval of its western minders. We hope that in the case (of the Crocus City Hall attack) the French secret services are

not involved." Asked about Mr Shoigu's remarks on Thursday, Mr Macron said they were "bizarre and menacing ... ridiculous." The president confirmed for the first time that there are alternative plans for the Olympics opening ceremony in July, if the terrorist threat worsens. Currently the 26 July ceremony is supposed to take place on boats in the river Seine, with more than 300,000 people watching from the quays. However experts have warned that the occasion is highly vulnerable to terrorist attack. "We will be ready," Mr Macron said. "We are preparing several scenarios. If the threat were to evolve, if we considered that circumstances made it necessary, we have back-up scenarios." Mr Macron also lent his support to the popular French-Malian singer Aya Nakamura, whose name has been mentioned as a possible performer at the opening ceremony. Critics on the hard-right of French politics say she would not be a good ambassador because the language of her songs is often crude and difficult to understand. "She speaks to a good number of our fellow citizens and I believe she has every right to be at the opening or closing ceremonies of the Games," the president said.

Miami, without Messi, falls 2-1 in first leg to Monterrey

FORT LAUDERDALE (Agencies): Inter Miami, without Lionel Messi, lost 2-1 at home to Mexico's Monterrey in the first leg of their CONCACAF Champions Cup quarter-final on Wednesday with Argentine Jorge Rodriguez scoring a superb 89th-minute winner. Miami had taken the lead through defender Tomas Aviles in the 19th minute but the game changed when Inter midfielder David Ruiz was sent off in the 65th minute. Maximiliano Meza equalized four minutes later and then Jorge Rodriguez grabbed the late winner with a superb curling shot into the far corner. Monterrey, level atop Mexico's Liga MX, will be strong favorites to advance to the last four of the regional tournament when they host the return game next Wednesday. Miami will be hoping to have Messi fit for the second leg after he was again forced to sit out due to his hamstring injury. Messi has missed Miami's past three MLS matches with the right hamstring injury but practiced on Tuesday morning, prompting suggestions he might be healthy for the first time since helping Inter reach the quarter-final by beating Nashville on March 13. Against arguably the strongest opponents the Florida club have played, Inter coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino set his team up in a defense-minded 4-5-1 formation with veteran Uruguayan striker Luis Suarez as the lone forward. It proved to be a prudent approach with Miami's five-



man midfield able to frustrate Monterrey, and then look to break on the counter. But the breakthrough came from a corner, whipped in low by Julian Gressel and met with a first time shot from Aviles which whistled home. The Mexican struggled to break down Miami until Ruiz lashed out with his arm at the head of Meza right in front of the referee, who wasted no time in producing a second yellow card and the inevitable red. Monterrey made the most of the numerical advantage and it took just four minutes for them to draw level when Sergio Busquets deflected a corner towards his own goal, 'keeper Drake Callender parried out but Meza was on hand to fire home the loose ball. It was backs against the wall from then for Miami as they tried to hang onto the draw, but as they tired mistakes began to creep in and in the penultimate minute of regulation, Diego Gomez failed to control on the edge of the box, Meza fed Rodriguez and he curled a brilliant shot into the top corner past the diving Callender. Martino said the dismissal would prove

to be a learning moment for the 20-year-old Ruiz, who was handed a starting role due to a several injuries. "It was a difficult situation for him. He did very well while he was on the field and obviously it is going to be a learning experience for him with the dismissal. For young players these are moments that serve you well as you grow in your career," he said. Martino, who said Messi remained "game to game" in terms of a return, lamented the absence of several of his squad for such a big game. "Monterrey was at full strength and we had important absences. The truth is that I liked the way we competed. We did very well," he said. "We're practically at the beginning of a season, we have been competing for a month and a half... and it was hard for us to hold on physically when we were down a player. "I can't have a negative view of what happened tonight because we competed well and we had seven players out of the team who give a lot of quality. But to start a season with a competition like this, you need the full squad to compete."

Australia's Claire Polosak to officiate women series matches in Karachi

PESHAWAR (APP): Australia's Claire Polosak will officiate as an on-field umpire in all the eight white-ball matches between Pakistan and West Indies women's cricket teams scheduled in Karachi from April 18 to May 3, 2024. West Indies women's cricket team will arrive in Karachi on April 14 to play three ODIs - part of ICC Women's Championship 2022-25 and five T20Is. All eight matches will be played at the National Bank Stadium. In the ODI series, former Test batter and member of the PCB and ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees Ali Naqvi will lead the playing control team, while Muhammad Javed, also part of the PCB and ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees will lead the playing control team in T20I series. Alongside Polosak, Abdul Moqeet, Imran Jawed, and Nasir Hussain - all part of the PCB Elite Panel of Umpires will serve as on-field umpires during the ODI series. Saleema Imtiaz and Humairah Farah,

both part of the PCB Women's Panel of Umpires will be the reserve umpires for the ODI series. For the five T20Is, scheduled from April 26 to May 3, Polosak will be joined by Faisal Afridi (ICC and PCB Elite Panel of Umpires), Farooq Ali Khan and Tariq Rasheed - both part of PCB Elite Panel of Umpires. Afia Amin, Humairah, and Saleema will be reserve umpires in the T20I series. Umpire and match referee appointments (Matches from April 18 to May 3) 18 April - First ODI. Claire Polosak and Nasir Hussain (on-field umpires), Abdul Moqeet (third umpire), Saleema Imtiaz (reserve umpire); Ali Naqvi (match referee) 21 April - Second ODI. Claire Polosak and Abdul Moqeet (on-field umpires), Nasir Hussain (third umpire), Humairah Farah (reserve umpire); Ali Naqvi (match referee) 23 April - Third ODI. Claire Polosak and Imran Jawed (on-field umpires), Abdul Moqeet (third

umpire), Saleema Imtiaz (reserve umpire); Ali Naqvi (match referee) 26 April - First T20I. Claire Polosak and Tariq Rasheed (on-field umpires), Nasir Hussain (third umpire), Humairah Farah (reserve umpire); Muhammad Javed (match referee) 28 April - Second T20I. Claire Polosak and Tariq Rasheed (on-field umpires), Imran Jawed (third umpire) and Saleema Imtiaz (reserve umpire); Muhammad Javed (match referee) 30 April - Third T20I. Claire Polosak and Faisal Afridi (on-field umpires), Tariq Rasheed (third umpire) and Afia Amin (reserve umpire); Muhammad Javed (match referee) 2 May - Fourth T20I. Claire Polosak and Farooq Ali Khan (on-field umpires), Imran Jawed (third umpire) and Humairah Farah (reserve umpire); Muhammad Javed (match referee) 3 May - Fifth T20I. Claire Polosak and Faisal Afridi (on-field umpires), Farooq Ali Khan (third umpire) and Afia Amin (reserve umpire); Muhammad Javed (match referee).

