

#### Four dead in road mishap

CHISHTIAN (INP): As many as four people lost their lives when a speeding bus collided with a motorcycle in a rural village of Chishtian. The rescue officials confirmed the death of the four individuals including three family members, while the injured are being transferred to the nearest hospital for immediate medical attention. The accident occurred due to over speeding of the bus.



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MADINAH MUNAWARAH: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif being received by Governor of Madinah Prince Salman bin Sultan Al Saud at Airport.

## Pakistan flays Indian Minister's statement

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has denounced the provocative remarks made by the Indian defence minister during a recent televised interview.

In a statement, Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan stands resolute in its intent and ability to safeguard its sovereignty against any act of aggression, as demonstrated by its robust response to India's reckless incursion in February 2019, which laid bare India's hollow claims of military superiority. The spokesperson said India's ruling dispensation habitually resorts to hateful rhetoric to fuel hyper-nationalistic sentiments, unapologetically exploiting such discourse for electoral gains.

Such myopic and irresponsible behaviour not only undermines regional peace but also impedes the prospects of constructive engagement in the long term. Mumtaz Zahra Baloch further stated that Pakistan has always demonstrated its commitment to peace in the region. However, our desire for peace should not be misconstrued. History attests to Pakistan's firm resolve and ability to protect and defend itself. The spokesperson recalled that Pakistan has provided irrefutable evidence, elucidating India's campaign of extrajudicial and transnational assassinations on Pakistani soil.

## Russia evacuates 4,000 people

MOSCOW: Russia said it has evacuated more than 4,000 people in the Orenburg region near the Kazakhstan border due to flooding after a dam burst. The Orenburg governor's office said on Saturday that "4,208 people, including 1,019 children" had been evacuated and more than 2,500 homes were affected by floods that caused the dam to give way following torrential rain.

Governor Denis Pasler said the flood had reached its "peak", adding that the situation was especially difficult in Orsk, a border city of 230,000 people. Officials said on Saturday that some 2,000 people were evacuated from their homes in Orsk alone. Orsk is located in the Ural mountains' Orenburg region.

But the authorities said that the situation was difficult throughout the region and warned of dangerous water levels on the Ural river in the main city of Orenburg. Video footage published by the emergency services ministry showed residents being helped into lifeboats, wearing life jackets. Thousands of homes were submerged, Russian news agencies reported.

Russia also opened a criminal case for "negligence and violation of construction safety rules" over the burst dam, which was built in 2014. The local prosecutor's office said the dam had been breached due to poor maintenance, according to Russian news agencies. — Aljazeera

## PM arrives in Saudi Arabia on three day visit

MADINA MUNAWARAH (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif arrived in Saudi Arabia here on Saturday along with his delegation on a three day visit. Governor of Madinah Munawarah Prince Salman Bin Sultan Al Saud received the prime minister at the airport.

The prime minister will stay in Madinah Munawarah and will offer prayers at Masjid e Nabwi (PBUH). PM Shehbaz travelled on a commercial flight and during the flight mingled with the passengers. The passengers took selfies with the prime minister and had a chat with him.

Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif and members of the federal cabinet including Ishaq Dar, Khawaja Asif, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Abdul Aleem Khan, Attaullah Tarar and Ahmad Cheema accompanied the prime minister.

The prime minister is expected to meet Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammad bin Salman bin

Abdulaziz and discuss issues of mutual interest. The leaders will also exchange views on regional and global developments. Pakistan and KSA have longstanding fraternal relations rooted in religious and cultural affinity.

The people of Pakistan have the deepest respect and regard for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, it was added. The leadership of both countries is committed to advancing the fraternal ties and mutually rewarding economic and investment relations.

**PM strongly condemns terrorist attack in Lakki Marwat; lauds security forces' operation in DI Khan:** Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned a terrorist attack on police personnel in District Lakki Marwat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The prime minister prayed for the high ranks of Shaheed DSP Gul Muhammad Khan, Naseem

Gul, constable and others and expressed sympathies with the bereaved families, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister said that KP police had been acting like a bulwark against terrorism. The cowardly terrorist activities could not shake their determination, he added. The prime minister also appreciated the security forces for their successful operation against terrorists in District Dera Ismail Khan.

In a statement shared by PM Office Media Wing, the prime minister said that the brave jawans of security forces had countered terrorists without caring for their lives and sent them to hell. The security forces had given unparalleled sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, he said while expressing resolve to crush the specter of terrorism. The prime minister further said that the entire nation was paying tribute to shahed and serving personnel of security forces.

## Attack on Chinese: Action ordered against KP cops

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said on Saturday that the incumbent government was taking all possible measures to strengthen the national economy and the economy and the industry both were showing positive signs.

In a press conference at the PML-N's Secretariat here he that Bloomberg stated it clearly that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had a good experience of talking to financial institutions and bringing economic reforms. "The previous 16-month government saved the country from default and helped stabilize the Pakistani rupee and even during the tenure of the interim government the rupee remained stable.

The stability of the rupee helped stabilize the country's economy and positive news were coming with regard to the stock exchange as well," he maintained. He said all these positive indicators were showing that business confidence had increased in the country. He said it was very unfortunate that anti-state elements which could not digest the country's progress were stuck to their negative agenda. "Chinese engineers were attacked in Dasu and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited Dasu and met Chinese engineers and expressed

grief over the incident besides offering condolences," he added.

Disciplinary action would be taken against the Hazara regional police officer (RPO) as well as other officials over their failure to thwart the Shangla terror attack, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar said.

He said that Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Chaudhry Salik Hussain went to Wuhan, China, on a special flight that carried mortal remains of five Chinese personnel, who had died in the terror attack and expressed condolences with the Chinese government and officials. He said that the PML-N government had always given importance to Pak-China friendship.

He said, "After the incident, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited the Chinese Embassy and met the Chinese Ambassador. The premier also visited Dasu to boost the morale of the Chinese engineers and give a message that Pakistan gives high importance to its friendship with China." Attaullah Tarar said that the Prime Minister had presided over many meetings on Chinese security and an committee was formed for an inquiry into the Dasu incident as Chinese.

He said that Prime

Minister Shehbaz Sharif had ordered action against RPO Hazara division, DPO Upper Kohistan district, DPO Lower Kohistan district, Dasu Hydropower Project Security Director and KP Special Security Unit Commandant in fifteen days. The information minister said that the quick action was a proof that no compromise would be tolerated on the security of the Chinese in future. He further said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was personally supervising security matters pertaining to Chinese projects and the Chinese and an effective system was being evolved in this regard.

He said, "We pay homage to all those who sacrificed their lives in war against terrorism." He said that the Pak armed forces and law enforcement agencies of the country were determined to root out terrorism and would not allow anybody to harm the country's peace.

Regarding a Guardian report on extrajudicial killings by India in different countries, Attaullah Tarar said that today the Foreign Office had also issued a statement in which not only rejected the statement of the Indian defence minister but condemned it. He said that the international community should also take notice of the extrajudicial killings.

## Didn't de-notify Bajwa despite 'betrayal': PTI founder

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan on Saturday asserted that he did not de-notify former Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa despite his actions "felt like a betrayal". "Although General Bajwa's actions felt like a betrayal, we [the then PTI government] refrained from convening a committee to confront him," the deposed prime minister said while speaking to journalists in an informal conversation during the hearing of the Toshakhana reference in Adiala jail.

During the conversation, PTI founder Imran Khan once again called for negotiations for the betterment of the country. "It's for the betterment of Pakistan, so convince me for negotiations," he said. "If I could meet Gen Qamar Bajwa twice following removal of our government, then I can meet anyone. Right now, it is not about me, but is about Pakistan," the former prime minister told reporters.

PTI founder Imran Khan said that he could have de-notified General Bajwa despite his "betrayal", however, he chose not to as he did not want to confront the Pakistan army. On the Toshakhana reference, the former prime minister said that he and his wife Bushra Bibi were convicted in the reference by claiming that the value of the jewellery set was Rs3 billion while the real value was Rs18 million. In this regard, he said that he would file a case against the chairman of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and the prosecution witness Inam Shah.

**PTI denounce lodging of FIRs against party leaders:** President, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Balochistan, Dawood Shah Kakar and General Secretary, Jahangir Rind on Saturday, while condemning lodging FIR against party's provincial leadership and workers over staging a peaceful demonstration for the release of PTI's founding Chairman, Imran Khan, have said that such tactics could neither alter the ideology of PTI nor could demoralise leadership and workers of the party.

In a statement they said, "We are and will forever remain the players of captain", adding, "Our courage is high and our struggle will continue till the destination is achieved."

They said peaceful protest was the right of every citizen and political parties of the country, adding that PTI took out rally and staged a demonstration for the release of founding Chairman of PTI Imran Khan in accordance with the law and constitution. They said in past, illegitimate and fabricated FIRs had been lodged against office bearers and workers of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, adding that voice would be raised for people's rights and for the release of the founding chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Imran Khan.

Meanwhile, the PTI has demanded the authorities to conduct a medical examination of Bushra Bibi, wife of incarcerated party founder Imran Khan, from Shaukat Khanum Hospital. The demand came two days after a medical report – released by Pakistan Institute of Medical Science (Pims) – found no evidence of any poisonous substance being given to Bushra Bibi at the Bani Gala sub-jail.

## DSP, cops martyred in Lakki attack

F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Three Police officials, including a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), were martyred on Saturday after an attack on their vehicle in Lakki Marwat, Police Control Lakki Marwat confirmed the incident, said.

The police vehicle was ambushed at night by militants. Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Gul Muhammad Khan and his gunman Constable Naseem Gul received fatal injuries while another police official Salamat Khan, who received critical bullet injuries, succumbed to his injuries later on at the hospital later on, the Police Control Lakki Marwat said. The casualties were shifted to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Sarai Naurang and the area was cordoned off for investigation.

According to details, DSP Gul Muhammad Khan and another official, Naseem Gul, were martyred in an attack by miscreants near Manjiwala Chowk, Lakki Marwat District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on late Friday night while another Policeman Salamat Khan was also injured in the attack and later on succumbed to his injuries in the Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Sarai Naurang.

According to details provided by a police spokesperson, DSP Gul Muhammad Khan was on patrol duty in the area when he was attacked. A policeman has been injured in the attack and was undergoing treatment in the hospital, later on died. Following the attack, law enforcement agencies swiftly responded, collecting evidence from the scene. Additionally, efforts have been initiated to apprehend the perpetrators responsible for this cowardly act.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has strongly condemned the attack on the police vehicle, and expressed regret over the



## ASI maryred in Bajaur blast

F.P. Report

KHAR: An assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police was martyred when his vehicle was targeted with an improvised explosive device (IED) in Mamund area of Bajaur district on Saturday.

According to police, an improvised explosive device targeted police officials in Lwee Mamund in Bajaur, injuring police sub-inspector and a constable. Later, the assistant sub inspector, who was critically injured, succumbed to injuries at the hospital. The police collected evidence from the scene and started investigation into the incident. Police cordoned off the area and started search operation.

martyrdom of DSP Gul Muhammad Khan and his gunman and another Police constable in the incident. He also prayed for the martyred, and demanded necessary action for the immediate arrest of the elements involved in the firing. "The families of the martyrs will not be left alone, and they will be fully supported," Gandapur remarked.

He also announced financial assistance for the families of the martyrs under the Shuhada Package. "Steps should be taken for timely payment of the martyrs' package to the families of the martyrs," the CM instructed the police officials.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali also condemned the firing on the Police vehicle in Lakki Marwat and expressed grief over the martyrdom of the three police personnel. He expressed sympathy and condolences to the families of the martyred officials and prayed for the departed souls.

Three Policemen including a DSP martyred in an

attack on a Police vehicle in Lakki Marwat area, Information Advisor Barrister Dr. Saif also condemned the attack. The Information Advisor expressed his condolences to the families of the martyred Policemen. Information Adviser Barrister Dr. Saif condemned the attack on the police vehicle in Lakki Marwat. The morale of the police cannot be lowered by such cowardly actions, Barrister Dr. Saif said.

Targeting the police who are responsible for protecting the people is a cowardly act, Barrister Dr. Saif said. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police have made eternal sacrifices to protect the lives and property of the people, said Barrister Dr. Saif.

Meanwhile, the funeral prayers of martyred police officers were performed in the Police Line Bannu. DSP Headquarters Lakki Marwat Gul Muhammad Khan, Constables Naseem Gul and Salamat Khan were saluted. DPO Bannu, Lakki Marwat and Police and army officers participated in the funeral prayer.







# Isolated villages to be solarised, say CM Murad

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that under Chairman Bilawal Bhutto's Election Manifesto Sindh government would solarise small isolated villages under the Village Electrification program.

He directed Energy Minister Nasir Shah to prepare a detailed proposal so that Chairman Bilawal Bhutto's plan could be implemented in true letter and spirit.

This emerged in the meeting he chaired to review the Sindh Solar Energy Project here at CM House. The meeting was attended by Minister Energy Syed Nasir Shah, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, PSCM Agha Wasif, Chairman P&D Najam Shah, Secretary Energy Kazim Jatoi, and Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoi.

The CM said that isolated villages' electrification through Solar/wind hybrid could be carried out on PPP Mode. The Private sector/community would be assigned to run the system in a sustainable manner. Murad Shah said that the community would bear the running expenses of the system including salaries of the technical staff and his government would bear periodic expenses of battery replacements.

Minister Energy Nasir Shah briefing the chief minister said that the Sindh Solar Energy Project (SSEP) was an initiative of the Sindh government with the World Bank financing of a \$100 million concessional loan approved by ECNEC in November 2018 & revised in July 2023. The project has four components, establishment of 400 MW Solar Parks through competitive bidding; Solarization of 50 MW Public Sector Building, Solar Home Systems to provide electricity to 200,000 households and capacity building by setting up a Solar testing Laboratory and training of Solar Technician.

Utility Scale Solar (Component-I): Three parcels of land were allotted in January 2023, including 250 Acres for 50 MW at Manjhand, Distt Jamshoro, 612 acres for 120 MW in Deh Halkani / Murad Band, Distt West Karachi and 600 acres for 150 MW in Deh Mitha Ghar, Distt Malir. Minister Energy told the CM that the Feasibility studies of the Manjhand and Karachi sites have been completed. The Expression of Interest for the Prequalification process of the Manjhand and KE sites has been completed. For the Manjhand site, four companies prequalified out of

five proposals. For KE sites, 16 Companies are prequalified.

The CM was told that the Request for Proposals (RFP) Documents of Manjhand were pending with NEPRA and lingering on due to a Grid approval issue with NTDC & PPIB. PPIB discussed this agenda in its latest Board meeting in January 2024 and it was decided that NTDC would approve the grid study before NEPRA could approve the RFP. At this, the CM directed the Minister of Energy to resolve issues with the NEPRA and expedite the project.

Further, the Karachi site RFPs were approved by NEPRA and the pre-qualification process was initiated on 2nd March 2024. A boundary wall will be constructed shortly.

Distributed Solar (Component-II): The CM was told that there was a target of 50 MW Roof Top Solar on 110 public sector buildings. In the first round 34 Buildings with 21 MW Hospitals. 33 Sites out of 34 have been completed and installation work on the last site Jacobabad will be completed by the end of April 2024 in the first phase.

In the second phase, 34 Buildings with 21 MW Hospitals have been taken up. Over 35 per-

cent of the work has been completed and sites will be commissioned by 30th June 2024.

In the third phase, 51 Buildings with 14 MW have been started. In Round IV 50 MW Rooftop solar would be installed at Water and Sanitation Agency Qasimabad Lagoon, Hyderabad.

A 4-MW Floating Solar with battery backup near Ghulam Muhammad Barrage Hyderabad would be installed. The total Load is 6.8 MW including Treatment Plant.

The CM was told that the under solar Home System the original implementation of the component was not successful due to a subsidy of only 40 percent and the high costs of the system which resulted in only 322 systems being sold.

National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) data of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) shall be used to identify the beneficiaries at the district level.

Operations and maintenance of the installed kits will be the responsibility of the Last mile Distributor (LMD) and the end-user beneficiary household. The CM said that the proposal for BISP beneficiaries may be submitted to him for necessary action.

## IGP says Police Khidmat Counters at hospitals to be made more active

LAHORE (APP): Inspector General Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has said that the Police Khidmat Counters, established in hospitals, will be made more active.

He expressed these views during a meeting with the provincial health ministers on the occasion of a visit to the Punjab Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Office Lawrence Road here on Saturday. He said that joint measures will be taken to solve the public health problems, faced by the transgender community in collaboration with the health department.

He said that with the cooperation of the health department, facility of health screening including diagno-

sis of aids and other important tests will be provided to transgenders community. He said that the Punjab Police will play an active role in beautifying the wards of cancer patients.

IG Punjab said that health screening of police employees with third dose of hepatitis vaccination will be completed soon. He said that has re-conduct of health screening and psychological profiling of police employees in collaboration with the health department will be completed. IG Punjab said that the collaboration of Police Lines Welfare Hospital Qila Gujjar Singh with King Edward Medical College will continue, police Lines Qila Gujjar Singh Hospital will provide the best medical facilities to

police employees and their families.