Dozens arrested after fans and police clash at Croatia Cup semi-finals

ZAGREB (AFP): More than 50 people were arrested and 17 police officers injured when football fans clashed with authorities after a match in Croatia's coastal town of Split, officials said Thursday. The violence kicked off late Wednesday when fans of Hajduk Split rushed the field following their team's 0-1 loss to Dinamo Zagreb in the national cup semi-finals. Members of Hajduk Split's ultra fan base, known as the Torcida, were trying to attack the visiting team and its supporters when they clashed with security at the stadium, a police statement said. After being pushed back into the stands, where the fans were ripping off the seats and throwing them along with flares at the offi-



cers, violence later spilled in the streets surrounding the stadium. "Large groups of people on several occasions attacked police throwing flares, bottles, stones and other objects at them", the statement said. Seventeen officers were injured, mostly by objects thrown at them, and three were hospitalised, one with serious injuries, the state-

ment said. One police vehicle was also damaged and 54 people were arrested, and fire-fighters were called to the scene to extinguish several blazes started in nearby dumpsters. The violence was condemned by officials including Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, who said there was no "place for violence in sports".

"We will continue to strongly resist such phenomena," he said at the government's weekly cabinet meeting. Split's mayor, Ivica Puljak, regretted "such unpleasant scenes". "I hope we will never see them again in our city," he wrote on Facebook. The match was attended by 27,000 people, including 1,000 Dinamo Zagreb fans, according to police. Football is an obsession in Croatia, where the national team finished as the World Cup runner-up in 2018. Along with several nations across the Balkans, the country has long struggled with hooliganism at matches, with Dinamo Zagreb's Bad Blue Boys and Hajduk Split's Torcida among the worst offenders.

Global football talent showcase to lands in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Football Academy (TFA), a Dubai-based football academy renowned for its global outreach in identifying and nurturing football talent, sets its sights on Islamabad, for its latest talent showcase. Unlike the previous year's paid showcases across Karachi, Islamabad, and Lahore, TFA has revamped its approach, offering a golden opportunity for local talent to shine without any barriers. In a significant move to give back to the community, TFA, in partnership with well-known Pakistani academies, has announced a free talent showcase, slated for April 18, said a press. In an exciting collaboration, Bookme.pk joins hands with TFA as the official ticketing partner, rolling out 99 free tickets for this exclusive event. This initiative marks a pivotal moment in TFA's mission to democratize access to professional football opportunities, reflecting a commitment to fostering sports development and talent recognition in communities that are rich in potential yet often overlooked. Ali El Jishi, The Sporting Director of TFA, commented on the initiative, "Last year, we made a promise to

come back, and we are here to fulfill that promise. Our commitment to nurturing talent is stronger than ever. This free showcase in Islamabad is just the beginning. We envision a future where our strategic partnerships extend beyond the field, developing coaches and delivering camps that could eventually evolve into a TFA franchise here. It's about laying down a sustainable foundation for football in Pakistan." As a professional football club that travels the globe to accelerate players' careers in professional football, TFA's Talent Showcase Tours have made waves in cities such as Reykjavik, Johannesburg, Kuala Lumpur, Cape Town, Addis Ababa, and Trinidad and Tobago. Now, as they prepare to make their mark in Bahrain, after Pakistan with an aim to uncover the next generation of football stars. The showcase in Islamabad follows a rigorous yet promising format wherein 99 players will be trialed across three different sessions, with each session hosting 33 hopefuls. From this talented pool, the top 25-30 players will be chosen for a final match, showcasing their skills in a

competitive setting that mirrors the pressures and triumphs of professional play. The most exceptional one to three players from this final will earn a 30-day trial in Dubai with TFA's Future Team and First Team. Success in this trial means more than just recognition—it opens the door to signing a professional football contract with the club. "Our goal is to reach into the heart of communities and bring out those shining stars that haven't had a platform before. Islamabad, with its rich cultural heritage and love for football, is the perfect stage," says a spokesperson from TFA. As April 18 approaches, excitement builds not just among the aspiring footballers of Islamabad but also within the broader Pakistani sports community. Through initiatives like these, TFA continues to strengthen its reputation as a forward-thinking club committed to football's global development. The Islamabad showcase is poised to be a landmark event, promising to uncover and polish the raw gems of Pakistan's football talent, setting them on a path towards international sportsmanship and success.

Australia's Lyon eager to link-up with Anderson at Lancashire

LONDON (AFP): Australia's Nathan Lyon has said the chance to be on the same side as long-standing Ashes rival James Anderson was a "big part" of his decision to sign up for a stint with English county side Lancashire. Landing a leading international cricketer to feature in the county game is now a major achievement given the increased demands on top players from their national sides and the lure of multiple franchise tournaments around the world. But Lancashire have still managed to sign Lyon. Although the off-spinner only arrived in England on Tuesday, he could yet feature in Lancashire's team for their first-class County Championship opener against Surrey at Old Trafford starting Friday. There has been much talk of how Lyon might mentor Lancashire spinner



Tom Hartley, following the left-arm's emergence on England's recent tour of India. Lyon, however, said it was the chance to join forces with England great Anderson, the most successful fast bowler in Test history, that drew him to Old Trafford. Lyon is the latest big name international cricketer to play for Lancashire, with the likes of Pakistan's Wasim Akram, India's Farokh Engineer and West Indies' Clive Lloyd among an impressive list to have lined up for them.

Anderson, 41, is currently resting following England's 4-1 series loss in India but the swing specialist and Lyon, who have 1,230 Test wickets between them, could yet feature in the same Lancashire XI. "That would be pretty amazing. I'd be lying if I said that opportunity coming around wasn't a big part of the reason I signed," Lyon told BBC Radio Lancashire. "He's one of the greatest, if not the greatest, fast bowler to have played the game," the 36-year-old

added. "I've had some incredible battles against him. I admire his skill, there's nothing but respect from my end for what he's been able to do for English cricket but also world cricket inspiring young boys and girls to play the game. "If the opportunity comes around that I get to bowl in tandem with him and share a changing room with him it will be pretty special, so I'm looking forward to that." Lyon was initially signed by Lancashire for the entire English season, across all formats, but has seen that schedule reduced to seven first-class games at the insistence of Cricket Australia chiefs concerned by his potential workload. "It's definitely not my call, that's the nature of the beast," he said. "CA have come over the top and said they wanted to manage me and hopefully extend my career. My hands are tied."