As per details, IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar met Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Khawaja Imran Nazir, Minister for Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Khawaja Salman Rafique. The support of the Health Department, matters of mutual interest including the health welfare of the police employees were considered.

During the meeting, health welfare of police employees and other issues were discussed in detail. Senior police officers including DIG Operations Lahore Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, SSP Operations, ASP Shahrabano Naqvi were also present on the occasion.

## CM chairs LDA meeting to review development projects

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has directed to formulate a monitoring mechanism of LDA staff members along with including katchi abadis in the LDA development plan on a priority basis.

The CM chaired a review meeting of LDA projects in which the programme to transform Lahore into a sustainable smart city was reviewed. A development project was approved in the

meeting to bring improvements in the road structure at a cost of Rs6 billion along with provision of other facilities. A waiting area will be allocated for walkways, specific bicycle lane, central recreation area, wheel carts and stalls.

A principal approval was granted for the Pilot Development Project in LDA Avenue 1. The LDA restructuring plan was also reviewed in the meeting and

it was decided to make LDA's Strategic Policy Unit functional as well. A principal decision was taken to amend LDA rules along with introducing one window transfer and digital transformation system. A principal decision was made to establish LDA Uniformed Force along with setting up LDA police station. The proposal to make 20 roads in Lahore commercial was reviewed in the meeting.

## Police, lawyers clash in Lahore

LAHORE (PPI): Police and lawyers clashed at an anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore on Saturday when Abdul Matin Advocate was being produced by a police team for seeking his physical remand.

Police inspector Naveed Awan produced the accused advocate Matin in the court. Abdul Matin advocate was arrested by police for sharing abusive and violent video messages against the institutions on social media.

As the accused advocate was presented before the ATC, the lawyers started to target SHO Sohail. However, the police controlled the situation by launching baton-charge against the violent lawyers. Resultantly lawyers escaped from the court premises.

## More police officials promoted

LAHORE (APP): The process of departmental promotions are going on in the police force, and in all regions and districts of the province, meetings of promotion boards are being held under the supervision of RPOs, in which hundreds of officials are being promoted to the next rank according to merit and seniority.

Punjab Police Spokesman said that 43 ASIs were promoted to sub-inspector rank while 24 head constables were promoted to ASI rank in Rawalpindi region. In DG Khan region, 27 ASIs were promoted to sub-inspector and 27 constables were promoted to the rank of head constable, the cases of 64 ASIs and 50 constables were considered in DG Khan Promotion Board.



ISLAMABAD: An illuminated view of Faisal Masjid decorated with colourful lights in connection with Shab-e-Qadar on 27th day of Holy fasting month of Ramzanul Mubarak. —APP Photo

## Qaiser Sheikh, Tessori discuss economic situation

KARACHI (PPI) Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh called on Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori in Karachi today. The matters pertaining to economic situation of the country, and the role of Special Investment Facilitation Council came under discussion.

On the occasion, the Governor stressed upon the need for collaborative efforts by all the stakeholders to steer the country out of economic issues. He said the economic strength is the guarantee for the development and prosperity of the country.

## NATIONAL INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COMMISSION ISLAMABAD

Dated: 19-03-2024

Appeal No.12A(19/2023-P Titled: PIAC Vs. Sonia Khan

### NOTICE

To: Sonia Khan, Ex-Air Hostess (63880), Resident of House No. 94, Sector D-4, Phase-1, Hayatabad, Peshawar.

Sonia Khan, Sheikh Maltoon Town House N.132, Sector C, Street No. 2, Mardan.

TAKE NOTICE that the above titled Appeal has been fixed for Hearing on 18-04-2024 at 0900 hours at NIRC Headquarter, Sector G-5/2, Islamabad.

You are therefore required to appear before the Honourable Full Bench of this Commission on the above said date, time and place.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

PID(K)2838/23

Deputy Registrar



**Shaukat Khanum**  
Memorial Cancer Hospital  
and Research Centre

A JCI Enterprise Accredited Organisation

## Career Opportunities in SKMCH&RC Peshawar

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre (SKMCH&RC) is a specialist tertiary care cancer Centre built and funded by charitable donations with a mission to provide the best possible cancer care to all patients. SKMCH&RC has a team of UK and US-trained physicians who provide state-of-the-art diagnostic, treatment and support services to patients. SKMCH&RC is pleased to invite applications for the following positions:

### Medical Consultants:

- Consultant Anaesthetist
- Consultant Breast Surgeon
- Consultant Clinical & Radiation Oncologist
- Consultant Clinical Haematologist
- Consultant Head and Neck Surgeon
- Consultant Medical Oncologist
- Consultant Nuclear Medicine
- Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon
- Consultant Paediatric Oncologist
- Consultant Pathologist
- Consultant Physician Critical Care & Pulmonary Medicine
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Pulmonology
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Gastroenterology
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Infectious Diseases
- Consultant Physician Internal Medicine & Nephrology
- Consultant Radiologist
- Consultant Upper GI Surgeon
- Consultant Urologist

- Locum Consultant Anaesthetist
- Locum Consultant Breast Surgeon
- Locum Consultant Pathologist
- Locum Consultant Radiologist
- Locum Consultant Urologist
- Part Time Consultant Anaesthetist

### Senior Instructors:

- Senior Instructor Anaesthesia
- Senior Instructor Breast Surgery
- Senior Instructor Clinical Haematology
- Senior Instructor Clinical and Radiation Oncology
- Senior Instructor Head and Neck Surgery
- Senior Instructor Medical Oncology
- Senior Instructor Paediatric Oncology
- Senior Instructor Radiology

### Hospital Based Fellowships:

- Fellowship in Anaesthesia
- Fellowship in Radiation Oncology

### Management, Administration & Technical:

- Database Administrator
- Manager/ Deputy Manager Radiology
- Security Guard

**Note:** All Senior Instructor positions for Karachi & Peshawar involve working at Lahore for two years, followed by two years of training overseas. For further details regarding the position and eligibility criteria, please visit our website on [www.shaukatkhanum.org.pk](http://www.shaukatkhanum.org.pk)

**TO APPLY:** Only online applications will be entertained. Please share your CV at the email address given below and do mention the position applied for in the subject line. We regret that only shortlisted candidates will be notified.

**We are an equal opportunity employer**

## Human Resources Department

Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital and Research Centre

5-B, Sector A-2, Phase V,  
Hayatabad, Peshawar, Pakistan.

Tel: +92 91 5885000 Ext. 3537, 3538

Email: [careers.peshawar@shaukatkhanum.org.pk](mailto:careers.peshawar@shaukatkhanum.org.pk)

Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Interior

**NATIONAL DATABASE AND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY**  
(Regional Head Office Peshawar - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)

**RENTAL OFFICE SPACE REQUIRED**  
**FOR NADRA Office Talash, District Dir Lower**  
(Re-Tender Notice No. 2023-24/Estate/NRC Talash)

**OFFICE ACCOMMODATION WILL HAVE FOLLOWING FEATURES:**

- Office Accommodation should be in Talash, District Dir Lower.
- Space measuring of total covered area 2000-3500 sq ft with public and staff washrooms.
- Prominent, having independent entrance and proposed building should not be in residential area.
- Security wise viable location and easily accessible by public transport.
- Dedicated 3 Phase Electrical Meter / Connection
- Preference will be given to the building in which dedicated transformer is installed.
- Tap Water facility along with overhead tank.
- Ramp for wheel chair for disable citizens.
- Space, NOC for installation of direction board, sign board and heavy generator.
- Roof top for satellite dish antenna installation.
- Sufficient space for maintaining the public queue & parking area.
- Tenancy for a longer period (Preferably 10 years).

**Note:** - Interested parties / owners can purchase the bidding documents on submission of a written application at a cost of Rs. 100/- from below mentioned address or from concerned offices between **09:00 am – 03:00 pm** (except gazetted holidays). The bids / proposal should be submitted duly completed in all respects by **23rd Apr, 2024 at 11:00 am** (under Single Stage–Two Envelope bidding procedure). The envelopes shall be clearly marked as Technical and Financial proposals. Technical bids / proposals will be Opened on **23rd Apr, 2024 at 11:30 am** at NADRA Regional Head Office, EOBI Building, Plot No. 31 Sector B-1, Phase-V Hayatabad Peshawar in presence of bidders/their nominated representatives. Bid / proposals must include the following documents in addition to any other information that the bidder may find necessary: -

**Technical Bid (Separate Envelope):**

- Photocopy of property ownership documents [Fard-e-Jaidad/Allotment letter/Relevant Certificate by concerned authority (where settled revenue record is not available)].
- Photocopy of valid CNIC.
- Fitness Certificate of the building
- Undertaking on Non-judicial stamp paper of Rs. 100/- certifying that owner / building is not temporary / permanently debarred from any Government agency / authority / department (without bearing any responsibility on NADRA whatsoever in this regard).
- Pictures of the building offered for lease.
- Valid Site Plan/ Map of the building duly approved from concerned authority.
- In case of absence of owner, authority letter for representative duly signed by property owner, permitting him to attend tender process.

**Financial Bid (Separate Envelope):**

- Owner's consent showing monthly rent & offered area of the building.
- Quoted price shall be inclusive of all taxes.
- No brokerage / service charges will be paid in case of real estate agent.
- Opening date / time of **Financial Proposal** will be informed to all successful bidders of General Proposal Evaluation.
- Bidding documents received after submission of due date / time mentioned above, will not be entertained.
- NADRA reserves the right to reject all bids / proposals under PPRA Rule 33 and can cancel the bidding process before acceptance of bid or proposal.
- Bid can also be rejected if owner of selected building fail to produce acceptable required / property documents.
- This advertisement is also available on PPRA website at [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk)

PID(I)No.6045/23 For any query contact on following address:  
Director (Admin)  
NADRA Regional Head Office, Peshawar - Khyber Pakhtunkhwa  
EOBI Building, Plot No. 31 Sector B-1, Phase-V Hayatabad Peshawar | Telephone: 091-9217840





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

## RTS Commission: A liability or accountability platform for KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A commission established for public service delivery in stipulated timeframe as well to frame charges against public servants for their incompetence and negligence become cattle market for retired bureaucrats and employees of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Public Service Commission despite the public.

According to available documents with *The Frontier Post* stated that: with reference to Notice No. RTS-20037 dated February 6, 2024, we wish to inform you that both the undersigned have duly complied with the notice and does not stay in the office beyond official hours.

It is brought to your kind notice that additional concerns and irregularities that require urgent and impartial resolution for the benefit of the public and the Commission:

Unauthorized Posting: We are concerned about the unauthorized transfer of Abdul Basit Shah (Appointed as District Monitoring Officer BPS-16) to the post of Establishment and Administration Officer (BPS-17) on the following grounds, even though over 11 districts are vacant.

This misallocation not only undermines the principles of transparent governance but also poses significant operational risks to our Commission's efficiency. His transfer sets a precedent that may lead to other employees working in the HQ being posted in their home districts.

He [Abdul Basit Shah] is not suitable for the position of E&AO due to

his inappropriate behavior towards other Commission officials on multiple occasions, including Tariq Kamal, Kamal Uddin, and Imad Ullah. He has used abusive language and derogatory remarks against them and their families.

Although he apologized to Tariq Kamal in front of Hafiz Ismat Ali, witnesses such as Imran Khan, Sajid Anwar, Amir Khan, Naveed Ullah, and Ahmad Shah can attest to these incidents. It is worthwhile to mention that despite requests from the establishment department for details of vacant posts, the response was null, yet the post of E&AO remain vacant.

Misuse of Commission Vehicles: Evidence suggests that Commission vehicles, including cars and motorcycles, are being used without proper authorization by individuals (Hafiz Ismat Ali, Noor Ud Din, and Shah Nawaz) on weekends. This unauthorized use raises questions about legality, oversight, and financial losses of Commission resources, indicating poor administration.

Absenteeism and Compensation: The driver (Inam Ullah) Of the former Chief Commissioner (retired on December 7, 2023) continues to be absent from duty while receiving a full salary. This situation warrants examination of payroll protocols and accountability measures. Additionally, it is noted that there is a shortage of drivers while the Secretary has allegedly hired a private driver for his vehicle.

Parking Privileges: The allocation of official parking spaces have been

compromised, with Abdul Basit Shah utilizing these facilities for his personal vehicle (brother official vehicle), thereby depriving other employees of the necessary parking space. This misuse of Commission property after office hours requires immediate attention, especially considering notices given to vacate office space for others.

We request immediate action on these matters to assess the extent of the irregularities and implement corrective measures. It is further requested that the investigation may not be assigned to any officials against whom allegations have been leveled in this application. Ensuring adherence to established rules and regulations, which are equal for all, is imperative for maintaining the integrity of our Commission.

It is worthy to mention that RTS covers incompetency and negligence of public servant by concealment of identifications after their appearance before the commission on public complaints.

Moreover, The Frontier Post had asked competent officials from RTS for provision of names along with posting stations of public servants appeared before the commission on citizen's complaints for their incompetency and negligence in delivery of public services notified by provincial government. However, RTS responded that the names of incompetent and arrogant public servants are concealing from citizens to protect their pride and fame in the society.

## KP forms body to curb overcharging in fares

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has established a six-member committee within the transport department to tackle overcharging during the upcoming Eid al-Fitr holiday.

The committee, comprised of transport department officials including Deputy Director Admin Salman Nisar and Assistant Director Ruidad Khan, is tasked with ensuring citizens are not subjected to excessive fares.

"A divisional-level committee has been formed to address citizens' complaints promptly," the transport department announced. The committee will investigate and take immediate action on reports of inflated fares at bus stations across the province.

To ensure compliance with official rates, the committee will be operational until April 16th. They are required to submit documented and photographic evidence of their inspections and interventions to the Transport Department. This initiative aims to prevent travelers from being exploited during the peak travel period associated with Eid al-Fitr.

Meanwhile, the Transport Authority on Saturday warned all transporters that action will be taken against additional fare.

On the instructions of Commissioner Mardan Division Shaukat Ali Yousafzai and Provincial Secretary Transport Ziaul Haq, the Secretary Regional Transport Authority Wajid Khan and Motor Vehicle Examiner went to the transport bases and made it clear to the transporters that vehicles should be available for passengers on all routes before Eid.

They were warned that under no circumstances should additional fare be charged. The transporters assured that they would charge the fixed fare.

In this regard, the Motor Vehicle Examiner along with the Traffic Police checked the public transport fares on different routes on Friday and 63 vehicles were stopped and passengers were talked to about the fare taken. Eight drivers were fined 21,400 rupees while dozens of passengers were returned the extra fares they were charged for. The transport authority has made it clear to the transporters that no one will be allowed to charge extra fare and the route permits will be canceled in case of violation.

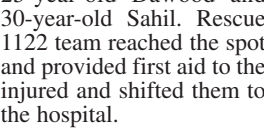
## Three youth injured in mishap

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Three youth were seriously injured in a head-on-collision between two over-speed motorcycles in Hajiabad, Tehsil Timargarah, officials of the Rescue 1122 confirmed the incident here on Saturday.

Rescue 1122 Dir Lower shifted the injured to the hospital after providing first aid to them on the spot of the incident. A collision between two motorcycles has taken place in the Hajiabad area of Dir Lower, as a result of which three youth have been seriously injured. The injured include 10-year-old Zain, 25-year-old Dawood and 30-year-old Sahil. Rescue 1122 team reached the spot and provided first aid to the injured and shifted them to the hospital.

Additionally, promoting greater collaboration and knowledge sharing between international and local researchers can facilitate the development of holistic and contextually relevant solutions to the challenges of forced migration in Pakistan.



## Weather to remain dry in KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Weather is likely to remain dry in most districts of the province, Meteorological Department said here Saturday.

During the last 24 hours, the lowest temperature in Kalam was recorded as minus 2 degrees Celsius and Chitral, Dir and Malam Jabba recorded 5 degrees Celsius, Darosh 6 degrees Celsius and Saidu Sharif 11 degrees Celsius, the official of the Meteorological Department said.

## KP govt paying full attention to sports development: Liaquat

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Population Welfare Department Malik Liaquat Ali Khan Saturday said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is paying full attention to the development of sports, so for the first time in the history of Pakistan, PTI is also honored to include sports fields in the election manifesto.

He expressed these views while addressing the ceremony organized on the occasion of Ramadan Sports Gala at Peshawar Press Club. A large number of journalists and media workers, including senior journalist were also present while addressing the ceremony.

He underlined the efforts being taken for the development of sports in the province. He said in the past the government has

built sports complexes at the Tehsil level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to create competitive spirit among the youth. While appreciating the organization of sports gala for journalists in Peshawar Press Club, he said that the leadership and organizers of the Press Club deserve congratulations for having organized the best entertainment program for their journalists.

He said that journalists are an important part of society. He said that the Peshawar Press Club platform is aimed at improving the well-being and professional capacity of journalists, as well as organizing positive activities like Ramadan Sports Gala for them. He said that there are competent people in every department, if everyone works sincerely, this province will go far as far as progress and development are concerned. He said that Peshawar Press

Club is the identity of the entire province.