In brief

IRSA releases 64,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 64,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 99,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1422.01 feet and was 24.01 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 27,400 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1095.65 feet, which was 45.65 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 35,600 cusecs and 18,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 29,100, 32,700, 31,500 and 7,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 23,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 8,400 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

ANF recovers 564 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations across the country managed to recover 564 kg of drugs and arrested two accused, said an ANF spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that in an operation, 301 kg of hashish was recovered from Chaman. In the second operation, 150 kg Ice was recovered from the Makran coastal highway in Gwadar. 45.6 kg opium and 67.2 kg hashish were recovered from an accused rounded up near M-1 Motorway Islamabad. In the fourth operation, 100 grams Ice was recovered from a drug peddler netted in Hyderabad. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.

AIOU commences examinations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is conducting examinations of Associate degree (B.A, B.Com), BBA, B.Ed, and BS programs offered in the autumn 2023 semester from April 23, 2023, throughout the country. The date sheet is available on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk) and roll number slips are uploaded to students' CMS portals. Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof Dr. Nasir Mahmood has instructed the examinations department to ensure transparency and provide all facilities to the students during the examinations. The examination centers are being established across the country in nearby vicinities of the students. Special teams will make surprise visits to the exam centers. Moreover, the last date for admission in the second phase of Semester Spring 2024 is April 15. The programs offered in this phase include Associate Degree (BA/B.Com), BBA, BS (ODL) programs, teachers training programs (1.5, 2.5, and 4 Years B.Ed.), post-graduate diploma programs, and certificate courses. Admission forms and prospectuses for these programs are available on the university website. For students in remote or backward areas without internet access, or those facing difficulties applying online, manual applications for B.A, B.Com, and B.Ed programs can be submitted at regional offices.



ISLAMABAD: Meeting of the Iranian delegation with the Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar at Law Ministry.

Eid preparations enter final stages

ISLAMABAD (APP): With only a few days left in the celebrations of Eid-ul-Fitr, majority of the people are finalizing their shopping by visiting the shopping malls and local markets of the federal capital to celebrate this auspicious occasion in a befitting manner. The preparations for the upcoming festival have entered its final stages with the markets of the capital city bustling with shoppers, amidst prayers and fasting as a huge rush of people can be witnessed thronging the main markets, including G-9, G-10, F-6, F-7, F-10, Abpara Market, etc.

Several women can be witnessed in the main markets and shopping malls of the capital looking for dresses, shoes, and other essential accessories to celebrate the Eid festivities in a befitting manner, taking advantage of the Eid sales.

Shaheena Zafar, a mother of three children, said, "I have completed shopping for my family, thinking that there will be more people

during the last days before Eid and the required sizes of dresses and shoes may not be available."

Talking to APP, she said, "Although the online shopping platforms have made it easier for many to shop while sitting at their homes during fasting but still visiting the market physically for Eid shopping has its own charm."

Irum Naz, a young girl, said, "I bought my Eid dress and shoes from the nearest shopping mall, availing of the sale offers. Now I have to buy just bangles, jewelry, and henna on the 'Chaand Raat' with my friends". She said, "I always try to buy dresses and shoes by the middle of Ramadan as all the good stuff is sold out during the last few days before Eid, while the tailors also stop taking orders during the last week of Ramadan as they also leave for native towns."

Hira Iftikhar, who is a government employee, said, "Shopping during the

month of Ramadan is a difficult task, so I am trying to complete it so that I can focus on prayers to seek blessings from Allah during the last Ashra of the holy month." The prevailing inflation has limited the purchasing capacity of the salaried class, so I completed all shopping for my family at a local market, she said while talking to APP. Eid-ul-Fitr is the biggest festival for all Muslims across the world, and Muslims celebrate this festival with great religious zeal and enthusiasm.

The capital city comprises over half of the population, of which a major chunk belongs to the different provinces. People who settled here for job purposes had to move to their home towns before the Eid festivity.

Keeping in view this, most of the natives have finalized their preparations so that they can move to their hometowns before the commencement of Eid celebrations.

Special Eid stalls attract female customers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Special Eid stalls of cosmetics, Mehndi, bangles, artificial jewellery and other demanded items of Eid-ul-Fitr, are being witnessed everywhere particularly in busy markets and bazaars of the city.

As Eid comes closer, the stalls of beautifully designed colorful bangles, jewellery, Mehndi and artificial jewellery have been set up in the markets of the city to attract female customers. Women start preparing for Eid many days before and commence shopping in Ramadan especially buying bangles, mehndi, jewellery, cosmetic materials and other items as it is an old tradition that women and girls wear bangles and artificial jewellery to express their joy and happiness. In Rawalpindi city, there are a large number of such stalls particularly in busy markets including Tench Bhatta, Peoples Colony, Lalkurti, Saddar Bazaar, Chotta Bazaar, Motti Bazaar, Commercial Market, Sadiqabad, Rehmanabad, Buni Market and several others markets.

Several projects to fast track process youth's empowerment: Rana

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Thursday said that the government was striving for the empowerment of youth and it had planned to launch several projects to fast track this process. Addressing a press conference here, he said that Pakistan was facing multiple economic and political challenges and that all political forces and institutions should work together to overcome these challenges. He said after the signing of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund, the economy was being put back on the right track and investors' confidence was restored.

He said out of the 240 million population of Pakistan, about 70 per cent comprised below 30 years. Rana Mashhood said it meant that 170 million of Pakistan's population consisted of youth.

He said that the government was working on several programmes to engage the youth and to provide them with suitable platforms to show their talent and skills. "It is vital to provide the youth of the country platform and engage them positively to bring prosperity", he added. He said that the new generation will have to be given confidence that if they work hard, they will get the reward.

Mashhood said that in the field of education, sports and IT skills, the youth will

have to come forward to contribute to nation building process.

Thanking the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leadership for appointing him as Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, he said Shehbaz Sharif had launched many youth related projects in the Punjab as chief minister and now they would be replicated at the federal level.

He said that this year the scope of the youth programme would be expanded and information technology would be included in it. He said it was the vision of the PM that the IT industry should be transformed into a \$ 15 to 25 billion industry and for this purpose the programmes launched by Punjab Information Technology Board would also be launched at the federal level. Rana Mashhood said that three sectors including IT, skill development and agriculture were identified for getting short and mid-term progress results.

He said that the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission was joining hands with provincial technical education and vocational authorities to impart skill development to the youth. He said besides technical and vocational courses, the youth would also attend language classes for the countries they intended to go to.

Railways instructed to tighten security in trains, at stations during Eid

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways Police has issued instructions to all Superintendent of Police (SP) Railways to tighten security in trains as well as at stations to avoid any untoward incident during Eid-ul-Fitr days.

The department had directed all SPs Railways to depute sufficient force at exit and entry points of all railway stations and strict watch to be carried out of suspicious persons, an official in the Ministry told APP. Pakistan Railways Police Commando Force would be deputed at vulnerable installations and in trains, while bomb disposal staff would also be kept on alert for search of luggage and passengers at railway stations.

"The SPs Railways directed to conduct complete check and search of empty rakes before trains reach the platforms for departure for their destinations," the official added. All the SPs Railways would also be directed to remain present on Eid holidays and randomly check trains, stations and escorting staff, the official added.

The official said the number of passengers was increasing day by day at railway stations and trains ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr and the Railway administration had arranged special trains across the country to facilitate the extra passengers.

It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan Railways has decided to run four Eid special trains from Karachi to Peshawar, Quetta to Rawalpindi, Karachi to Lahore and Lahore to Karachi for the convenience of the passengers on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

One special train would depart from Karachi to Peshawar and the other from Karachi Cantonment to Lahore. The train would leave Karachi for Peshawar on April 7 at 6:00 am.

The second special train would run from Quetta to Rawalpindi on April 7 at 10:00 am while the third train will leave from Karachi Cantonment to Lahore on April 8 at 9:00 pm. The last Eid special passenger trains will leave from Lahore to Karachi on April 9 at 5:00 pm.

HEC announces medical scholarships in University of Dhaka

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has announced education scholarships and admission to M.Sc. in rehabilitation Science in the University of Dhaka Bangladesh (8th Batch, July 2024 Intake).

According to HEC, Bangladesh Health Professions Institute (BHPI), Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralyzed (CRP) under the Faculty of Medicine, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh is inviting applications from the SAARC member countries for scholarships and admission for its eighth batch of M.Sc. in Rehabilitation Science (2 years) program funded by SAARC Development Fund (SDF).

As per eligibility criteria, the candidates must be citizens of any of the SAARC member countries and must have a bachelor's degree in Physiotherapy/Occupational Therapy/ Speech and Language Therapy, Medicine, Nursing, Prosthetics & Orthotics or an equivalent degree in health-related subjects from a public university or recognized by relevant government authority. The candidates must have completed at least one year internship training/work experience in a recognized hospital/institute/centre approved by the relevant government authority. Sharing the details of application and document requirements,

the admission-related information will be available on the webpages of CRP(<http://crp-bangladesh.org/crp-project/regional-inter-professional-masters-program-rehabilitation-science-funded-saarc>), and BHPI (<https://www.bhpi.edu.bd/departments/rehabilitation-science-international-program/>).

The desire students are asked to submit their application forms [hard copies - (1) Admission and Scholarship Application Form and (2) Application form - Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, BD] in triplicate along with academic documents (attested by Foreign Ministries of your country) at the Bangladesh missions (Embassies or high commissions) in your country.

They are asked to send scan copies of your application forms and academic documents (attested by Foreign Ministries of your country) to bhpi.mrs@gmail.com.

The application deadline is April 30, 2024 (Application should be received no later than April 30, 2024, 17.00 Hours, Bangladesh time), while notification of admission will be issued on June 15, 2024 and admission deadline is July 15, 2024.

Regarding visa, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), Islamabad, has made mandatory for Pakistani Students proceeding to Bangladesh to obtain a 'No Objection Certificate'

(NOC) from the Ministry of Interior (MOI) prior to applying for Bangladeshi Student Visa. For information, please contact Section Officer Political External (P.E) Wing-I, Ministry of Interior at Tel.No.051-9208310. It is to be mentioned here that HEC has only announced this scholarship program received through the official channel. Potential applicants may apply directly to the respective mission/university and queries may also be directed to the respective institute.

Further, HEC will have no financial liability regarding this scholarship. The donor institute/agency reserves all rights to amend and update any of the information and instructions that may be in force from time to time.

It is the sole responsibility of the students applying for any professional degree (Medical, Engineering, Nursing, Architecture, Law, Veterinary Medicine etc.) to first get confirmed its accreditation from the respective Councils i.e. Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC), Pakistan Council for Architects and Town Planners (PCATP), Pakistan Bar Council (PBC), Pakistan Veterinary Medical Council (PVMC), Pakistan Technology Council etc.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Khazar Farhadov of Azerbaijan presents souvenir to Federal Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan.

RDA demolishes illegal under construction commercial buildings

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on the directives of the Director General (DG), Kinza Murtaza has demolished under construction commercial buildings in Gulraiz Housing Scheme phase-II Rawalpindi.

According to an RDA spokesman, the Enforcement Squad RDA carried out an operation against unauthorized and illegal commercial buildings and demolished under construction commercial buildings being constructed at Plot No. 549, 513 and 514 in Gulraiz Housing Scheme, phase-II Rawalpindi. He said that the Enforcement Squad of RDA including the Deputy Director Building Control, incharge/Assistant Director Building Control, Building Inspectors and others carried out the operation against illegal commercial buildings.

The spokesman said that earlier taking

legal action five notices were issued to Jamshaid and Fazal, the owners of the properties who had violated approved building plans/maps, violated the Punjab Development of Cities Act 1976 and RDA Building and Zoning Regulations 2020. The owners constructed illegal commercial buildings without approval and No Objection Certificates (NOCs), he added.

He said that the DG had directed the LU&BC Wing to take strict action against encroachments, illegal and unauthorized constructions and commercial activities without any discrimination.

The DG had also directed the Building Control Wing to conduct a survey to identify illegal residential and commercial buildings and regularize all illegal residential cum commercial buildings.

The citizens should remove encroachments to avoid any legal action, he added.

45 detainees release

KABUL (BNA): The Consulate General of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Karachi, Pakistan, Mawlavi Abdul Jabbar Takhari, has announced the release of 45 Afghan migrant detainees from prisons in Karachi. These individuals have been repatriated to Afghanistan following their release. This action is the result of concerted efforts by the Afghan Consular Office in Karachi. It's noteworthy that this is not an isolated incident.

OCHA chief warns

KABUL (ARINA NEWS): Indrika Ratwatte, the UN's Special Coordinator of Humanitarian Affairs and head of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for Afghanistan has expressed deep concern about the support and funding of Afghanistan's humanitarian needs as currently only six percent of the required budget for 2024 has been funded. In a report released this week, Ratwatte highlighted the complex geo-political context and Afghanistan's vulnerability to natural disasters.

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

World Bank allocates \$16 million to support women-led business in Afghanistan



Tabasum Nasiry

The World Bank has announced that it has allocated \$16 million to support small businesses in Afghanistan, with a focus on women-owned enterprises and businesses led by women.

The World Bank stated on Wednesday, April 3rd, through a press release, that this assistance will be directly disbursed to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) via the Aga Khan Foundation in the USA. Melinda Good, World Bank country director for Afghanistan, emphasized that "supporting small financial providers in Afghanistan is one of the few actionable options cur-

rently available to enhance access to financial resources in Afghanistan, especially for women."

According to her, "This project aims to strengthen the small financial sector in Afghanistan so that owners of small businesses and women-led enterprises can access the necessary financial credit to rebuild their businesses, rebuild their lives, and contribute to the revival of the private sector." The World Bank stated that the Afghanistan Credit Guarantee Foundation was established in 2004 and added that the bank is striving to increase access to financial resources in Afghanistan for small and medium-sized enterprises by pro-

viding credit guarantees and technical assistance.