Sports activities are welcome for them. He further said that people's rights are not lost in the government of justice. They will advance their homeland and province with honesty and hard work. Earlier, Peshawar Press Club President Arshad Aziz Malik and General Secretary Irfan Musa Zai. Welcoming the chief guest and the participants, he said that in this mega sports event of Peshawar Press Club, more than 150 working journalists are participating in various indoor games, while for the last few years, this tournament has become a festival which is intense. At the end of the ceremony, Peshawar Press Club President Arshad Aziz Malik thanked the chief guest and presented him with the Ramadan Sports Gala cape and honorary shield.



PESHAWAR: President Press Club, Arshad Aziz Malik presenting shield to KP Minister for Population Welfare Department, Malik Liaquat Ali during Ramazan Sports Gala.

## KP CTA to run Takht Bhai Train Safari on Eid

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority has decided to run Takht Bhai Train Safari on Eid-ul-Fitr and the aim of the train safari is to provide national and international awareness about the archaeological and religious tourism in the province, said the Tourism Advisor Zahid Chanzeb while talking to media men here on Saturday.

The participants will be taken on a tour of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, Zahid Chanzeb informed. Secretary Tourism, Culture and Archeology Muhammad Bakhtiar, Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority Barkatullah Marwat, and other senior officers were also present.

On the happy occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, under the auspices of the Culture and Tourism Authority, a train safari is being run for the second time from Peshawar to Takht Bhai, the historical

archeological site of the province, on Saturday, April 13, he said.

Females will be taken from Peshawar Sadar Railway Station in the safari train and will be taken to various historical places on the way, Zahid Chanzeb said. The train will pass through City Railway Station, Nasirpur, Pabbi, Nowshera, Risalpur and Mardan, Zahid Chanzeb informed.

In the future, our effort is to organize various activities for tourists from time to time. Train Safari is a link to it, he said. The participants will also be taken on a tour of various historical places, especially the ancient Buddhist monasteries in Takhtbhai, Zahid Chanzeb said.

DG Tourism Authority Barkatullah Marwat is going to organize a one-day guided tour for men, women and children in the tour. On Eid-ul-Fitr, youths of tourism police will perform services for the convenience of tourists at tourist spots, DG Tourism while commenting on this

occasion, said.

During the Peshawar tour, the participants will be exposed to the remains of the Buddhist civilization of the first century AD, Tourism Advisor Zahid Chanzeb said. Before departure, the participants will be welcomed by traditional band tunes at the railway station.

During the trip, the archaeologist and guide will provide valuable information about the history and architecture of Takht Bhai. The purpose of the visit is to promote religious tourism in the province, and the participants will be informed about religious, cultural and archaeological sites, heritage and history, Zahid Chanzeb said.

The ruins of Takhtbhai have been declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, Tourism Advisor Zahid Chanzeb said. Millions of domestic and foreign tourists, Buddhists, historians and archaeologists visit here from all over the world, the Tourism Advisor said.

## KP Advisor tourism, culture rejects Gandhara Corridor Bill tabled in NA

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Adviser to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism, Culture and Archeology Zahid Chanzeb on Saturday rejected the Gandhara Corridor Bill and termed this move as an open interference in the affairs of the provincial government and attack on provincial autonomy.

This bill is tabled at floor of the National Assembly by MNA from Sindh Ramesh Kumar recently. In a statement, Zahid Chanzeb demanded that Member National Assembly Ramesh Kumar should immediately withdraw his bill that he presented in the National Assembly. The KP Advisor Tourism and Culture said that if Ramesh Kumar wants to present the bill, those should be presented on archaeological relics of his Sindh province where the ruins of Harappa and Mohenjodaro are spread over a wide range of areas.

Zahid Chanzeb recalled that after the 18th constitu-

## SCCI demands resumption PIA flight operation from Peshawar to Karachi

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: PESHAWAR: Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) expressed concern over closure of PIA flight operation from Peshawar to Karachi and demanded its immediate resumption. Ejaz Khan Afridi, vice president of the SCCI in a statement issued here on Saturday said PIA was not operating single flight from Peshawar to Karachi. He added PIA service was available by business community and people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but it has been halted, due to which the community has not only faced difficulties but it has also inflicted huge revenue loss to the national carrier PIA.

The SCCI vice president said the PIA move to halt flight operation from Peshawar to Karachi has created great unrest among the business community and people of the province and demanded immediate resumption of the flight operation from Peshawar to address their grievances. He said the flight operation should be launched both ways from peshawar to Karachi and Karachi to Peshawar. He demanded the PIA should operate two flights from Peshawar to Karachi within a week to facilitate the business community and people of the province. Afridi said the resumption of flight operation from Peshawar to Karachi will benefit maximum travelers and it will also help to generate hefty revenue for the national carrier PIA and make it a profitable organization.

national amendment, the affairs and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Museums and Archeology purely falls

under the provincial jurisdiction and the province also has the power to legislate or suggest legislation in this regard.

## Meeting for peaceful conduct of Eid held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A high-level meeting regarding the peaceful conduct of Eid-ul-Fitr was held under the Chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Kurram here on Saturday.

In the light of the orders of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a high-level meeting was held under the Chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Kurram Javedullah Mehsud regarding the religious fervor and peaceful celebration of Eid-ul-Fitr in which all Additional Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners, Additional Assistant Commissioners, DPO, security forces officials, Tehsildars and officers of concerned departments across the district participated.

In the meeting, on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, the plan to provide security and other facilities for tourists and Eid-ul-Fitr in Kurram district, during Eid-ul-Fitr holidays, administration, police, rescue 1122, tehsil municipal administration, medical centers and all institutions to be on high alert.

Campaign against black glasses, action against drivers who overcharge passengers on Eid-ul-Fitr, action under Section 144 on aerial firing on moon night, necessary in major hospitals of Upper, Lower and Central Karam for timely delivery of emergency medical aid. It was approved to ensure the availability of medical personnel and medicines. Similarly, it was decided to establish an emergency control room in the office of Deputy Commissioner Karam to deal with any emergency. The line numbers can be contacted on 0926 310777, 0926 520399 and 0926 3107599.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the concerned authorities to implement all the decisions made in the meeting. At the end of the meeting, the country's survival and security, stability a special prayer was also made for prosperity of the motherland.

## Forced migration research in Pakistan

Dr. Waseem Hassan

ACCORDING TO Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), From 2010 to 2021, a staggering 225.3 million internal displacements, or forced movements (due to conflicts, natural disasters, and other destabilizing events), were documented globally. While, according to UNHCR, (by the close of 2022), 108.4 million people were forcibly displaced.

In the same vein, Pakistan emerges as a significant player in the landscape of forced migration and displacement. As of recent BBC statistics, Pakistan is home to over four million Afghan migrants and refugees, making it one of the largest host countries for displaced Afghans globally.

Beyond the immediate needs of shelter, food, and other essential services for forcibly displaced populations, there exists a critical imperative to conduct comprehensive research covering the experiences, challenges, and aspirations of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and forcibly displaced individuals.

Research focusing on IDPs and forcibly displaced

populations can encompass a wide range of areas, not limited to Protection and Human Rights, Livelihoods and Socio-economic Integration, Psychosocial Well-being, Education and Skill Development, Durable Solutions and Return, and Community Participation and Empowerment.

According to Scopus (one of the largest databases), 3348 research documents (3054 articles and 294 reviews) are published in the area of "forced migration". The glaring disparity between the number of research documents published globally on forced migration and the remarkably low contribution from Pakistan raises significant concerns regarding the attention and planning dedicated to addressing the needs and challenges faced by the country's millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Despite Pakistan being home to one of the largest populations of IDPs in the world, the limited representation of Pakistani researchers in this critical area of study is a matter of urgent attention.

The stark reality that only 12 papers published in Scopus-indexed journals specifically focus on forced migration within Pakistan

is alarming, especially considering the magnitude of the displacement crisis within the country. Even more concerning is the fact that only five (5) of these papers were produced without strong international collaboration, indicating a deficiency in indigenous research capacity and resources dedicated to understanding and addressing the complexities of forced migration within Pakistan's context.

Addressing this disparity requires concerted efforts from multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, academic institutions, civil society organizations, and funding bodies. Investments in research capacity building, support for interdisciplinary collaborations, and the creation of conducive research environments are essential to ensure that Pakistan's response to forced migration is informed by robust evidence and tailored to the needs of affected communities.

Additionally, promoting greater collaboration and knowledge sharing between international and local researchers can facilitate the development of holistic and contextually relevant solutions to the challenges of forced migration in Pakistan.



PESHAWAR: KP Minister for Food inspecting price list during his visit to local market.





## In brief

### Release of six inmates ordered F.P. Report

BANNU: District and Sessions Judge visited the central jail and ordered the release of six prisoners involved in minor cases. As per detail, D&SJ Muzamil Shah Khattak, Additional Session Judge Faisal Anjum, Senior Civil Judge Admin Muhammad Asghar, Senior Civil Judge Judicial Muhammad Ashfaq visited Bannu Central Jail. During their visit Superintendent Jail Tahir Shahbaz Wazir and Deputy Superintendent Jail Mutasim Billah briefed them with the facilities provided to prisoners. On this occasion Hawalat Muharr Head Ward Hanifullah Khan, Warrant Muharr Head Wards Zahir Nawaz and other staff were also present. During the visit the judges inaugurated the newly constructed ward of the jail and had a long discussion with the female prisoners. The judges released six prisoners involved in minor cases and distributed Eid gifts among the prisoners. The judges appreciated the efforts of the staff for the quality services provided to the prisoners during the Holy Month of Ramadan.

### Man guns down mother-in-law

GUJRANWALA (INP): In a shocking turn of events, a man reportedly shot and killed his mother-in-law following the breaking of his engagement. As per details, the incident unfolded in Ferozwala, Gujranwala, where the assailant, identified as Farooq, entered his ex-fiance's house and opened fire. The firing claimed the life of his ex-mother-in-law, while her daughter sustained injuries and was rushed to the hospital and the accused managed to flee the spot of incident. Police officials stated that the accused had been engaged to his cousin, Maryam, two years ago. However, Maryam was reportedly scheduled to be engaged to another individual on the second day of Eid after breakup with Farooq.

### Ggirl injured in acid attack

BAHAWALNAGAR (PPI): An 18-year-old girl was critically injured when acid was thrown on her by a scoundrel in Bahawalnagar on Saturday. The girl was rushed to a nearby hospital while the accused escaped from the scene. According to the FIR, the incident took place in village Dhani Malapar in the limits of Donga Bonga police station. Sidra Bibi was returning to her home after attending Mehfil-e-Naat at a local seminary when the attacker threw acid on her. The accused used to harass the girl and on the day of incident he was hiding in fields and when Sidra came near him, he threw acid on her face and escaped from the scene. After the incident, the victim was admitted to the hospital. Police were conducting raids for the arrest of the accused. Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif took notice of the acid attack on a girl in Bahawalnagar.

### Bandits kidnap two more persons

SHIKARPUR (INP): Bandits kidnapped two more persons from a village in the vicinity of Shikarpur increasing the number of abductees to 13 in the district. The incident took place in Abdul Wahid Mahar village in the jurisdiction of Bachal Bhayo police station, when two cousins Amir and Ghulam Farid were kidnapped. The relatives have suspected that the two men have been abducted by the bandits.



QUETTA: Activists of Grand Health Alliance holding a banner during a protest for acceptance of their demands.

## Mother, child dead at DHQ hospital Tribesmen demand action against staff

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Residents of Piro Khel tribe charged health staff of the labor room, District Headquarter Hospital, Landi Kotal for the alleged death of a woman and her baby and demanded of the health department to take stern action against them.

It is to be mentioned here that the previous night the wife of Haji Rehman was brought to the DHQ Landi Kotal for labor purposes. The on-duty gynecologist conducted a C-section operation but due to continued bleeding the patient was referred to Peshawar health center where she gave birth to a dead baby and as per doctors died of cardiac arrest because of excessive bleeding.

Relatives of the deceased and a number of social and political workers staged a protest demo in front of the causality of



DHQ Hospital, Landi Kotal on Saturday to denounce the labor room health staff where their negligence caused the death of mother and neonate last night.

Village council chairman Sajjad Shinwari, Farman Shinwari and others blamed that the labor staffers in spite of lack of experience and facilities tackled complicate labor cases and after got serious asked attendants of the patients to take her to Peshawar hospital that was a deliberate attempt to kill them.

Present case is not a single one but in the past carelessness of the health staff allegedly caused the death of scores of women during delivery that must be halted, they remarked. The protestors locked the main gate of DHQ Hospital and threatened that till availing of justice, they would not give up their protest. On the other hand District Health Officer and Medical Superintendent Dr Zafar formulated a three members inquiry committee to sort out the facts.

## Wife killed, husband injured in gunfire

F.P. Report

MARDAN: A minor dispute escalated into a fierce brawl when two rival groups exchanged gunfire, resulting in the tragic death of a woman and injuries to her husband in the premises of Rustam police station. Simultaneously, three members of the opposing group were also wounded. Within an hour of the incident, the police apprehended five suspects involved in the altercation.

According to the events, Muhammad Hilal resident of Khairabad, reported his injuries to the police. The complainant explained that he was on his way for medical treatment when, near the Khairabad stop, he encountered Tauqeer, Fawad along their father named Ali Muhammad son of Zareen, and Ashfaq, who were already present. Amid heated arguments, they suddenly opened fire, and I was wounded.

Hearing the commotion, my wife, known as Masma (M), rushed to save me. However, the assailants also shot her with a blazing weapon, and she succumbed to her injuries. In the exchange of gunfire, Ali Muhammad and his two sons, Fawad and Tauqeer, were also wounded.

The Rustam police initiated an investigation by filing a case. The reason

behind this feud was a previous altercation between the rival groups. The timely action by SHO Alamgir Khan of the Rustam police station led to the arrest of the five suspects, including the use of firearms.

**PEC commits for uplift of young engineers:** Engineer Mir Masood Rasheed, advisor to the Chairman of the Pakistan Engineering Council and convener of the Pakistan Development Committee, has said that the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) is striving for the leadership of young engineers and engineering students.

He expressed these views on the occasion of his visit to the University of Engineering and Technology, Mardan. He further said that crores of rupees are being spent for the welfare of engineering students. According to the Convenor Pakistan Development Committee, students are being financially supported for their final year projects, and young engineers are being given internships as per their choice.

The financial support is being provided by the Engineering Council. On this occasion, checks were distributed among the students of UET. Member of Pakistan Development, Engineer Adil Nawaz, and Assistant Registrar Danyal

Khan participated in the delegation.

**Report submission sought within fortnight:** A meeting regarding the mapping of Afghan citizen card holders in Mardan Division was held under the chairmanship of Commissioner Shaukat Ali Yousafzai in his office. Regional Police Officer Najeeb ur Rahman, Additional Commissioner Naeem Akhtar, Deputy Commissioner Mardan Muhammad Fayaz Khan Sherpao, Deputy Commissioner Swabi Dr. Tariqullah, SP Security Mardan Fayaz Khan DSP Headquarters Swabi Muhammad Iqbal, Assistant Commissioner Revenue and other concerned Officials attended the meeting.

In the meeting, the current progress regarding the mapping of Afghan citizen card holders in Mardan and Swabi was reviewed. Various committees were formed in the meeting which includes the concerned Assistant Commissioner, SDPO, Tehsildar and Secretary of Neighborhood/Village Council. The committees will submit a report in this regard within fifteen days. He directed that the report be completed and submitted regarding the instructions of the government.

## Rs10m compensation granted to victims of March 17

F.P. Report

WANA: Deputy Commissioner (DC) South Waziristan granted compensation cheques to victims of roof collapse in which six killed and more than 10 were injured of same family near Pak-Afghan border area Raghzai on 17th March, on Saturday.

According to details, Member National Assembly Zubair Khan and Member Provincial Ajab Gul were present during provision of compensation checks to the heirs of the victim family. A 10 million

cheque was granted to the members of victim family in Wana Scouts Camp.

MNA, MPA and other officials assured full support to victim family during the check distribution. Additional Deputy Commissioner Kashmir Khan and national leaders were also present and appreciated the efforts of MNA Zubair Khan and MPA Ajab Gul for providing timely relief to the families of Raghzai tragedy.

Meanwhile, unknown terrorists shot and killed police personnel Rahimullah Mehsud in Manra area of tehsil Birmal

near Pak-Afghan border around 4:00 pm when he was on duty to provide security to the polio monitoring team.

According to eyewitnesses, two masked motorcyclists shot and killed Rahimullah Mehsud, the only police man was on duty of polio monitoring team, and after the incident, the two terrorists managed to escape from the spot and went into the dense forests of Manra. Local sources said that the gunmen killed only the policeman but did not fire on the polio monitoring team, which included a woman.

## Mother along with five children laid to rest

F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: The funeral prayers of the mother along with her five children was offered, who were allegedly died after drinking poisoned tea, last day.

According to the details, the funeral prayers of the mother Nadia Bibi and five children, Iqra, Madiha, Aqsa, Samia and Ali Hassan, who drank poisoned tea in Toba Tek Singh's neighboring village 520 GB, have been offered in Toba Tek Singh's neighboring village 364 JB of Tehsil Gojra.