This comes as support for women in the private sector, especially in investment and trade, has increased from international organizations.

The World Bank report stated that this project will be concentrated in 15 provinces of Afghanistan, including Badakhshan, Balkh, Bamyan, Dykundi, Faryab, Herat, Jawzjan, Kabul, Kunduz, Nangarhar, Parwan, Samangan, Sar-e Pol, and Takhar.

It is worth mentioning that this project in Afghanistan will be implemented through the Aga Khan Foundation and the Afghanistan Credit Guarantee Foundation.

The World Bank has stated that the goal of aligning this project is to support "enhancing the financial resilience and growth of small providers and companies." Additionally, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has announced the alignment of several projects to create job opportunities for women and emphasized that aligning projects strengthens the economy of Afghanistan and enables women entrepreneurs to manage their businesses.

This is while women's interest in trade and investment has increased in Afghanistan following educational and employment restrictions.

Khaama Press

Ongoing clashes between Iranian forces and Jaish Al-Adl rebels result in casualties

KABUL (BNA): In the eastern regions of Iran, specifically in Sistan and Baluchestan province, violent clashes continue between Iranian security forces and rebels from the Jaish al-Adl group.

These confrontations have resulted in multiple casualties, with at least 13 people reported dead.

The skirmishes, which have been particularly intense in the cities of Chabahar and Rask, have claimed the lives of 5

security officers and 8 attackers. Iranian government officials have confirmed that the Jaish al-Adl group has launched extensive and coordinated attacks on military installations in three cities: Rask, Chabahar, and Sarbaz.

Currently, about six members of the Jaish al-Adl group are under siege by security forces in the cities of Chabahar and Rask. Among the casualties in Chabahar are a sol-

dier, a security guard, another security personnel, and two police officers.

Ali Reza Marhamati, the deputy governor of Sistan and Baluchestan, provided details about the start of the attack, which began at ten o'clock local time last night. He revealed that the attackers in Rask had intended to infiltrate the headquarters of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps but were repelled

by the military.

The fighting, however, is still ongoing.

Iranian authorities believe that the leadership of Jaish al-Adl, who are advocating for the separation of the Baloch areas of Iran, are based in Pakistan.

This belief led to Iran recently launching missile attacks on parts of Baluchistan province in Pakistan, escalating tensions between Tehran and Islamabad.



Dozens of medical supplies distributed to Panjshir's public health

KABUL (BNA): The Panjshir Public Health Directorate has announced the receipt of dozens of medical supplies.

Dr. Hojatullah Mohammadi, Head of Panjshir Public Health, reported to Bakhtar News Agency that The MOVE Welfare Organization has supplied these medicines and medical equipment to Panjshir's health centers for the second quarter of 2024. The head of Panjshir's public health department stated that these medications, totaling 140 items including medical supplies, have recently been provided by the MOVE Organization.

He added that the received medications and medical supplies are officially distributed to Panjshir health centers after a series of formal pro-



cedures.

He noted that the distribution of these medicines and medical supplies will facilitate better provision

of healthcare services to the residents across Panjshir.

Worth mentioning that the MOVE Welfare

Organization has been engaged in a longstanding healthcare partnership with the Panjshir Public Health Directorate.

560 killed and injured in mine explosion across Afghanistan in 2023

KABUL (Khaama Press): The de facto administration stated that in 2023, 560 individuals lost their lives or were injured in mine explosions across the country. Nuruddin Rustam Khel, the head of the Mine Clearance Department at the Ministry of State for Disaster Management, said during a ceremony commemorating the International Day for Mine Awareness and

Assistance in Mine Action in Kabul that in 2023, 174 individuals, including women and children, lost their lives due to mine explosions and unexploded ordnance in the country. He stated that during the past year, 90 square kilometers of land in 119 districts of the country have been cleared of mine and unexploded ordnance threats.

However, the Deputy Political Chief of Staff

insists that the presence of mines in Afghanistan has not been eradicated. Abdul Kabir, the Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs, said in a meeting commemorating the International Day for Mine Awareness that despite most areas in Afghanistan being cleared of mines, the threat hasn't been reduced to zero, and people are still falling victim to them.

He called on the international community to fulfill its responsibilities regarding mine clearance in Afghanistan. He reassured in this meeting that the Taliban administration supports mine clearance programs and emphasized that these programs should be implemented nationwide. He also expressed hope that Afghanistan will be mine-free in the coming years.



12-year-old sacrifices childhood works to support family amid uncertain future



Zahra Rashidi

The child is young, but she has taken on the responsibility of providing for her family like adults. At twelve years old, she is in the second grade. However, unaware of the future, she spends half of her day working outside the home.

In the street where Mezghan is busy polishing shoes, one can see children (both girls and boys) engaged in street work. Mezghan and other children working alongside her are typically busy with street work from early morning until around seven in the evening, pushed into the streets by various factors, seeking bread. In this report, you'll read why Mezghan has become a victim of street work.

Mezghan works on one of the streets in the fourth district of Kabul city. When asked about her place of residence, she says she lives in this area. According to her, they live in one of the houses known as "Zurabad" by the people.

Most child laborers are forced into hard work on the streets due to economic

poverty and the loss of a family breadwinner. However, the reason Mezghan works is a large number of family members and the expenses of her family: Mezghan lives in a family of twelve, a result of her parent's marriage producing nine children, and they live in a rented house.

Other members of Mezghan's family also work on the streets like her, but the amount of money they earn is not sufficient for the twelve-member family. Mezghan's father and elder brother, around 16 years old, also work in shoe coloring. However, Mezghan and her brother lack much skill in this area, so most of the money people give them is in the form of charity. Alongside the items needed for shoe coloring, there are plastic goods, sunshades, and childish trinkets available for sale, from which she earns 3 Afghani for herself.

Mezghan is twelve years old, but the adverse effects of poverty on children's growth have made even children of her age appear very weak and small. Living in a poverty-stricken family has brought a high

level of stress to Mezghan, as she is responsible for meeting her family's expenses or at least bearing part of the burden of providing for her family.

From Mezghan's words, it seems she doesn't have much desire to continue her education because she knows she is expected to stop going to school after the sixth grade. She says her elder sister is the only literate person in the family because she studied until the sixth grade and sometimes helps Mezghan, but after the Taliban came, she was also deprived of going to school.

The circumstances she finds herself in have deprived her of imagining any kind of future she desires. When asked about her wishes, she responded without hesitation: "I have no wishes." She has worked for 30 Afghani in half a day's work. When asked what she does with her money, whether she spends it herself or her parents take it, she responded again without hesitation: "No, I give it all to my family." There isn't much time left until Eid al-Fitr, and people are

preparing for this occasion by giving clothes to their children, especially their daughters. The initial preparations start almost fifteen or twenty days in advance, but Mezghan is supposed to sit in the same place even on the day of Eid, selling goods and items.

Mezghan smiles as she recalls an Eid when she was sitting by the street, and a wealthy person in a black-windowed car passed by and gifted her 5,000 Afghani at once.

She says, "I was very happy and got this much for the first time, and it was mine. I quickly went home to the point of being out of breath and gave the money to the family urgently. Then we paid the rent and bought the rest for food, and this Eid was a very happy Eid for us."

Poverty and destitution in the country have led many children in the capital to engage in hard work instead of going to school. However, the ban on education for girls and the fact that they are left out of education have exacerbated this crisis even further.

Khaama Press



ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

KP CM directs for modern irrigation system

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has directed the irrigation department to introduce modern irrigation system with the purpose to make maximum barren land cultivable by ensuring judicious and prudent use of available water resources across the province.

"Artificial dams be constructed at suitable spots of the province and for this purpose, a system of Cluster Solar Tube Wells be introduced so as to bring maximum barren land under cultivation with minimum water resources", he directed and said that this whole exercise will pave the path of self-sufficiency in agricultural products and food security of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He further directed them to introduce GIS system for collection of "Aabyana" and other related taxes and to increase the fixed fines and penalties so as to prevent water theft and other illegal activities in the province. These directives, he issued while chairing a meeting of the irrigation department, held here at Chief Minister's House.

Provincial Minister for Irrigation Aqibullah, Additional Chief Secretary P&D Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan, administrative secretaries of the concerned departments and other relevant officials attended the meeting. The Chief Minister was given a detailed briefing about the administrative affairs, development projects, reforms, future plans and other related matters of the department.

Addressing the participants, the chief minister said that, it is the priority of his government to make this province self-sufficient in agricultural products and directed the quarters concerned for special focus on introducing result-oriented research techniques in agriculture sector as well as expediting work on the ongoing

development projects for this purpose. Chashma Right Bank Lift Canal (CRBC) project is of vital importance in this regard", he said and added that this flagship project once completed, would play very important role in bringing millions of acres barren land of southern districts under cultivation.

The Chief Minister also directed the concerned authorities to collect and compile realistic data of all small dams and command areas in the province and said that the irrigation department should pay special attention to digitize all its affairs as early as possible. Apart from this, the Chief Minister has directed all works departments to fix realistic timelines for the contracts of development projects, adding that the contractors would be responsible to ensure progress on the projects as per stipulated timelines; and in case the contractor fails to do so, fine should be imposed on him.

Meanwhile, addressing a meeting of the Live Stock department, the chief minister said that there is considerable potential in the livestock sector to provide employment opportunities and to increase income of the province as well. We just need to develop this productive sector on modern lines so as to utilize this potential in an effective and useful manner, he remarked and directed the quarters concerned to come up with a comprehensive and viable plan for the purpose.

The Chief Minister has directed the department to work on increasing and value addition of dairy products, further directing them to organize a separate program for imparting advanced skills and training to people in the Livestock sector. A specific program should also be devised in order to provide interest-free loans to people for rearing good breed cattle, he remarked and urged upon authorities to have special attention on promoting fisheries, especially wild fish, adding that a comprehensive strategy should also be prepared for this purpose.

Medical board formed for Parvez Elahi's treatment

ISLAMABAD (INP): A five-member medical board formed for the treatment of former Punjab chief minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Pervaiz Elahi at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Hospital in Islamabad.

According to sources, doctors related to heart, medicine, stomach, chest and general surgery including Dr Muntaz Niazi, Dr Tashfeen, Dr Israr, Dr Akhtar Bandisha, and others are on board. The sources said that an echocardiogram (ECG) and other heart-related tests will be conducted on Chaudhry Parvez Elahi and the medical board will treat him as per the results of the test reports.

Former chief minister Punjab was also complaining of breathing difficulty and chest pain due to the fractured ribs. Parvez Elahi, who was shifted to a private room at PIMS yesterday, has been suffering from diabetes and heart diseases for a long time. Earlier, Pervaiz Elahi was rushed to Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) after his health deteriorated in Adiala jail.

According to sources, the former PM was shifted to PIMS by Islamabad police when his health suddenly deteriorated. Pervaiz Elahi will be examined completely in PIMS hospital. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf President Pervaiz Elahi suffered bone fracture after slipping in Adiala jail's washroom. Adiala jail deputy superintendent presented Elahi's medical report in court during the hearing of a case against the latter related to illegal recruitment in the Punjab Assembly. The jail official apprised the court that Elahi slipped in the washroom on March 17 and suffered a slight fracture.

Azam Swati surrenders before court

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former federal minister Azam Swati on Thursday surrendered before the Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) in the case of a controversial tweet.

As per details, Swati surrendered before the court and filed bail before arrest in Anti Terrorism Court. The court approved the interim bail plea of former federal minister Azam Swati in controversial tweet case against surety bonds worth Rs 10,000 and granted him bail till April 20.

PTA blocks 1.109m contents, website for blasphemous content: PHC informed

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) had blocked 1.109 million websites along with blasphemous contents from digital media platforms while identical content removed from face-book, X {Twitter} and Instagram to minimize its impact on Pakistani society, on Thursday.

This was revealed by PTA lawyer Jahan Zeb Mehsud advocate before Peshawar High Court (PHC) and added that a procedure has been formulated for identification of blasphemous contents as well as blocking of immoral website to minimize its impact on Pakistan's social norms and etiquettes.

PHC's divisional bench comprised Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Syed Arshad Ali heard writ plea against blasphemous contents available on X {Twitter}, Facebook, Instagram and immoral websites operating in Pakistan which is damaging

social fabric of the society.

The petitioner contended that PTA had failed to establish a mechanism for removal and stoppage of blasphemous content and immoral websites which are violative to our faith and religion as well as destroying youth. PHC should direct PTA for removal of blasphemous contents and filtration before uploading, the petitioner argued.

Deputy Attorney General Hazrat Syed and PTA Lawyer Jahan Zeb Mehsud appeared before PHC during hearing of writ plea seeking removal of blasphemous content and blockade of immoral website filed Sara Ali Khan as petitioner.

PTA's lawyer informed that as many as 1.1 million contents have been removed from internet while website mentioned by petitioner were closed permanently. He added that PTA lacks mechanism to filter the content before uploading. However, Justice SM Attique

enquired regarding filtration system from PTA's lawyer? He informed that PTA is deleting thousands of thousand contents on daily basis after uploading and added that there is a problem that the people obtaining accessibility with different tools especially VPN.

PTA's lawyer contended that it isn't accept and can't be tolerate as the authority is utilizing resources to control it. He added that controlling immoral content and website is religious obligation as it is our faith.