A large number of people including the local Member National Assembly (MNA) Osama Hamza participated in the funeral.

Meanwhile, former independent candidate for provincial assembly from Kamalia and famous businessman-Chaudhry Shahid Iqbal Gujjar said that the government is well aware of the people problems and is trying day and night to solve them.

The people will see improvement with each passing day, he expressed these views while talking to the correspondent of The Frontier Post in his office. He said that the coalition government will spare no effort to solve the problems faced by the country and the nation. The country is facing very serious challenges at the moment and the hostile forces do not want Pakistan to go on the path of development.

The attack on the Chinese residents is a clear proof of this. The friendship between Pakistan and China cannot be disturbed by such cowardly acts. The Pakistani nation is an equal sharer in the suffering of the affected Chinese families. In the end, He said that all political Parties, Putting politics aside, for the betterment of the country by uniting must be demonstrated.

## Public took to streets against police

F.P. Report

THATTA: Relatives of Raffique Khaskeli have accused police of killing him in a fake encounter. A large number of people including family members of Raffique Khaskeli-a man killed by police in an alleged encounter a couple of days ago, took to streets in Mirpur Sakro city to protest the brutality of Thatta police.

As per the version of Gharo police, Raffique Khaskeli allegedly abducted 6 year old girl Nabila from outside his house in Gharo city and she was recovered next day near Mirpur Sakro city. The alleged suspect Raffique went into hiding after the recovery of minor girl, until police received a tip off regarding his presence in a poultry farm near babra area.

Upon arrival of police Raffique allegedly opened fire at police party after which an encounter ensued. After half and hour of cross fire the alleged suspect was shot dead by police. However, the relatives of the deceased rejected the version of police during protest and said that Raffique had family terms with Shahbawaz Jokhiyo and he would frequently visit their house.

# 2 reaches to home after payment of ransom to dacoits

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The abducted property dealers Haji Hameed Khan alias Hajiano and his friend Zahir Shah safely reached home after his abduction by a gang of bandits in Punjab's Kacha belt some two months ago. He was given a warm welcome on his arrival to the Timergara city wherein he was also garlanded by his relatives and friends.

Haji Hameed of Koto village in Balambat, according to his relatives, fell prey to the robbers along with his friend Zahir Shah from the Bajaur district when the two reached Punjab to buy a car they had come across through social media at a low price. The bandits released both the abducted youths the other day.

The captors, a few days ago, had released a video torturing both the abducted youths in which the two could be seen crying for help and asking their families to pay the ransom money. A close relative of the released person said that the bandits' gang from the Kacha area released him when the family paid a ransom amount the figure of which is not known. Several political parties and politicians here are trying to score political points for the release of Haji Hameed.

Pakistan Tehreek Insaf MPA Malik Shafiullah along with MPA Humayun Khan had met the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa inspector general of police Akhtar Hayat Khan at Peshawar a few days ago and informed him about the matter. In a social media message Malik Shafiullah had claimed the IGP had talked to the Sindh IGP and the victim would soon be released.

Similarly, the PPP district general secretary advocate Alam Zeb claimed that they had talked to the PPP central leader Faisal Karim Kundi who had raised the issue with the Sindh chief minister Murad Ali Shah and party chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. The PPP activist claimed that the abductee was released after his efforts. The Dir qaumi Pasoon, a body of local elders and civil society also claimed credit for the youth's release.

The Lower Dir police also claimed the abducted persons were released when they contacted the KP higher authorities of police. However, news about the payment of a ransom amount also circulated on social media platforms. However, the families are tightlipped about the reality.

**As many as 27 Assistant Professors appointed at TMC:** A total of 27 senior doctors were appointed as assistant professors at the Timergara Medical College in the first phase while the rest of positions would also be filled soon.

Sources in the health department confirmed that 27 senior physicians including ENT specialist Nadar Khan, medical specialists including Dr Saeedur Rehman, Dr Niaz Muhammad, Qazi Ikramullah, gynecologist Dr Lubna Tahir, Dr Rab Nawaz, orthopedic surgeon Dr Wiqar Alam, eye specialist Dr Jamal Hussain, children specialist Dr Qiamud Din, Dr Muhammad Daud and others were appointed as assistant professors at the TMC, the notification of which was issued the other day.

## Awareness walk for children enrollment at schools held

F.P. Report

BUNER: An awareness walk arranged to enroll out of school children in government schools at Swari bazaar in which District Education Officer along with academics for the success of enrollment drive continued to 30th April.

Prior to awareness walk, DEO enrolled a girl in government primary school Gunbat Rega and provided her free of cost books as well. He added that enrollment drive started from 1st March to be continued 30th April 2024 by giving admission and free books too.

In the walk large number of ADEOs, DEOs, ASDEOs, Headmasters and students participated. The participants of the walk carried banners and play cards inscribed on which the slogans, "education is for all. It is every child right, acquiring knowledge is worship, enroll your children in government schools"

The participants of the walk raised loud slogans of education is the right of children and conveyed their message effectively to the passengers of the vehicles passing by on the road, the nearby shopkeepers and the parents present in the bazaars. Deo Ifthikhar ul Ghani said in a media talk that qualified teachers teach in government schools and the schools have a good environment for character building, moral training of the students besides electricity, water and fan facilities are available.

DEO vowed the education staff members would make the admission campaign successful by more children can be admitted. He continued for this purpose the teachers are present in the school even during the spring vacations and appealed to the parents to enroll their children of five years and above in the nearest government schools and to give the children their right to education and the

right to acquire knowledge. **Account officer demands provision of generator:** District accounts office (DAO) which popularly known and called as treasury (Khazana) is lacking the facility of a latest generator for use in case of electricity load shedding as a result both visiting employees and the staff members are suffering a lot.

The permanent employee the other kinds of daily visiting needy people and DAO staff members have demanded of the deputy commissioner the elected members parliament to provide a latest small size generator for smooth routine work. According to employees and staff members that heavy generator was installed in the begging which went out of work because of long period used and finally grounded in 2009 when the staff was no more able to afford time and again cost of repairing and over fuel consumption charges from own pocket money.

They also shared that DAO situated in the premises of district courts since 1991 is dealing for 1.8 millions employees out of them 1.4 are regular employees and 0.4 million pensioners besides daily visiting needy people and vehicles repairing utility bills of the government offices, departments including institutions as well. They claimed billions rupees disbursed monthly by daily basis.

The staff and visiting people shared during the holy month of Ramadan electricity came right at 10 AM and remain for two hours only. When there is no electricity supply the DAO staff members are unable to deal any file before 10 AM and after 1 PM while the DAO closed at 3 PM. They termed 3 hours working hours are extremely to deal all the pendency.

The staff were sure the DAO staff members were

collegist Dr Lubna Tahir, Dr Rab Nawaz, orthopedic surgeon Dr Wiqar Alam, eye specialist Dr Jamal Hussain, children specialist Dr Qiamud Din, Dr Muhammad Daud and others were appointed as assistant professors at the TMC, the notification of which was issued the other day.

**PPP, JUI to support JI in LG polls:** The Pakistan People Party and Jamiat Ulama Islam Fazl nominated candidates announced to withdraw in favour of the Jamaat-i-Islami candidate for tehsil chairman Balambat Imranud Din advocate. Both the candidates withdrew their nomination papers.

The bye election for the seat has been scheduled to be held on April 28. The announcement was made during a meeting held at Odigram which was attended by the PPP former MPA Muhammad Zamin Khan, Malik Abdul Satar Khan, Salim Khan advocate, Malik Nisar Khan, JI district chief Izazul Mulk Afkari, former MNA Sahibzada Yaqub Khan, JI nominee advocate Imranud Din and others.

The three parties agreed to contest the bye election for the Balambat tehsil chairman as an alliance against the Pakistan Tahreek Insaf that swept the 2024 general elections both in Lower Dir and Upper Dir.

**Timergara Medical college gets assistant professors:** A total of 27 senior doctors were appointed as assistant professors at the Timergara Medical College in the first phase while the rest of positions would also be filled soon. Sources in the health department told media here on Saturday that 27 senior physicians including ENT specialist Nadar Khan, medical specialists Dr Saeedur Rehman, Dr Niaz Muhammad, Qazi Ikramullah, gynecologist Dr Lubna Tahir, Dr Rab Nawaz, orthopedic surgeon Dr Wiqar Alam, eye specialist Dr Jamal Hussain, children specialist Dr Qiamud Din, Dr Muhammad Daud and others were appointed as assistant professors at the TMC, the notification of which was issued the other day.

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## Police arrests 8 culprits

F.P. Report

LARAKANA: The operations against criminals and anti-social elements are continued in which 8 alleged culprits charged serious cases were arrested while weapons and drugs were recovered from their possession.

According to the details provided yesterday, Shaheed DSP Abdul Malik Bhutto Police has arrested the accused drug dealer Abdul Jabbar alias Tani Tanyu from the loco shed area and registered a case with two kilos of hashish. He has gone to jail in more than 100 cases, while the Allahabad police has arrested the drug dealer accused Ajab alias Ajab Gul Anad along with 1500 grams of hashish from the airways area and registered a case against him for robberies in different police stations. Involved in the cases of

On the other hand, the Market Police has arrested the accused Shakeel Chandio from Ali Park area without a license along with a pistol and bullets and registered a case under the Sindh Arms Act. On the other hand, Ali Goharabad Police has arrested the drug dealer accused Abdul Nabi Bardi along with 450 grams of hashish and registered a case.





GAZA: Children studing in a makeshift classroom at a camp for displaced Palestinians in Rafah.

## Russia’s war on Kyiv forces Europe to weaponise its economic might

MOSCOW: Whatever the exact territorial outcome of the war in Ukraine, the political outcome is already clear – Russia has lost its gambit to create a vassal state and buffer zone in Eastern Europe, because Ukraine’s Westward course is now irreversible.

That was one of the key messages of an international symposium of diplomats and academics who gathered at Cambridge University under the auspices of the Centre for Geopolitics. The focus was the Maidan Revolution of 2013, which overthrew Ukraine’s Moscow-friendly president Viktor Yanukovych and set the country on a path towards Europe, but it also dwelled on Russian President Vladimir Putin’s full-scale invasion of the country in February 2022. “Putin has lost Ukraine. It has become crystal clear. He has invaded their sovereignty and they have resisted him,” said Baroness Catherine Ashton, who was the European Union’s first foreign policy chief between 2009 and 2014, and held frequent talks with Yanukovych and Putin during the turbulent months of the uprising. “All those years before he was losing them, and now he’s lost them completely.”

The Maidan protests started on the evening of November 21, 2013, when Yanukovych decided not to sign an association agreement with the European Union, which had been under negotiation for seven years, opting instead for a free trade deal with Moscow. “I remember that evening very well,” said Argita Daudze, Latvia’s ambassador to Ukraine at the time, who was hosting a reception that day. “Ukrainian foreign ministry officials joined us late and they were in a very bad mood.”

“Ukrainian society in 2013 was living in certain hopes that closer ties with the EU would bring more order and faster economic development in Ukraine,” said Daudze. “It seemed the notion of Europe started to become an answer to many problems that Ukrainian lawmakers were facing – and became a synonym of a good life for the common people.” As the protests against Yanukovych grew, “the atmosphere was fantastic – it was families, young people, NGO leaders, journalists, a spectrum of people from across society in Kyiv,” recalled Ashton, who visited the gathering

crowds.

“And it was very, very cold, so you know people are committed ... there was a clear sense this was a movement of people who were not going to go away.” The spontaneity and length of the uprising belied the Russian argument that it had been engineered by Western officials.

But it’s not just Ukraine that is pinning its hopes on benefits from stronger ties with the EU. Ashton believes the experience of absorbing Ukraine is transforming the European Union, too. “It’s made the EU stronger in foreign policy terms ... more coherent,” she told Al Jazeera. Foreign and defence policy remain national competences, requiring unanimity for action at the EU level, but Ashton said European willingness to work together was “absolutely extraordinary” and had increased since her tenure.

During the Maidan uprising, for example, many EU members were still deferential towards Russia. “Many people considered the Polish official reaction as too timid,” said Lukasz Kulasa, deputy head of research at the Polish Institute of International Affairs. “[Then-Foreign Minister Radoslaw] Sikorsky told Ukrainians to agree to a compromise with Yanukovych.” Even after Putin annexed the Crimean Peninsula the following March, European officials advised Ukraine not to use arms against Russians, and Germany agreed with Russia to build the Nordstream gas pipelines under the Baltic Sea that would circumvent Ukraine.

Poland is now one of Ukraine’s most unequivocal allies. Germany has abandoned Nordstream, and the EU has imposed a dozen sanctions packages against Russia and is this year putting in place predictable, multiyear military and financial aid to Ukraine. “The EU has never understood how strong it is,” said Ashton. “As an economic power, it is enormous, and it doesn’t yet really get that it has the capability to use that incredible economic strength to achieve things.” It was high time, she said, for EU leaders to start forming security strategies for the next 50 years.

In December, the EU invited Ukraine and Moldova to start their membership processes, and that, too,

was seen as a form of security. Vygaudas Usackas, the EU ambassador to Moscow in 2013-17, called for “an unprecedented political decision by both Europeans and NATO to expedite negotiations of Ukraine’s membership of the EU and invite Ukraine to join NATO at the Washington summit” in July. Both processes normally take several years, but membership would strengthen Ukraine’s hand in negotiations with Russia to end the war, whenever they took place, Usackas said.

For the same reason, he called for the deployment of NATO troops to Ukraine and “immediate and urgent, massive military and financial support to Ukraine so it regains the momentum and can talk to the enemy from a position of strength”. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg this week reportedly proposed a NATO aid package that would send \$100bn in military assistance to Ukraine over five years. These coordinated policies among EU and European NATO members stand in contrast to US congressional lawmakers beholden to presidential hopeful Donald Trump, who have frozen aid to Ukraine this year, throwing even more responsibility on European shoulders. “This is the greatest success of Russia’s political warfare,” Mark Voyager, a lecturer in international relations at Kyiv American University, told Al Jazeera. “I believe Mr Trump most certainly is in some shape or form an asset for the Kremlin. Whether it was his visits in the late Soviet period or his Miss Universe affairs in Moscow or his business dealings with Trump Tower, a financial personal entanglements, I believe the Russians have something quite substantial on him.”

Investigations in the US, however, have so far failed to turn up evidence that Moscow holds any compromising information about Trump that could make the former US president susceptible to political pressure from Moscow. Whatever Trump’s reasons for seeking to cut off aid to Ukraine, Daudze called to mind the results of not standing up to Russia during and after the second world war, when Stalin’s armies swept across Eastern Europe, ending the brief interwar independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. — Aljazeera

## Moldova’s breakaway Transnistria region claims

BUCHAREST (AP): State security services in Moldova’s Russia-backed breakaway region of Transnistria said that a drone attacked a military unit close to the border with Ukraine, causing minor damage to a radar station but no casualties.

The incident occurred in the region of Rabinia, about 6 kilometers (about 4 miles) from the Ukraine border, the region’s state security ministry said, adding that a criminal investigation has been opened. They did not say who they thought was behind the alleged attack.

Moldova’s Bureau for Reintegration Policies responded by saying that the incident fits “a pattern of provocations” in Transnistria designed to “incite panic and tension” and maintain attention on the region.

Moldova, like Ukraine, is a candidate member for European Union membership, and has repeatedly accused Russia of conducting a “hybrid war” against the country, meddling in local elections, and running vast disinformation campaigns to try to topple the government and derail its path toward full EU membership. Russia has denied the accusations. The drone incident came after an empty helicopter at a military installation in Transnistria last month was destroyed in what the authorities in Transnistria blamed on a Ukrainian drone strike, but what Moldovan officials said was a staged explosion also meant to inflame tensions.

While Moldova did not squarely blame Russia, it did say that “more such actions are planned by the Russian Federation” in Transnistria. After a short war in the early 1990s, Transnistria declared independence from Moldova, where today’s pro-Western government has firmly opposed Russian President Vladimir Putin’s war with Ukraine.

Although Transnistria’s independence isn’t recognized by any UN member countries, including Russia, the Kremlin-friendly territory has become a source of tension during the war, especially since it is wedged between Moldova and Ukraine and is home to a military base with 1,500 Russian troops. It wasn’t immediately clear if any troops were at the site of the drone incident. The separatist region also made headlines in February when authorities used a rare meeting of Transnistria’s congress to appeal to Moscow for “protection” due to what they said was increased pressure from Moldova. The appeal stopped short of asking Russia to annex the territory, allaying fears in Moldova, which dismissed the event as propaganda.

## Mexico suspends ties with Ecuador after police raid embassy

MEXICO CITY: Mexico has suspended diplomatic relations with Ecuador after police forcibly broke into its embassy in Quito and arrested former Ecuadorian vice president Jorge Glas who had sought political asylum there. Glas, who had been convicted twice of corruption, has been staying in the Mexican embassy since December, claiming he was being persecuted by Ecuadorian officials.

Mexico’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that it had offered political asylum to Glas, calling on Ecuador to grant him “safe passage” out of the country. But Ecuadorian special forces, wearing tactical gear including bulletproof vests and helmets, forcefully entered the embassy and arrested Glas.