Meanwhile, the petitioner argued PHC to direct Director General Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in this regard because blasphemy and other incidents are reporting on daily basis across the country.

PHC's divisional bench comprising of Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Syed Arshad Ali dispose-of plea after conclusion of arguments while detailed judgement would be announced later.

Israel strike that killed 106 people in Gaza 'apparent war crime': Probe

GAZA: An "unlawful" Israeli air attack that killed 106 people in a residential building in central Gaza on October 31, 2023, was an "apparent war crime", Human Rights Watch (HRW) has said. The inquiry was based on testimonies from 16 people the group spoke to between January and March, satellite images, dozens of photographs and videos from the site, as well as those shared on social media, the international rights group said on Thursday as it released the findings of its investigation.

It called on governments to suspend weapons transfers to Israel and support the International Criminal Court's (ICC's) investigation in Palestine, saying the attack was among the "deadliest single incidents for civilians" since Israel's war on Gaza started in October. Witnesses said 350 or more people were staying in the Engineers' Building, south of the Nuseirat refugee camp, when four aerial munitions struck it that afternoon within about 10 seconds, without warning. At least 150 people were seeking shelter after fleeing their homes elsewhere in Gaza. The building was demolished.

The New York-based group said it

found no evidence of a military target in the vicinity of the building when the attack took place, which according to HRW made the air attack "unlawfully indiscriminate". The victims included "children playing football, residents charging phones in the ground-floor grocery store, and displaced families seeking safety", HRW's associate crisis and conflict director Gerry Simpson said.

"This strike inflicted massive civilian casualties without an apparent military target – one of scores of attacks causing overwhelming carnage, and highlighting the urgency of the ICC probe." HRW said the Israeli authorities have not publicly provided any information about the attack, "including the intended target and any precautions to minimise harm to civilians".

More than 33,000 Palestinians have been killed since Israel launched its military operation in the enclave following the Hamas-led attack on southern Israel on October 7. The death toll in Israel stands at 1,139, with dozens still held captive in Gaza.

"The staggering number of Palestinian deaths, mostly women and children, shows deadly disregard

for civilian life and points to many more possible war crimes that need to be investigated," Simpson said.

"Other governments should press the Israeli government to end unlawful attacks, and immediately halt arms transfers to Israel to save civilian lives and avoid complicity in war crimes."

The United States has defended the transfer of billions of dollars worth of bombs and fighter jets to its ally, reasserting its commitment to Israel's security, even as it publicly expresses concerns about the long-threatened Israeli invasion of Gaza's Rafah and the rising civilian casualties in the enclave. Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is facing growing political pressure to halt arms exports to Israel after seven aid workers from the charity World Central Kitchen were killed in an Israeli air attack in Gaza as international outrage grows. HRW said governments that continue to provide arms to Israel "risk complicity in war crimes". "They should also use their leverage, including through targeted sanctions, to press Israeli authorities to cease committing grave abuses," it said. — Aljazeera

PTI backed candidates challenges Election results

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The electoral results of six constituencies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including National Assembly constituency NA-28 and Provincial Assembly constituencies PK-74, PK-75, PK-78, PK-101, and PK-102, have been challenged.

The election petition was filed by Shumail Ahmad Butt advocate after Election Tribunal verdict by challenging their failure in general election scheduled on 8th February.

The Election Tribunal is set to review the challenged results from National Assembly Constituency NA-28 and Provincial

Assembly Constituencies PK-74, PK-75, PK-78, PK-101, and PK-102, following petitions filed by concerned candidates.

Parties implicated in the petition include the Election Commission, District Returning Officer, Returning Officer, and successful candidates, as allegations of tampering with Form-45 emerge. The petitioners argue discrepancies between Form-45, where they were declared victorious, and Form-47, which favored opposing candidates.

Seeking justice, petitioners urge the Election Tribunal to uphold the integrity of Form-45 results and ensure the secure handling of ballot papers for accurate vote verification.

However, frustration mounts as recount applications filed with the Election Commission are summarily dismissed without explanation, raising questions about the Commission's commitment to transparent elections.

Candidates such as Sajid Nawaz from NA-28, Arbab Jandan from PK-74, and Malik Shahab from PK-75 are among those who have approached the Election Tribunal. Their demand for a fair recount is echoed by candidates Arbab Asim from PK-78, Malik Adnan from PK-101, and Shah Muhammad from PK-102.

PTI founder's bail extended

LAHORE (INP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Thursday extended the interim bail of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former prime minister Imran Khan in Jinnah House attack case.

As per details, the ATC judge Arshad Javed heard the interim bail pleas in three cases including Jinnah House attack. The

court extended the interim bail till April 16 and told the PTI founder Imran Khan's lawyer Salman Safdar to present arguments at the next hearing.

On Feb 28, an Islamabad court acquitted PTI founder Imran Khan, Asad Umar, Faisal Javed and others in a protest and vandalism case. PTI

founder Imran Khan, Asad Umar, Faisal Javed Khan, Raja Khurram Shahzad Nawaz, Abid Hussain, Ali Nawaz Awan, Zaheer Khan and others were booked at Tarnol police station on February 26, 2022. Judicial magistrate Muhammad Shahbair has issued the release verdict by accepting their acquittal pleas in the case.

PPP marks ZAZ's death anniversary

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The 45th death anniversary of People's Party (PPP) founder Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was observed on Thursday. On April 4, 1979, Bhutto was hanged at Central Jail in Rawalpindi after Gen Ziaul Haq upheld the death sentence on murder charges. He was laid to rest at his ancestral graveyard in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh in Sindh.

Zulfikar Bhutto, who gave the first unanimous constitution to Pakistan, was born in Larkana, Sindh, on January 5, 1928. His father Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto was dewan (prime minister) of princely state of Junagarh. He received his higher education from the University of Southern California and Oxford and took up law as a profession but later joined politics. He became a member of Sikandar Mirza's cabinet and the foreign minister under Gen Ayub Khan.

He parted ways with Gen Ayub and founded the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in 1967. He gained popularity among the masses in a short span of time and won their confidence.

Banning arms sales to Israel: UN to take up Pak's resolution

UNITED NATION (INP): In an upcoming session scheduled for (today) Friday, the United Nations will address a resolution proposed by Pakistan aimed at banning arms sales to Israel.

The draft of this resolution, submitted by Pakistan to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on behalf of 55 member countries of the United Nations, has stirred significant anticipation and debate within the international community.

The comprehensive eight-page resolution places forth stringent demands on Israel, calling for an immediate end to its occupation of Palestinian territories and Gaza. One of the key provisions of the resolution is the demand for Israel to cease its illegal blockade on the Gaza Strip. Moreover, the resolution underscores the urgency of

preventing the sale or transfer of explosives and other military equipment to Israel, emphasizing the need to curb the proliferation of arms that exacerbates the ongoing conflict in the region.