“Ecuador is a sovereign nation and we are not going to allow any criminal to stay free,” Ecuador’s presidency wrote in a statement shortly before the raid. Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador wrote in a post on X that the storming of the embassy and arrest of Glas constitute an “authoritarian act” and “a flagrant violation of international law and sovereignty of Mexico”. For many Ecuadorians it seemed like a “mockery of justice” that the convicted former vice president was being granted political asylum by Mexico, especially considering that he is an ally of the Mexican president, said lawyer and political commentator Adrian Perez Salazar.

“But the fact that there was this grievance does not – at least under international law – justify the forceful breach of an embassy,” Salazar told Al Jazeera from Guayaquil, Ecuador. Alicia Barcena, Mexico’s foreign minister, said on X that a number of diplomats suffered injuries during the incident – which she called a vio-

lation of the Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations. Mexican diplomatic personnel will “immediately” leave Ecuador, Barcena said, adding that Mexico will appeal to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to hold Ecuador accountable for violations of international law.

“International law is very clear that embassies are not to be touched, and regardless of whatever justifications the Ecuadorian government might have, it is a case where the end does not justify the means,” Salazar told Al Jazeera. The situation had escalated a day earlier after the Mexican president made remarks about Ecuador’s elections which the South American country said it considered “very unfortunate”. Lopez Obrador had commented on the assassination last year of Ecuadorian presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio, comparing it with recent violence in the run-up to the current election cycle in Mexico, which had seen several local candidates shot.

He implied that frontrunner Luisa Gonzales ultimately lost the election because of Villavicencio’s murder and the media speculation it produced. Lopez Obrador also took aim at “owners of media outlets” and those that he deemed were responsible for an “atmosphere of violence” throughout election campaigns. Ecuador’s government subsequently declared Mexican ambassador Raquel Serur Smeke as persona non grata and directed her to leave the country “soon”. Ecuador has been dealing with a new wave of violence since earlier this year, when riots erupted in prisons across the country, criminal leaders escaped custody and masked gunmen stormed a live television broadcast and took hostages. — Aljazeera

## Rising temp upend migratory bird habitats in Albania

LONDON (AFP): Long considered a Garden of Eden for migratory birds, the Vain Lagoon along the northern Albanian coast has been increasingly abandoned by a range of species as rising temperatures wreak havoc on wetlands across the country.

Millions of birds pass through Albanian lagoons and estuaries during flights north every year, providing critical grounds for migratory species travelling between northern Europe and Africa. The Vain Lagoon covers more than 3,000 hectares (7,400 acres) stretched along the Adriatic Sea and is home to 196 species of migratory birds.

Long-legged flamingos with bright pink plumage, black-headed gulls, slender egrets, whistling ducks and teal with their raspy bird-song are among the species that frequent the area. But their numbers are in steep decline, according to experts. At least 40 percent of the total migratory bird populations were missing in January, the latest survey reported. For several years, the mallard duck has all but disappeared.

Scientists say that poaching, poisoning, collision

with power lines and loss of habitat kills migratory birds by the thousands every year. But spiking temperatures across the globe may prove even more disruptive. “There are many reasons, but above all it is global warming which has affected migration and breeding seasons,” said Kreshnik Toni, who oversees the protected nature reserves in Lezhe, which includes the Vain Lagoon. Local fishermen have also blamed warming waters for the overall decline in fish populations in the area, depriving the birds of vital food supplies.

“Water temperatures, rising sea levels and other factors have led to a decline in fish stocks,” said Nikolle Lucaj, who has been fishing commercially in the area for 35 years. Once abundant, the population of eels – a favoured prey for many bird species – in the area has dropped by as much as 80 percent, said Cel Arifi, who oversees fishing operations at the Vain Lagoon.

Invasive species like blue crab, which are native to the waters of the West Atlantic, have also threatened the biodiversity of wetlands in Albania. “They attack birds and they are very aggressive

even towards flamingos,” Lucaj told AFP. Pollution along with the degradation and destruction of the birds’ habitat by humans also poses a significant risk, warned Mirjan Topi, the author of the first field guide of birds in Albania.

A young stork carrying a GPS device that tracked its migration in real time died last year in Greece after hitting an electricity pole. Some birds, like white storks -- an endangered species -- spent less time in Africa this year only to return much earlier than expected to Albania, according to conservationists. Scientists have also been closely watching a pair of mated storks for the past seven years, with the couple nesting at the same spot in Albania.

“But another pair of storks preferred to spend the winter in Albania rather than take the risk of a long and perilous migration to Africa,” said Taulant Bino, who chairs the Albanian Ornithological Association (ASO). Worried Albanian ornithologists are also impatiently awaiting the return of an Egyptian vulture from Chad, which is equipped with a GPS device.

## Indigenous survivors pursue justice at genocide trial in Guatemala

GUATEMALA CITY: Jesus Tecu remembers wrapping his little brother in his arms in an attempt to protect the two-year-old from the horrors unfolding around them. It was March 13, 1982, and their village of Rio Negro — a Maya Achi community situated along a river in central Guatemala — was under attack. Guatemala was in the midst of a grisly civil war, and army and paramilitary forces had been stalking the countryside, razing Indigenous villages to the ground.

Already, Tecu’s parents had been among the dozens of Rio Negro residents slaughtered just one month prior in another village. But now soldiers and paramilitary patrolmen were in the town, and 10-year-old Tecu hoped to shield his brother from the killings and rapes they were witnessing. A patrolman decided to take Tecu to be his household servant, but he did not want to bring home a toddler too. Ignoring Tecu’s desperate pleas, the patrolman grabbed the two-year-old from his arms, smashed him against rocks and threw his body into a ravine.

An estimated 107 children and 70 women died in Rio Negro that day. Tecu and 16 other children survived only because they were chosen to be servants. Now, Tecu hopes a criminal case in Guatemala can offer a shred of accountability for atrocities thousands of Indigenous people experienced during that period.

“We have never stopped seeking justice,” said Tecu, who has spent the last 30 years as a human rights activist and advocate for community rebuilding. Manuel Benedicto Lucas Garcia, the former head of Guatemala’s army, is slated to stand trial for genocide. It is the latest chapter in the country’s fitful, stop-and-start efforts to achieve justice for the systematic killing of Guatemala’s Indigenous peoples. An estimated 200,000 people were killed during the war, which stretched from 1960 to 1996. More than 80 percent

were Indigenous Maya.

A United Nations-backed truth commission found that the military committed acts of genocide against five of the country’s 22 different Maya peoples between 1981 and 1983. That period overlaps with Lucas Garcia’s tenure as the chief of the general staff of the army. For seven months between 1981 and 1982, Lucas Garcia helmed Guatemala’s forces, as part of the administration of President Romeo Lucas Garcia, his brother. He now stands accused of genocide, crimes against humanity, forced disappearances and sexual violence.

But Tecu points out that time is running out for survivors to find justice. Decades have passed since the war’s end. Alleged perpetrators like Lucas Garcia, 91, are growing old — and in many cases, dying. “The importance of this case is that there is an intellectual author alive,” Tecu told Al Jazeera. “He needs to be held accountable for what happened with the deaths of so many children, women and men.”

Lucas Garcia, however, has denied wrongdoing. Rather, in a live video feed on March 25, he told Guatemala’s High Risk Court A, “I am a national hero”, though he later clarified he meant it in reference to accomplishments unrelated to the armed conflict. The March 25 hearing came after a year of postponements. Expecting the trial to start, genocide survivors had gathered outside the courthouse in Guatemala City to hold a ceremony in support of the proceedings. But one of Lucas Garcia’s two lawyers had announced her resignation just days ahead of the hearing, and then the other quit too — something critics believe was a tactic to further delay the trial.

Ultimately, Lucas Garcia accepted to use a public defender and was permitted to continue to attend hearings by video conference while recovering

from surgery. The trial’s start date was rescheduled for April 5, to give the new lawyer time to prepare. “We know these are all manoeuvres and strategies that Benedicto Lucas Garcia is using,” said Diego Ceto, a Maya Ixil leader providing support for witnesses and survivors during the trial. Speaking to Al Jazeera on the courthouse steps right after the postponement, Ceto explained that other defendants have likewise used stalling techniques to evade justice.

After all, one of Lucas Garcia’s co-defendants — a former head of military operations — died in 2020. And in January, another — a former head of military intelligence — was found mentally unfit to stand trial and will face separate proceedings. “They look for any justification to avoid the start of the trial,” Ceto said. “Nevertheless, as Ixils we will continue to insist on the pursuit of the truth.” The area Ceto is from is at the heart of the ongoing case. Prosecutors are focusing on crimes allegedly committed in the Maya Ixil region, 225km (140 miles) northwest of the capital.

More than 30 massacres were carried out under Lucas Garcia’s command and at least 23 Ixil villages were completely destroyed, the plaintiffs’ lawyers have said. The prosecution plans to present more than 80 experts and 150 witnesses as part of the trial. Evidence also includes forensic reports from exhumations and military documents lawyers say will help establish the genocidal intent behind the crimes. Atrocities in the Maya Ixil region also formed the centrepiece of another historic trial: that of the late military ruler Efraim Rios Montt, who took power from Romeo Lucas Garcia in a military coup.

In 2013, Guatemala made history when a court convicted Rios Montt of genocide. But the verdict was overturned soon after in a widely-questioned ruling, illustrating the difficul-

ties of prosecuting such a case. Rios Montt died before a partial retrial could end in 2018. On September 27 of that year, a tribunal ruled the military did commit genocide, but no one was convicted. Advocates, however, emphasise that the atrocities perpetrated by Rios Montt and others extended beyond the Mayan Ixil people, also targeting other Indigenous peoples, unions, clergy, student movements and other groups.

For example, in a separate case from 2018, Lucas Garcia was convicted of rape, forced disappearance, and crimes against humanity for actions taken against an activist and her family. He was sentenced to 58 years in prison. In June 2023, however, an appeals court ordered Lucas Garcia’s release, along with that of his co-defendants. However, he remained in custody due to a pretrial detention order in the genocide case. In another case that has yet to go to trial, Lucas Garcia is one of several former officials accused of crimes in connection with more than 550 human remains exhumed from mass graves on a military base.

“Right now we are on the Ixil case, but the destruction was not just in the Ixil area,” said Eleodoro Osorio, a representative of the Association for Justice and Reconciliation (AJR), an organisation of survivors and relatives from five of the hardest-hit Indigenous regions. Osorio’s group formed in 2000. That same year, it filed a formal legal complaint against Romeo Lucas Garcia for genocide, followed by one against Rios Montt the following year. Those legal actions eventually led to the prosecutions of Rios Montt and Benedicto Lucas Garcia, the army leader currently facing charges. AJR has joint plaintiff status in Lucas Garcia’s trial, allowing its own legal team to intervene on behalf of victims alongside the prosecution.

The group’s participation improves

the outlook for a successful conviction, according to Naomi Roht-Arriaza, a law professor at the University of California College of the Law in San Francisco. She pointed out that grassroots movements can help exert pressure on Guatemala’s legal system, which has seen the erosion of judicial and prosecutorial independence in recent years. “In the trials that we’ve seen in Latin America, that has been the case. It’s been the lawyers for the victims that have basically carried the lion’s share of the actual work,” said Roht-Arriaza, who was a legal adviser in a similar case brought against Rios Montt in Spain.

She sees the pursuit of justice in Guatemala as part of a broader regional phenomenon. “I think Latin America has been the leader in holding national trials around massive violations of human rights. So it’s not just Guatemala. It’s also Argentina and Chile, Colombia, [and] to some extent Peru,” she told Al Jazeera. The bulk of genocide prosecutions have been in international courts, not domestic ones, according to Mark Berlin, a political science professor at Marquette University in Wisconsin whose research focuses on accountability for human rights violations and war crimes.

He explained that “atrocious crimes” — including genocide and crimes against humanity — are usually committed by state actors, and states are unlikely to prosecute themselves. So when a country does prosecute genocide within its own borders, it is often the result of shifting power dynamics in the government itself. “It’s usually when a group that was previously targeted is able to come to power and use that power to then target for prosecution those who were previously in power,” Berlin told Al Jazeera, pointing to the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide as an example of that dynamic.

The situation in Guatemala was different, though, he said. “Given that those conditions do not exist in Guatemala, the odds were stacked against the possibility for Guatemala to be able to carry out genocide prosecutions.” Still, Berlin said other factors, including foreign assistance and forensic work, helped enable the genocide prosecutions to move forward.

“Guatemala did have kind of a perfect storm of other kinds of factors that did make it able to carry out these prosecutions,” he said. “One was — or continues to be — the existence of a very active and well-organised social movement, a very tenacious and persistent social movement that has been calling for accountability for decades.” But now that Lucas Garcia is about to be brought to trial, efforts to secure a conviction present new hurdles.

Prosecuting genocide is considered more complex than it is for other human rights violations and crimes against humanity, due to legal elements set out in the 1948 Genocide Convention and incorporated into Guatemala’s criminal code in 1973. “You have to demonstrate that the actor or the accused had the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a group of people,” said Geoff Dancy, a political science professor at the University of Toronto. “That is very difficult to demonstrate and has only been successfully demonstrated in a few cases, really.”

There have been about 105 trials involving genocide charges in 15 countries around the world, according to Dancy, who is a principal investigator in a research project compiling and analysing global data on transitional justice mechanisms, including human rights prosecutions. But even if prosecutors are not successful in convicting figures like Lucas Garcia of genocide, Dancy said the trials can still be useful tools for justice. — Aljazeera



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## Economic outlook and leaders legacy

**T**HE International Monetary Fund (IMF) has expressed interest in talks with Pakistan for a new loan program. During a recent media interaction, the IMF's Director of Communications Julie Kozack told the media that IMF authorities have expressed interest in a successor IMF-supported program to resolve Pakistan's fiscal and external stability challenges and lay the foundation for inclusive growth. According to her, the IMF stands ready to engage in program discussions, about which both parties have already reached a preliminary staff-level deal last month. The global lender praised Pakistan's central bank and outgoing caretaker government for strong program implementation and hoped the new government would continue its efforts to stabilize the economy.

Pakistan's current short-term loan program with the IMF ends this month and the government faces problems meeting the balance of payments in the midterm. Henceforth, the country and its leaders have no solution except to take new loans to pay the previous baggage of the global lenders. Presently, the country faces long-held problems of fiscal mismanagement, irrational policies, and poor governance that caused a vicious cycle of mass circular debt, economic slowdowns, and low foreign reserves that require frequent injections of foreign loans/ aids from the global lenders and friendly nations to provide temporary relief to the dying economy. Although the recent caretaker setup significantly contributed toward the rescue and revival of the sick economy, the country was due to receive the third and last tranche of existing standby agreements worth \$1.1 billion this month. Despite significant improvement and economic stability, the Shehbaz-led newly elected administration seeks cooperation from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and intends to initiate a new long-term program worth \$ 6 billion or more to meet its urgent payment needs and to put new vigor into the national economy which marks sustainable growth and bring prosperity to the nation. Presently, such an arrangement with the IMF is of utmost importance to consolidate the economic gains so far made by the South Asian economy in the past year. With the new IMF program, the international institutions and foreign investors will have more trust in the country and the government will be able to move forward on the national development agenda with more ease and confidence.

Historically, Pakistan's economic issues have always been an unceasing rigmarole of temporary successes and repeated failures that outcomes mostly ended up with zero-sum results for the country and the public as well. The country grappled with pressures on domestic prices, external and fiscal imbalances, exchange rates, and foreign exchange reserves. High inflation, global monetary tightening, climate-induced catastrophic flooding, and continued political uncertainty largely exacerbated the situation and conversely affected the government places aimed at consolidation of the economy. After two consecutive years of stellar growth, Pakistan's economy largely contracted in the previous fiscal year. Weak agricultural performance, supply chain disruptions, and reduced private consumption contributed to this decline. The PML-N leaders previously urged the nation to throw away the begging bowl and echoed the slogan for achieving self-sufficiency, now they sought a contradictory policy and jubilate approval of loans from the global lender. It is time that the nation and its leaders must self-assess and review their conduct and policies, which turned an affluent nation into a debt-ridden dying economy.

Currently, Pakistan's economic indicators present an encouraging future scenario. The UN Economic Survey forecasted a real GDP growth of 2 to 2.3% and headline inflation is expected to decline from 26% to 12.2 % in the next year and a half. Despite challenges, strategic planning and sustained reform commitment are crucial for overcoming the country's persistent economic issues and unlocking the hidden potential to achieve sustainable economic growth. Pakistan has a glorious human capital, a vast industrial base, and enormous untapped agri and mineral resources that need judicial use, transparent management, and strict regulation to convert weakness into success and translate opportunity into prosperity.

## Towery projects and public welfare

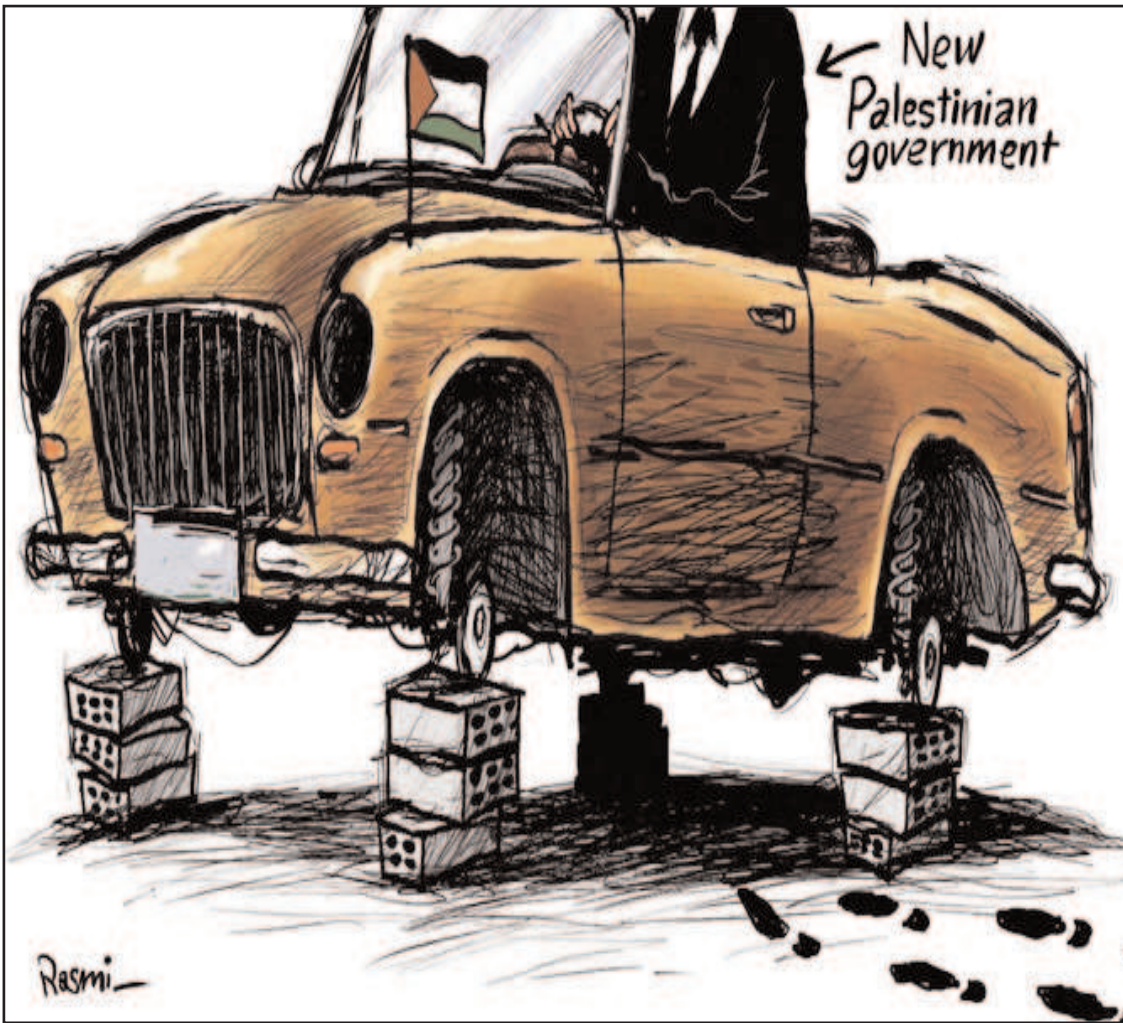
**S**ENIOR Minister of Sindh and Provincial Minister for Transport, Mass Transit, Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control, Sharjeel Inam Memon, has announced the launch of new transport projects immediately after Eid, following the instructions of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, to bring good news to the people. The second phase of the pink bus service for women will be initiated in Karachi and the People's Bus Service will be launched in Mirpurkhas to provide safe, cost-effective, and state-of-the-art travel facilities to the people. According to the Minister, the Sindh government will initiate a free shuttle service to connect the Orange Line BRT and Red Line BRT that will commence after the Eid.

The political work has largely influenced the governance in the center as well as the provinces. Amid nose down economy, skyrocketing inflation, and talks with the IMF for billions of dollars in loans, politically motivated towery projects are being inaugurated in Sindh, the KP, and Punjab to mark the pro-public legacies of the ruling parties. The research shows that the circular debt and fiscal losses of over 200 State-Owned Entities (SEOs) are the only issues that used to eat bulk resources regularly and kneel the country's economy to the ground. Yet, our leaders are recklessly investing bulk money in structuring more Public entities, mega projects, and mass transit system that neither survive nor can operate for a single day without subsidies from the government.

Doing business and running corporations do not come under the domain of the government, public leaders, and bureaucrats. The governments provide essential infrastructure, encourage businesses, and facilitate private investment in public projects to provide comfort to the public. The government monitors and regulates the function of private entities and ensures timely and cost-effective service delivery to the public. Unfortunately, political race persuades ruling parties to increase their public rating through symbolic artificial growth which often does not improve the living standard of the masses but tags gigantic achievements to the leaders essential to thrive in their politics. The current day economy does not afford such politically motivated schemes which are least beneficial to the public and more poisonous for the country. Therefore the self-claimed public leaders must review their legacies of free electricity, free atta, free travel, and free care, which are neither free nor a charity from any leader or the government but always paid from the national exchequer and taken back from the public through taxes, tariffs and tolls. It is a bitter reality that can't be denied.

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## Remedial action required

Wei Zongyou

**T**HE comprehensive confrontation between the Western world and Russia, which has found its latest expression in the Russia-Ukraine crisis, as well as the United States' escalation of its strategic pressure on China and accelerated steps to promote its "Indo-Pacific" strategy, have had significant impacts on the international order in at least three aspects.

First, the international political order is trending toward bloc confrontation. On the issue of the Russia-Ukraine crisis and sanctions against Russia, the West, led by the US, advocates for extremely harsh comprehensive economic sanctions against Russia and provides massive military aid to Ukraine. Under US pressure, a group of "like-minded" countries have formed closer political and security partnerships, emphasizing the competition and rivalry between "democracy and autocracy".

However, countries in the Global South, such as China, India, Brazil, South Africa and Indonesia, refuse to join the US-led economic sanctions against Russia, advocating for the right to maintain normal economic and trade relations with the country and seeking a cease-fire and political resolution to the crisis.

Most countries from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the African Union, the Gulf region, and Latin America reject the "democracy versus autocracy" narrative and a new Cold War, advocating for dialogue and engagement to reduce confrontation and ease international tensions. With the intensification of US-China strategic competition, the Russia-Ukraine crisis, and international economic inequality, the Global South has increasingly become an important international political force outside the West, promoting the multipolar development of the international system.

Second, the international economic order is trending toward fragmentation. The economic sanctions imposed by the US and its Western allies on Russia aim to cut the energy and trade ties between Russia

and Europe. At the same time, the Joe Biden administration has accelerated steps to advance its "Indo-Pacific" strategy, increase its technological blockades against China, and push for decoupling and reshoring of its manufacturing sector. In doing so, Washington has politicized and securitized economic and trade relations, and weaponized technological exchanges and supply chain dependencies, severely disrupting international economic exchanges and the division of labor in the global industry and value chains.

Moreover, the rise of economic nationalism and trade protectionism in the West has exacerbated the North-South development gap and international economic inequality. The energy and food crises, along with various trade protection measures and steps to build small circles in economy, trade and supply chains, have obviously led to more economic damages and a greater drag on the Global South than on developed countries. Especially, Washington has intensified its drive for the resurgence of its manufacturing sector, under slogans such as "America First" and "friendshoring", which have intercepted investments, production and manufacturing originally flowing to many developing countries, further exacerbating the development gap and international economic inequality. A study by the World Trade Organization shows that decoupling and the formation of small trade blocs increase trade costs. According to the study, if the global economy decouples, the public well-being in some countries could drop by up to 12 percent, with low- and middle-income regions hit the hardest.

Third, the international security order is trending toward militarization. The Russia-Ukraine crisis and the advancement of the US' "Indo-Pacific" strategy have triggered a new arms race in Europe and the Asia-Pacific, exacerbating regional and international tensions. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, global military spending

reached a record \$2.24 trillion in 2022, with European military spending surging by 13 percent and Asia's military spending also climbing. The substantial increase in military spending by European and Asian powers, together with the shocks from the Russia-Ukraine crisis and the Biden administration's formation of a small multilateral security network against China in the "Indo-Pacific" region, has greatly propelled the militarization and bloc confrontation in the international security order, casting a shadow over world peace.

To avoid the international order falling into possible disorder and to prevent a resurgence of the Cold War and bloc confrontation in international relations, it is necessary for the international community to work together to promote the establishment of an international order with lasting peace, inclusive cooperation and common prosperity.

First, it is important to seek a political resolution to end the Russia-Ukraine crisis as soon as possible. The prolonged crisis has not only led to huge losses both sides but also greatly intensified the confrontation between major powers, endangering global energy and food security. Currently, the Global South, including China, are actively seeking a political resolution, hoping to end the crisis and restore peace as soon as possible. This requires complying with the United Nations Charter and the basic principles of international relations, seeking common ground through dialogue, consultations and compromises, and finding a peaceful way out of the crisis. Moreover, as major external military and economic aid providers to Ukraine, the US and the European Union should also join the international community to promote peace talks and seek a political resolution to the crisis, allowing Europe to regain peace as soon as possible.

Second, it is important to strengthen engagement and strategic communication between Beijing and Washington to prevent a new Cold War. In recent

## Israel's lose-lose situation shows its crisis just beginning

Dr. Ramzy Baroud

**H**ISTORICALLY, wars unite Israelis. Not anymore. Not that Israelis disagree with Benjamin Netanyahu's latest war; they simply do not believe that the prime minister is the man who can win this supposedly existential fight. But Netanyahu's war remains unwinnable simply because liberation wars, often conducted through guerrilla warfare tactics, are far more complicated than traditional combat. Nearly six months after the Israeli attack on Gaza began, it has become clear that Palestinian resistance groups are durable and well prepared for a much longer fight.

Netanyahu, supported by far-right ministers and an equally hard-line defense minister, Yoav Gallant, insists that more firepower is the answer. Though the unprecedented amount of explosives used by Israel in Gaza has already killed or wounded more than 100,000 Palestinians, an Israeli victory - however it is defined - remains elusive. So, what do Israelis want and, more precisely, what is their prime minister's endgame in Gaza?

Major opinion polls since Oct. 7 continue to produce similar results: the Israeli public prefers Benny Gantz, leader of the National Union alliance, over the prime minister and his Likud party.

A recent poll conducted by the Israeli newspaper Maariv also indicated that one of Netanyahu's closest and most important coalition partners, Religious Zionist Party leader and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, is virtually irrelevant in terms of public support. If elections were to be held today, the far-right minister's party would not even pass the electoral threshold. Most Israelis are calling for new elections this year. If they were to receive their wish today, the pro-Netanyahu coalition would only be able to muster 46 seats, compared to its rivals with 64. And if the Israeli coalition government - currently controlling 72 of the Knesset's 120 seats - were to collapse, the right wing's dominance of Israeli politics would shatter, likely for a long time.

In this scenario, all of Netanyahu's political shenanigans, which have served him well in the past, would fall short of allowing him to return to power, keeping in mind he is already 74 years of age. A greatly polarized society, Israelis have learned to blame an individual or a political party for all of their woes. This is partly why election outcomes can sharply differ from one election cycle to the next. Between April 2019 and November 2022, Israel held five general elections, and the people are now demanding yet another.

The November 2022 elections were meant to be decisive, as they ended years of uncertainty and settled on the "most right-wing government in the history of Israel" - an oft-repeated description of Israel's modern government coalitions. To ensure Israel does not return to its previous indecision, Netanyahu's government wanted to secure its gains for good. Smotrich, along with National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, hoped to fashion a new Israeli society that is forever tilted toward their brand of religious and ultranationalist Zionism.

Netanyahu, on the other hand, simply wanted to hold on to power, partly because

he has become too accustomed to the perks of his office and also because he is desperately hoping to avoid jail time due to his several corruption trials. To achieve this, the rightist and far-right parties have diligently worked to change the rules of the game, curtailing the power of the judiciary and ending the oversight of the Supreme Court. They failed at some tasks and succeeded at others, including an amendment to the country's Basic Laws to curtail the power of Israel's highest court, such as its right to overturn the government's policies. Though Israelis protested en masse, it was clear that the initial energy of these protests, starting in January 2023, was petering out and that a government with such a substantial majority - at least, per Israel's standards - will not easily relent. Oct. 7 changed all the calculations.

The Palestinian Al-Aqsa Flood operation is often examined in terms of its military and intelligence components, if not usefulness, but rarely in terms of its strategic outcomes. It gave Israel a historic dilemma that even Netanyahu's comfortable Knesset majority most likely will not be able to resolve. Complicating matters, on Jan. 1, the Supreme Court officially annulled the decision by Netanyahu's coalition to strike down the power of the judiciary. This news, however significant, was overshadowed by the many other crises plaguing the country, mostly blamed on Netanyahu and his coalition partners. These included the military and intelligence failures leading to Oct. 7, the grinding war, the shrinking economy, the risk of a regional conflict, the rift between Israel and Washington and the growing global anti-Israel sentiment.

The problems continue to pile up and Netanyahu, the master politician of former times, is now only hanging by the thread of keeping the war going for as long as possible to defer his mounting crises for as long as possible. But an indefinite war is not an option either. The Israeli economy, according to recent data from the country's Central Bureau of Statistics, shrank by more than 20 percent in the fourth quarter of 2023. It is likely to continue its freefall in the coming period.

Moreover, the army is struggling, fighting an unwinnable war without realistic goals. The only major source of new recruits can be obtained from ultra-Orthodox Jews, who have been spared the battlefield to instead study in yeshivas. Seventy percent of all Israelis, including many in Netanyahu's own party, want the Haredi to join the army. The Supreme Court last week ordered a suspension of state subsidies allocated to these ultra-Orthodox communities. If this were to happen, the crisis would deepen on multiple fronts. If the Haredi lose their privileges, Netanyahu's government is likely to collapse; if they maintain them, the other government - the post Oct-7 war council - is likely to collapse as well. An end to the Gaza war, even if branded as a "victory" by Netanyahu, will only further the polarization and deepen Israel's worst internal political struggle since its founding on the ruins of historic Palestine. A continuation of the war will add to the schisms, as it will only serve as a reminder of an irremediable defeat.

## HK legislation balances rule of law and development

Tian Feilong

**T**HE recent implementation of the Safeguarding National Security Bill in Hong Kong, 26 years after the return of Hong Kong to the motherland, marks a significant milestone in bolstering the special administrative region's legal framework for safeguarding national security.

The belated piece of legislation, based on Article 23 of the Basic Law of Hong Kong, signifies the advancement of the "one country, two systems" framework and highlights the political achievements of "patriots governing Hong Kong". The Safeguarding National Security Bill, characterized by its scientific and democratic essence, will play a significant role in strengthening the rule of law in Hong Kong. The new law is comprehensive in that it integrates the substantive and procedural aspects of law as well as complements the National Security Law of

Hong Kong, and identifies the offenses punishable under Article 23. In fact, it is an institutional response to the decision made by the National People's Congress on May 28, 2020, and aimed at eliminating the new national security risks, thereby plugging the loopholes in the national security legal framework.

How to understand the importance of the law based on Article 23 and its role in strengthening the rule of law in Hong Kong? Some naysayers claim the new law undermines "one country, two systems", violates the Sino-British Joint Declaration and compromises judicial independence in Hong Kong, but these are unfounded criticisms. The new law is constitutional, based as it is on Article 23 of the Basic Law of Hong Kong, which means it advances, rather than undermining, "one country, two systems". As for the Sino-British Joint Declaration, it

was never the constitutional basis for the laws of the SAR; it cannot be used as a legal basis to interfere in Hong Kong's affairs either.

According to the Constitution of the country and the Basic Law of Hong Kong, the central government has the right to supervise local legislation in the SAR. Based on that, it strongly supported the implementation of the Safeguarding National Security Bill. Also, the new law is based on the lessons learned from and the latest legislative dynamics of national security laws in Western countries. If Western countries can update and strengthen their national security laws, why can't the SAR?

The bill's legitimacy is based on not only the direct authorization of Article 23 of the Basic Law but also the National Security Law of Hong Kong, the NPC's deci-

sion on May 28, 2020, and the NPC Standing Committee's interpretation of the National Security Law. Also, the bill is guided by the principle of "one country, two systems" in the new era, especially the highest principle of "national sovereignty, security, and development interests". Given its robust legality and rationality, the new law strengthens the rule of law in many ways.

First, by complementing the existing National Security Law and integrating it into Hong Kong's jurisdiction, the new law lays a solid foundation for the SAR's national security governance, and better safeguards national security and interests. Second, adopting an approach that is closer to common law practices and with its precise legal language, the new law facilitates proper understanding and application by Hong Kong's judicial system, fostering the development of

structured jurisprudence in matters of national security.