The proposal has garnered widespread support from the majority of OIC member countries, reflecting a collective effort to address the longstanding humanitarian and security concerns stemming from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The resolution symbolizes a unified stance against the injustices and violations of international law perpetrated by Israel, particularly in its treatment of the Palestinian population.

Meanwhile, the UN humanitarian officials in Gaza have suspended operations at night for at least 48 hours in response to the killing of seven aid workers

from the NGO 'World Central Kitchen' by an Israeli strike. The move will allow for further evaluation of the security issues that impact both personnel on the ground and the people they are trying to serve, UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said on Wednesday during the noon briefing for reporters in New York. The UN World Food Programme (WFP) reports that daytime operations are continuing, including ongoing efforts to get food aid convoys into northern Gaza.

World Central Kitchen and other charities have suspended aid operations which has had a "double impact" in the Gaza Strip, Mr. Dujarric said in response to a reporter's question. "It has a real impact on people who depend on these organizations to receive aid," he said.

Russia scales up its attacks as Ukraine warns of urgent need for weapons

MOSCOW: Ukraine has repelled a battalion-sized mechanised assault on its eastern front – the first attack of such a scale in five months – proving the resilience of its defences, but raising concerns that Russia is becoming increasingly ambitious as it gears up for an expected major offensive.

The attack on Sunday reportedly included three dozen tanks and a dozen infantry fighting vehicles, and struck near Tonenke, a village close to Avdiivka, the city Russia overran on February 17 and has been inching westward from ever since. A Ukrainian serviceman reported that a third of the tanks and two-thirds of the infantry fighting vehicles were destroyed. "The start was very good. We carried out combined fire," said a Russian trainer of Storm-Z assault forces. "On subsequent approaches, which lasted until lunchtime, the fire supply dwindled to sparse artillery fire ... and then significant losses began."

Yet he noted that the last group of vehicles to enter the fray suffered no losses, possibly indicating that local Ukrainian defences had been exhausted: "I would venture to cautiously suggest that these regular vis-

its could ultimately overload the enemy's strike capabilities." "We are trying to find some way not to retreat," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told the Washington Post's David Ignatius in an interview published two days before the battle.

"If there is no US support, it means that we have no air defence, no Patriot missiles, no jammers for electronic warfare, no 155-millimetre artillery rounds," he said. "It means we will go back, retreat, step by step, in small steps." Some \$60.1bn in United States military aid the administration of Joe Biden requested last December has been stalled by a small group of lawmakers loyal to former President Donald Trump, who hopes to return to power in the November election.

Europe was stepping in to cover some of the shortages. A Czech initiative had reportedly located a million artillery shells around the world which would start to be delivered to Ukraine this month; and France pledged hundreds of reconditioned armoured personnel vehicles. Ukrainian commander-in-chief Oleksandr Syrskii told Ukrinform that Avdiivka would not have fallen

if deliveries of Western military aid had been more constant, and that the Ukrainian counteroffensive that reclaimed much of Kharkiv and Kherson in September 2022 would have been more sustained.

He said Ukrainian soldiers were outnumbered, and outgunned by a ratio of 6:1, but despite this Russians were suffering staggering losses – 570 tanks, 1,430 armoured vehicles and 1,680 artillery systems in the last two months alone – thanks to changes in tactics that optimised available resources. Although Ukrainian forces had largely managed to stabilise the front line following the fall of Avdiivka, Ukraine was not prepared to stop another major Russian offensive, Zelenskyy told the US broadcaster CBS. "Partners are sometimes really happy that we have stabilised the situation," Zelenskyy said. "No, I say we need help now."

And that stabilisation is not 100 percent solid. Russian forces have continued to make marginal advances. Most of these have been in the neighbourhood of Avdiivka. Despite their defeat on Sunday, they made marginal gains west of Tonenke, and were photographed in the settlements of Semenivka and

Berdychi, both northwest of Avdiivka, on Monday and Tuesday.

To the south, they advanced into the settlement of Novomykhailivka, southwest of Donetsk city, on March 27. And at the northern end of the front, in Luhansk, they began to creep into Bilohorivka on Tuesday. Russian defence minister Sergei Shoigu boasted in a Tuesday conference call with military personnel that Russian forces had gained 403sq km since the beginning of the year. The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, put the figure at 305sq km since January 1, and a total of 505sq km – five times the size of Paris – since Russian forces went on the offensive in October.

Russia has been targeting Ukraine's power plants, and in the past week began to bomb hydroelectric power stations in addition to thermal power plants. The Kaniv Hydroelectric Power Plant, 80km southeast of Kyiv, and the Dnister Hydroelectric Power Plant, 300km southwest of Kyiv, just north of the Moldovan border, have been among the main targets. The barrage of drones and missiles that targeted these dams and other infrastructure was massive: 60 Iranian-designed

Shahed drones and 37 missiles of various types. Ukraine managed to down 58 of the drones and 26 of the missiles, but Zelenskyy stressed the need for greater air defence. "It is necessary to replenish supplies more quickly," he said. Zelenskyy told the Washington Post that air defence ammunition was running low, and CBS said Ukraine could lock its skies to Russian attacks with another five to seven Patriot batteries.

"The range of possible outcomes from most advantageous to most dangerous – is very wide and will remain so until it is clear whether the US will resume military support," said the ISW. The other great variable, it said, was Ukrainian manpower, and on Tuesday Zelenskyy signed into law a long-awaited bill lowering the conscription age from 27 to 25. The bill is expected to raise up to half a million new soldiers for Ukraine, though Syrskii said a more efficient rotation of existing manpower had made that scale of recruitment unnecessary.

Russia also reached a new milestone on March 22, when it completely destroyed one of the largest thermal power plants in Kharkiv. "All units were destroyed" at the

Zmiivska power plant said its operator, Tsentrenegro. "The degree of destruction is different." Ukrainian foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba said Russia had launched 140 drones and 190 missiles against civilian infrastructure far from the front lines in just one week, from March 18 to 24. French defence minister Sebastien Lecornu said his country would provide Aster 30 surface-to-air missiles to strengthen air defence.

Ukraine's response has been to target Russian energy infrastructure back – specifically oil refineries – and on Tuesday a Ukrainian drone struck the Tanekov refinery in Tatarstan, Russia's third largest refining facility, more than 1,000km (600 miles) from the Ukrainian border. Tatarstan head Rustam Minnikhanov claimed "no serious damage" was done, but Reuters reported that the drone had struck a core refining unit and reduced the plant's capacity by half. In the same strike, Ukraine also hit a dormitory at the Alabuga Polytechnic, which is reportedly used to build Shahed drones. Ukrainian military intelligence (GUR), which conducted the strike, said there was "significant destruction of production facilities". — Aljazeera