Third, the new law enhances legal deterrence against both local and external forces, reinforcing trust in the rule of law and boosting the confidence of global investors and tourists in Hong Kong's safety, freedom and development, thus consolidating its legal standing on the global stage and status as a global financial center. And fourth, the new law includes special mechanisms to safeguard judicial independence, countering undue external interference and upholding the authority of Hong Kong's judiciary.

As Hong Kong progresses toward achieving the goals outlined in the 14th Five-Year Plan, a stable and sustainable legal environment, enhanced by the law based on Article 23, will serve as the cornerstone for policy implementation and economic growth. People arguing that the new law is incompatible with the SAR's social

and business environment lack legal basis. The truth is that the new law adheres to existing human rights standards and legal principles, and is designed to operate in Hong Kong, which has an independent judiciary and is governed by rule of law. Like the National Security Law, the new law will also be implemented based in the SAR's legal system and gradually integrate with its common law tradition.

The new law, based on a strong legal foundation, fills the gaps in Hong Kong's national security legislation and aligns enforcement and judicial mechanisms. It will thus improve Hong Kong's national security governance and help build a new environment of prosperity and stability. Its enactment is a positive institutional development for the long-term commitment to "one country, two systems" and the unleashing of Hong Kong's new developmental potential.

The China Daily



# Why Judge Aileen Cannon is on thin ice in Trump’s Mar-a-Lago case

Norman Eisen, E. Danya Perry & Joshua Kolb

ON Tuesday, special counsel Jack Smith threw down the gauntlet in an extraordinary filing in the Mar-a-Lago prosecution, the case that centers around former President Donald Trump's retention of classified documents and his resistance to government attempts to recover them from his Mar-a-Lago estate.

Smith warned Judge Aileen Cannon that her approach to the law governing the handling of presidential records - and so Donald Trump's culpability in the case - was "fundamentally flawed" and threatened to seek rare pretrial review by the 11th US Circuit of Appeals. (Trump denies all wrongdoing.) Cannon is headed for the most trouble she has faced since that 11th Circuit reversed her twice in her original meddling in the government's pre-indictment investigation. If she does not course-correct, she's headed for another shelacking by the circuit - and possible removal from the case.

As a threshold matter we should be clear that there are alternative explanations for her pattern of decisions favoring Trump at the expense of the law. Some analysts believe she is acting out of bias for a president who appointed her. But she had a good reputation before this case and we cannot rule out other explanations for her bending over backwards (and bending the law) to appear fair to Trump.

But whatever the explanation, the fresh threat from Smith came after she got herself into a tangle when she ordered the parties to propose two versions of instructions for a jury on how to apply the Presidential Records Act (PRA) when the case goes to trial. That statute outlines the parameters between a president's official and personal records, and sets up processes for how official documents are preserved. Cannon provided the parties with two scenarios for the divergent jury instructions that

assumed legal conclusions about the PRA while simultaneously indicating that she had not made up her mind about which interpretation to apply and reserved the right to entertain counterarguments. She then asked both sides to fashion jury instructions based upon these two imaginary worlds.

We have never seen anything like this before in our collective half-century of legal practice. Judges are supposed to decide the law and to order parties accordingly, not invent fanciful alternative realities for everyone to react to. Putting that to the side, though, as Smith's new response makes crystal clear, Cannon's order suffered from an even more fundamental problem: Both options rest on badly misconceived assumptions about the law.

Cannon's first scenario would allow the jury to make a factual determination about whether a former president deemed a record to be personal or official under the PRA. That is nonsensical - presidents are not allowed to designate official records as personal ones, so there is no factual issue for a jury to resolve. A different set of laws govern the classification process and the rules for handling highly sensitive classified documents - not the PRA. They include Executive Order 13526. One of the authors of this column (Eisen) helped write that executive order. The 11th Circuit has already established that those rules fully apply to former presidents.

Cannon seems to think that the PRA somehow supersedes the executive order and the rest of federal law pertaining to the handling of classified materials. It does not. On the contrary, the PRA defines "personal records" as "all documentary materials ... of a purely private or nonpublic character which do not relate to or have an effect upon the carrying out

of the constitutional, statutory, or other official or ceremonial duties of the President." That cannot possibly include highly classified battle plans, nuclear secrets and the other official documents at issue in this criminal prosecution. That rules out Cannon's first hypothetical. But as Smith points out in his filing, the second alternative is just as bad. She made up a legal standard, asking both sides to assume that Trump could have deemed a record personal by simply not including it with the records transmitted to the National Archives and Records Administration at the end of his term. If this were true, the mere fact that Trump took the documents with him from the White House would inherently turn them into personal records.

Of course, Trump leaped at this interpretation, fashioning proposed jury instructions that would inevitably result in his acquittal. But, as Smith noted, this approach has no basis in the law - or the facts. Even Trump himself does not seem to have considered classified documents personal after he left the White House, as evidenced in an audio recording CNN obtained last year in which Trump, during a conversation at his Bedminster, New Jersey, estate in 2021, discussed documents remaining classified even though he took them with him upon leaving office. Smith hits this point hard, arguing that Trump's position that records are personal was "invented" when the controversy over the documents began to emerge in February 2022, over a year after Trump left the White House. Importantly, Smith asked Cannon to let both parties know "promptly" how she viewed the law. If she ultimately embraces the legal interpretation articulated in her proposed scenarios, Smith indicated he would strongly consider immediate appellate review. That shows how

seriously Smith views this issue and the fundamental error Cannon would be making.

Nor is all this an isolated mistake by Cannon. We are, for example, still waiting for the resolution of her baffling and potentially dangerous decision to release the identities of two dozen possible government witnesses. Smith has already taken the extraordinary step of asking Cannon to reconsider, pointing out that she made a clear error by applying the wrong legal standard and ignored the harmful consequences of such a disclosure. All of this comes after her two prior reversals by the 11th Circuit, which slammed Cannon's professed view that Trump deserves special treatment given his status as a former president. The conservative 11th Circuit lambasted Cannon for "carv[ing] out an unprecedented exception in our law for former presidents." But even now, Cannon appears to be continuing to confer extra legal considerations for the former president.

In the 11th Circuit, under rare circumstances, a judge can be removed from a case if their conduct creates "the appearance of impropriety or a lack of impartiality in the mind of a reasonable member of the public." She still has time to rectify this - by, for example, abandoning these incorrect jury instructions or granting Smith's motion to reconsider revealing witnesses' identities. But if she doesn't, and clings to even a few of these wrong decisions, Smith would be entitled to seek the review he threatens by the circuit and her removal. Ejecting her from the case would be extremely unusual and Smith does not mention seeking it in his papers. But neither does he rule it out, and Cannon's reasoning on the jury instructions and on exposing witnesses is lawless enough that, unless she reverses course, he may have no other choice.

CNN

# Ousting Boris was a huge mistake

Daniel Hannan

caused by the Ukraine war or the wokeness of government agencies that are outside ministerial control.

Sometimes, human nature being what it is, you even get blamed for what the opposition is doing. There is justified anger about the scarcity of housing, but an attempt to scrap a pointless EU rule that was holding up the construction of 100,000 homes was blocked by Labour in the House of Lords. There is anger, too, at the government's failure to get on top of illegal immigration, but every attempt to do so has been held up by Labour and LibDem peers. Such setbacks are inescapable in politics. They help explain why no party has won a fifth consecutive election since the Duke of Wellington was prime minister.

The putsch against Boris, by contrast, was an unforged error. Not all the putschists had dishonourable motives. Some MPs always regarded my former Telegraph colleague as unfit for office. Although I disagreed with them, I didn't for a moment question their sincerity. Others fell out with him on policy grounds - most significantly, the National Insurance rise. Again, I can't fault their motives, though I think they blundered. Still others never forgave him for Brexit. These are harder to excuse, since vindictiveness, quite apart from being ugly and debilitating, is pointless. Also hard to excuse are those who jumped on the bandwagon, spotting an opportunity for themselves. But the single largest group were those who blockheadedly thought that switching horses mid-race would increase their popularity. Does this really need spelling out? When a party sacks a sitting PM, voters feel taken-for-granted. MPs might think that Boodle is now obviously superior to Coodle that their constituents will thank them for making the change. But voters are likelier to see a Westminster cabal presenting them with someone they never asked for.

Which, of course, brings us to the putsch three months later - the October Revolution against Liz Truss. Again, the putschists had a variety of motives, some honourable and some less so. I was a Truss supporter, and I argued on this page that, if Tory MPs were unwilling to implement pro-growth policies, they should step aside and hand the keys to Keir Starmer. But that is

not what happened. Instead, the country got its fourth Tory prime minister in barely three years. Little wonder that voters, again denied an election, felt insulted. Take another look at those polls. How many Reform voters do you suppose could name the party's leader or more than two of its policies? The same question might be asked of Lib Dem voters.

Reform would no doubt boost its standing if it made Nigel Farage its leader. So would the Lib Dems if they replaced the forgettable Ed Davey with, say, Daisy Cooper. But these parties are not in office. To ditch a sitting PM yet again would be a final and decisive middle finger at the electorate. And for what? Even if there were an alternative candidate with higher poll ratings - which there is not - what would be the offer to the country? What new policies would transform the Tories' standing? It is all very well to say, as Reform does, "lower taxes, less wokery, fewer immigrants". But do you imagine that any Conservative MP disagrees with these things? The difference between the two parties is not so much one of ideology. Rather it is the difference between a pressure group that can say whatever it likes, and a governing party that must deal with an unresponsive civil service, a hostile judiciary and, not least, an electorate that, since the lockdown, has consistently demanded higher spending. In a parallel universe, one in which the pandemic had not happened, the Conservatives might have had time to reform the structures of the state, to assert parliamentary sovereignty and to cut spending. In that parallel universe, there would have been no partygate, and Boris would, I suspect, now be ahead in the polls.

But in our own universe, the Tories' best option is to shore up their support by cutting taxes (including scrapping inheritance tax), rejecting the carbon border adjustment mechanism, seeing through the Rwanda plan, finalising a free trade deal with India, toughening the rules on incapacity claims and using our post-EU freedoms to scrap needless regulations, lift tariffs and lower energy bills. Will these things be enough to win? It's a long shot. But one of the last cards the Tories have to play is that they represent constancy and experience in an uncertain world. Another leadership contest at this stage would wantonly toss that card away.

The Telegraph

# Climate crisis should be topping global electoral agenda

Ranvir S. Nayar

THE world faces two crucial tests this year. Both will impact large parts of the planet, if not the entire world, and also have the potential to dictate its future. And though it is not yet evident to most people, these two tests are also closely linked, so much so that at least one of them will have a significant bearing on the outcome of the other.

The first test, which is already underway, is that of global democracy, as some 4.1 billion people in 76 countries will this year take part in elections to choose those who will represent them and formulate laws and policies for the next four or five years.

These elections are spread across almost every part of the world and electorates, from the smallest to the largest democracies, should be using this powerful right to determine the future of not just their own cities, regions or countries, but the entire globe. Alongside relatively small nations like Taiwan and Estonia, elections will also grip three of the world's largest democracies: India, the EU and the US, which between them boast more than 2 billion people, or 25 percent of the global population. To the electorates and politicians in these nations, the outcomes of the polls will be crucial. Hence, the past few months have seen these societies increasingly preoccupied with the elections and their likely outcomes.

The second test that the world faces this year is even more potent and crucial than the test of democracies. While the elections will directly impact about half of the global population, the second test will not only impact every human being, but also every single form of life on Earth. This is the climate test and it is not a one-time exercise like casting a vote. Instead, it is a test that humanity has been facing and increasingly failing every

year for the past four decades. Carbon emissions, pollution and the rapacious degradation of natural resources have led to record levels of global warming, which has been having a severe impact on the Earth's climate, making it increasingly swing between extremes, from very hot to very cold and very dry to very wet.

Unfortunately, even though scientists have long been warning about the increasing threats the world faces due to climate change, human behavior has failed to adapt. Atmospheric carbon dioxide levels reached historic highs last May and are forecast to keep rising in 2024 - and at a much higher speed. Global temperatures were last year suspected to have crossed the threshold of 1.5 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial era, a red line that was drawn by the UN and underwritten by the Paris Agreement of 2015.

But with emissions rising and weather changes accelerating, it is predicted that, in the next five years - in time for many countries to have their next national elections - the face of the world and of humanity will no longer resemble what we see today. In the face of such a dire situation, one would have expected that 2024 would present a unique opportunity for world leaders to use their electoral campaigns and speeches to put climate change at the top of their political agendas. But so far, the climate crisis has remained absent from political discourses, whether in India, the US or even the EU, which has so far been the leader in terms of cutting carbon emissions.

By not talking of climate change, political leaders are shirking their responsibility to lead their nations toward the measures, which may be tough but are vital, that are

needed to at least cut the pace at which global warming is increasing. By keeping climate change out of their discussions during the campaign, they also show exactly how seriously they take the challenge of climate change. While most people around the world regularly get to hear from their leaders and often lose interest, elections present a unique opportunity, as the attention of voters is particularly focused on the political discourse and politicians' promises and vision for the country.

Instead of providing only a few dollars in cash as food or job subsidies to these people, politicians should create a policy to counter critical water shortages by giving tax breaks or subsidies for water harvesting and restoring natural water bodies or putting tax penalties on automobile and factory emissions. Societies would then gain far more through reduced health bills and the increased productivity of healthier and happier citizens. The only difference is that, unlike a \$10 bill put straight in citizens' pockets, they and their families might gain hundreds or even thousands of dollars over the course of a few years. Through these measures, both politicians and the people alike would attain what is good for them. It would cost the politicians nothing to link their measures to climate change and long-term national development.

By not focusing on climate change in their election campaigns, political leaders are doing themselves and the world a huge disservice. Elections, especially during a year like 2024, offer a unique opportunity to drive home the message of the impending climate disaster. Politicians should start by laying out how they, along with their citizens, plan to tackle it. Unfortunately, no leader has so far taken up the gauntlet.

# Demotion of Israel’s democracy a powerful warning

Yossi Mekelberg

THE findings of two recently published international reports are difficult to reconcile as far as Israel is concerned. One is the Economist Intelligence Unit's "Democracy Index" 2024 report, in which Israel was demoted from the top-tier "liberal democracy" category to an "electoral democracy." Not something to be proud of. On the other hand, to mark the International Day of Happiness - which, in case you have never heard of it, is celebrated annually on March 20 - the UN released its "World Happiness Report" and Israel was ranked fifth, sandwiched between several Nordic countries, led, as in the previous seven years, by Finland.

The Scandinavians always lead the way when it comes to national happiness. In my naivete, I was sure that, in the case of Israel, the survey must have been conducted before the Oct. 7 Hamas attack. But I was wrong. For obvious reasons, I am not suggesting a direct correlation between the two reports, but since the decline of Israeli democracy has been a long, gradual and relentless development - and has had more impetus since the sixth Netanyahu government was formed just over a year ago - one wonders from where this burst of happiness could possibly stem from.

However, putting aside for a moment the origins of Israel's happiness, which should be investigated separately, the confirmation of the steady deterioration of Israel's democratic system should be a source of worry for Israel's friends and allies abroad, to those who live under its occupation in the West Bank and Gaza and, above all, its own citizens. Israel has fallen out of the liberal democracy category for the first time

in more than 50 years, due largely to the fact that at the heart of the current coalition government are elected politicians who not only abuse the democratic system, but frankly despise the very creed of this system of liberal-democratic governance.

To be sure, the anti-democracy trend is rooted in social-political developments that took place long before the advent of the present far-right government led by a defendant in a corruption trial. Specifically, the report asserts that Israel lost its long-time status as a liberal democracy last year to what is a lesser model of democracy, an electoral one, due "to substantial declines in the indicators measuring the transparency and predictability of the law, and government attacks on the judiciary."

It lays the responsibility for that fairly and squarely on the coalition government's attacks on the judiciary and its legitimization and normalization of corruption. In addition, the report refers to the relations with the Palestinians and rightly asserts that the harsh practices of the occupation are not fitting for a liberal democracy.

From the very outset, as early as its Declaration of Independence, Israel has set itself the stiff challenge of becoming both Jewish and democratic. Reconciling these two elements has always been an extremely difficult but not impossible task. After all, Israel is the home of a big non-Jewish minority who are loyal citizens, but how can they identify with the Jewish character of the country, especially when it institutionally discriminates against them? And this is without even considering the question of what does a "Jewish state" mean in the first place?

Remaining a liberal democracy has proved to be a difficult task and some would say impossible since the war of 1967, which resulted in the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and the daily control of the lives of millions of Palestinians against their will, while depriving them of the most basic rights.

Israel under the "leadership" of Benjamin Netanyahu is on the path of driving a wedge between itself and its friends across the globe - and even more emphatically with the liberal-democratic world. This is not a coincidence, but rather a deliberate direction in which some within Israeli society and politics would like the country to head, either for ideological reasons or for their private vested interests; sometimes for both.

To begin with, many ultra-Orthodox Jews have long opposed the Zionist idea since they perceive it to be a secular ideology set against the basic tenets of Judaism. They have always aspired to a state ruled by Jewish jurisprudence, the "Halacha," not a liberal democracy. Add to that the far-right, Zionist, religious-messianic settler movement, which sees the democratic system, especially its independent judiciary, as a hurdle between them and their goals of marginalizing the Palestinians in Israel and annexing the West Bank, and you get a picture of the rapid disappearance of Israel as a liberal democracy.

Moreover, over the years, the political system has become increasingly corrupt. Netanyahu epitomizes this above any other politician, albeit he is far from alone in this. His hedonism has already landed him in court on corruption charges. And to escape justice he is leading a cynical assault

on the independence of the judiciary, while legitimizing convicted criminals, some of whom are also ultranationalists, by allowing them to serve in his government. He has corrupted and distorted the entire political system. It will take years, and considerably more than one term, of a diametrically opposite kind of leadership to heal the wounds inflicted on the body of democracy by Netanyahu governments over the years.

Electoral democracy is hardly a democracy if the principles of the separation of powers and checks and balances are not kept to. That can only lead to authoritarianism and deeply ingrained corruption, which is the direction in which Netanyahu is taking Israel. Had it not been for the protest movement throughout last year, Israel would have been way further down this dangerous path by now. Electoral democracy allows free and (almost) fair elections but uses the government machine to distort them and, when elections are won, those elected attempt to use their full term to govern without transparency and without accountability in the hope of perpetuating their time in power.

Israel cannot afford to be heading in this direction and the Economist Intelligence Unit report is a powerful warning to Israelis. Much of the support their country has enjoyed from the democratic world, despite its many transgressions from what is expected of a liberal democracy, was due to its being perceived as one. However, between the assault on the independence of the judiciary and the way that Israel is conducting the war in Gaza, this perception is looking more and more outdated - and this is happening in front of a watching world.

# Is Syrian regime starting to stand up to Iran?

Khaled Abou Zahr

IRANIAN Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei this week asserted that Israel would face consequences for its attack on the Iranian Embassy compound in Damascus that claimed the lives of two senior Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps generals. President Ebrahim Raisi also vowed that Iran would retaliate and "punish" Israel. This was followed by the IRGC and its proxies across the region, which promised more deadly strikes against Israel.

Monday's attack, coupled with the heightened rhetoric and the situation in Gaza, has sparked fears within the international media and diplomatic community of a broader conflict in the region. But is this really about to happen?

Despite the promises of Iranian officials, I doubt the Iranian response will be so vehement as to rock the rules of engagement between the two countries. Even if this was the first time Israel has hit the Iranian Embassy in Syria, these targeted assassinations appear to fall within the agreed playbook between the two regional powers. The target of the attack was Brig. Gen. Mohammed Reza Zahedi, who was a commander in the IRGC's Quds Force responsible for its role in Syria and Lebanon.

Yet, this strike should also raise two questions. What is the IRGC preparing in Syria and has it changed its objectives since the war in Gaza started? And maybe more importantly, how did Israel know when to hit its target, especially as it was known that Zahedi

traveled in secret? Just two months ago, the IRGC reduced its deployment of senior officers in Syria due to Israel's deadly airstrikes and instead relied more heavily on its allied militias. This claimed shift came after a spate of attacks by Israel that killed several IRGC members, including high-ranking commanders.

Call me a conspiracy theorist, but when such strikes take place, one has to wonder where the information came from. It has always been the case - whether it was the 2008 killing of Imad Mughniyeh, Hezbollah's international operations chief, or Qassem Soleimani, the head of the Quds Force, in 2020 - that the information comes from within.

Mughniyeh was killed by a bomb planted in a spare tire on an SUV in Damascus. The bomb was apparently triggered remotely by Mossad agents, instantly killing the target. Media reports indicated that a team of CIA spotters was tracking his movements in Damascus but they could not intervene in the operation executed by Mossad. This took place amid accusations of links between Hezbollah and the Syrian regime over the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

Today, the Syrian regime is in the middle of an ambiguous situation and it knows it will not regain its legitimacy while staying under the thumb of the Iranian regime. Worse, it cannot accept having a proliferation of militias that under-

mine its authority. Hence, the increase in assassinations could mean that either the Syrian regime is looking to tame the Iranian plans indirectly or, at a less strategic level, the Syrian security services are leaking information for financial or other benefits. For Tehran, in the short term, the result is the same.

There is also clarity and a strategic position in the fact that Iran has stood silent in the face of numerous Israeli strikes in Syria and Lebanon. It has, for decades, worked with great focus on developing a military infrastructure and logistics that extend to Syria and Lebanon through Iraq. This Israeli strike, like the previous ones, will not create a different outcome and will not lead to an escalation or broadening of the war for these reasons. We can call it the rules of engagement between these countries, but it is starting to look like a Tehran-Tel Aviv tango in the land of the Levant.

Despite the war in Ukraine - and only two days after the Israeli attack on the Iranian Embassy compound - Russia's Defense Ministry this week deployed more forces to the Syrian-controlled areas of the Golan Heights. These soldiers, from Russia's military police, aim to reduce tensions and monitor the ceasefire in Syrian provinces like Quneitra and Deraa. Russian observation posts are positioned above Syrian military posts to oversee potential provocations.

However, as we now all know, despite their interests being aligned

with the Assad regime, Russia and Iran are also in competition for influence and leverage on Syrian soil. This Iranian retrenchment is a tactical win for Russia, as well as the Assad regime, which could not agree with Iran's deployment of militias like in Lebanon, Iraq and elsewhere.

One striking difference from 2008 and the targeting of Mughniyeh is the US position. Judging by the current administration's response of profuse and obsequious justifications to Tehran that it was not involved, something has indeed changed. Moreover, current and former US officials have expressed concerns over Israel's airstrike, fearing that it could escalate tensions in the region and lead to retaliatory strikes. This is the first time that, despite the IRGC being designated as a foreign terrorist organization, the US has not granted Israel the gift of silence. If we read between the lines, it is perhaps even going so far as condemning this action.

There is no doubt that Iran is not only suffering on the ground in Syria, but it is also suffering from a huge deficit in terms of image and status since the Gaza war started. Despite the visit of leaders of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad to Iran last week, many consider Tehran to be standing on the sidelines and leaving its proxy militias to focus on wreaking havoc, rather than getting involved in a direct war with Israel, as its raison d'etre claims. Yet, this time, the biggest challenge might not be Israel but a less docile regime in Syria.





# Gold rates up by Rs 4,900 to Rs 245,100 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold witnessed an increase of Rs 4,900 and was sold at Rs 245,100 on Saturday as compared to its sale at Rs 240,200 on the previous day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold increased by Rs4,200 and was sold at Rs 210,134 against the sale price of Rs205,932 and 10 gram 22 karat gold also increased to Rs192,622 from Rs 188,772, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs 2,650 and Rs 2271.94 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$44 to 2,350 from \$2,306, the Association reported.

## FPCCI for increasing tax-to-GDP ratio by broadening of tax base

LAHORE (APP): Federation of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) President Atif Ikram Sheikh here Saturday called for broadening of tax base so as to increase the tax-to-GDP ratio.

He said, "While FPCCI supports the efforts to increase tax-to-GDP ratio, it has to be achieved through broadening of tax base and simplification of the taxation system – rather than further squeezing the already filers."

The only pragmatic approach to achieve tax-to-GDP ratio of 15 percent in the next five years is to add 1.5 to 2 million new taxpayers in the tax-net, he added. Atif Ikram Sheikh maintained that the tax and FBR reforms should not be

attempted in a consultation-less manner as these kinds of efforts have been unsuccessful multiple times in the past, and the successive governments had resorted to measures of further increasing the taxes on existing filers.

FPCCI President suggested a three-pronged strategy to broaden the tax base: (i) end-to-end digitalization of the taxation system to bring transparency and fairness (ii) FBR reforms in consultation with the business community in light of the ground realities (iii) an end to maladministration & harassment of trade & industry at the hands of taxation machinery.

FPCCI Chief stated that the business, industry and trade community understand the need for the country to

enter into a new, expanded and longer-term IMF programme; which would entail, as per past practice, imposition of more taxes – however, FPCCI wants to make it clear that last few years have been unprecedentedly difficult for trade and industry due to COVID, floods, cost of doing business, exchange rate volatility; and, incremental rounds of increase in electricity, gas and petroleum prices.

Atif Ikram Sheikh apprised that the core inflation has come down to 12.8 percent and headline inflation recorded at 20.7 percent in the month of March 2024; which is the lowest in 22 months; and, the trajectory is categorically showing a downward trend for the months to come.

## Commerce Minister, HanGeng discuss Investment opportunities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer (CEO) HanGeng Trade & Yuanhua Industrial, Andy Liao here on Saturday called on Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan to discuss foreign investment opportunities in Gawadar and ways to expand exports.

They explored Gawadar's potential for economic growth and collaboration between foreign companies and local authorities, said a press statement issued by commerce ministry.

Minister Khan assured Liao of the full government support for investment and trade initiatives, emphasizing collaboration for mutual economic prosperity.

## DPO visits SCCI

SIALKOT (APP): District Police Officer (DPO) Sialkot Muhammad Hassan Iqbal visited the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here today.

DSP Rana Muhammad Jameel and Security Incharge Inspector Hafiz Muhammad Saeed were also with him. President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Abdul Ghafoor Malik, Senior Vice President (SVP) SCCI Wahub Jahangir and Vice President SCCI Amer Majeed Sheikh welcomed the distinguished guests. During the meeting held here at the SCCI, there was a discussion about character-wise screening of the employees working in the factories of Sialkot.

DPO Sialkot Muhammad Hassan Iqbal said that our aim is character-wise screening of the employees working in the factories so that action against the criminal elements can be improved.

He said that employees working in the factories who have come here from other cities will also be checked whether they are not involved in any crime in their native area.

President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) Abdul Ghafoor Malik agreed with DPO Sialkot Muhammad Hassan Iqbal and said, "This is a good practice and we should conduct character wise screening of the employees working in our factories."



ISLAMABAD: CEO of HanGeng Trade & Yuanhua Industrial Andy Liao, calls on Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, to discuss foreign investment opportunities in Gawadar and ways to expand exports.

## No delay in wheat procurement target decision, clarifies finance ministry

ISLAMABAD (APP): In response to reports appearing in a section of the press, the Finance Ministry here on Saturday clarified that there had been no delay in the decision-making process regarding wheat procurement targets.

"News stories appearing in a section of the press have given the misleading impression that ECC has delayed the decision on wheat procurement targets. There is no truth to these assertions," the ministry said in a statement issued here. The Economic Coordination of the Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet discussed the matters related to wheat procurement in its meeting

held on April 4, 2024 and after considering the views of the relevant federal ministries, the members of the ECC felt that it would be advisable to include the provincial governments in the deliberations, as they would be responsible to implement the decisions on the ground.

The meeting was therefore reconvened on April 5 and representatives of all the provincial governments participated, the statement added. They provided updates to the committee on the latest situation relating to procurement of wheat in their respective areas and apprised it of their requirements for bank credit for the purpose.

The committee after detailed deliberations approved the procurement target proposed by the Ministry of Food Security and the provinces and the cash credit limits required for the purpose.

The relevant departments did not suggest any enhancement or reduction in targets presented by the Ministry of Food Security, neither did the ECC approve any such change.

The government of Punjab informed the Committee that it was closely monitoring the wheat situation in the province and had initiated procurement process. They further informed that the provincial gov-

ernment would continue to intervene to make sure that farmers are able to sell their produce at the support price level. The ECC in its inaugural meeting resolved that all the matters brought before it would be deliberated in detail with a view to make informed decisions, instead of rushing through and rubber-stamping hasty measures.

The Committee would also continue to ensure that all the stakeholders are onboard before arriving at decisions which have far reaching implications. The detailed discussions during the meetings of the ECC on April 4 and 5, 2024 are reflective of this policy.

## PQAMC announces dividend of Rs 1.7635 per unit

KARACHI (APP): Pak-Qatar Asset Management Company Limited (PQAMC), a leading pure Islamic asset management company in Pakistan, has recently announced the monthly dividend of Pak-Qatar Monthly Income Plan (PQMIP), which is one of the plans under PQAMC's 'Shariah-Compliant Income Fund'.

As per the PQAMC website, the announced dividend is PKR 1.7635 per unit. PQAMC is rated AM2 with 'Stable Outlook' by PACRA - the internationally acclaimed

rating agency. The PQMIP plan is also rated A+ with a 'Stable Outlook' by PACRA.

The Chief Executive Officer of Pak-Qatar Asset Management Company Limited – Farhan Shaukat has approved the distributions of dividends for the month of March 2024, under the authority delegated to him by the Board of Directors.

Farhan further stated that the above entitlement will be distributed to the unit-holders, whose names appear in the register of unit-holders at the

close of business on March 28, 2024." Pak-Qatar Group has a vision to add value to the economy of Pakistan by making valuable investments and creating innovative and Halal financial ventures and services for sustainable growth.

The stakeholders can also review the performance of Pak-Qatar Monthly Income Plan on the website of the Mutual Funds Association of Pakistan (MUFAP) - the trade body for Pakistan's multi billion rupees asset management industry.

## 32nd international Children Health Conference

### F.P Report

KARACHI: Every sound and action carries weight, thus raising awareness about the nature of each issue stands as the initial stride towards its eradication. Across the globe, people encounter health challenges. Only with collective efforts, we can overcome these challenges.

These views were expressed by Ms. Sadia Rashid, President HFP, at 32nd international Children Health Conference, held online under the aegis of Hamdard Public school Karachi and HFP on the topic of "My health, my right" on the occasion of World Health Day on April 7, 2024, presided over by Dr. Luo Dapeng, world Health Organization (WHO) representative in Pakistan. Prof. Dr Raza-ur-Rehman, Dean of Faculty at Hamdard University attended the conference as chief guest. Dr. Sara Salman Zuberi, Head, WHO Sub-Office, Sindh was the guest of honour.

She further said for the past 32 years, Hamdard Foundation Pakistan has consistently hosted the

International Children Conference annually. This initiative was inaugurated by Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said to foster the mental and intellectual growth of youth, equipping them for forthcoming challenges. Guided by his vision, Hamdard Pakistan remains dedicated to advancing health and education in the country. Health constitutes a fundamental entitlement for every individual.

Dr. Luo Dapeng in his presidential address said that every year, the World Health Organization (WHO) sheds light on various medical challenges confronting the global community. This year's theme aims to globally advocate for the significance and benefits of prioritizing individual health. World Health Day, observed annually on April 7th, is an occasion for the WHO to enhance public awareness regarding human health and foster endeavors toward establishing healthier environments for populations worldwide. The WHO manifesto underscores the organization's commitment to safeguarding human health and advancing global health initiatives. It emphasizes the ini-

tial strides made in healthcare and hygiene globally. Furthermore, it stresses the imperative of recognizing health risks stemming from environmental changes and pollution, urging the younger generation to address environmental concerns. The commendable efforts of the Hamdard Foundation Pakistan in Pakistan's healthcare and education sectors are noteworthy. It is envisaged that young people will assume a pivotal role in disseminating awareness within their communities through this platform. Dr. Luo commended the speeches delivered by young speakers at the conference and congratulated Ms. Sadia Rashid on holding such wonderful Conference.

Dr. Raza-ur-Rahman said that mental health often lacks the attention in health discussions it deserves, but these young speakers' focus on mental wellbeing was commendable. The interconnectedness of our body, thoughts, mind, society, and environment, and added that negative societal influences can detrimentally affect on health. Thus, as a nation, comprehensive measures must be implemented to

enhance our overall wellbeing. He commended the children's speeches, highlighting that the conference transcends mere gathering or showcasing of talent; rather, it provides a platform for free discourse on specific topics. Participation in such conferences bolsters children's confidence and enriches their personalities.

Sara Salman Zuberi said that Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said established several distinctive traditions, which the Hamdard organization continues to uphold. One significant tradition is the hosting of the International Health Conference aligned with the theme designated by the World Health Organization on World Health Day. Pakistan's efforts to advance health have garnered appreciation from the World Health Organization. Ms. Sadia Rashid has gracefully maintained this cherished tradition of Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said, organizing the conference each year on World Health Day with utmost dignity.

During the conference, young delegates delivered informative speeches and shared insightful perspectives on the topic at hand. Representing Pakistan, the United States of America, Australia, Afghanistan, and Sri Lanka, they contributed to the discussion. Young speakers emphasized the significance of cultivating a culture of integrity and raised concerns about the presence of the polio-virus in Pakistan and Afghanistan, despite its eradication elsewhere worldwide. A delegate from Afghanistan urged Pakistan to invest in the healthcare sector in Afghanistan.

FAISALABAD (APP): Divisional Commissioner Madam Silwat Saeed had directed the deputy commissioners, assistant commissioners and price control magistrates to evolve a comprehensive strategy to control price hike during last days of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak and Eid days across the division.

During a meeting, she said that the government was committed to providing maximum relief to the masses by ensuring the provision of daily-use items at fixed rates.

She said that some greedy elements increase the prices of kitchen items including chicken meat, onion, potato, tomato, etc. at their own to mint money. Therefore the price control magistrates should keep vigil eye on the profiteers and take strict action against overcharging.

She said that performance of price control magistrates would also be monitored and stern action would be taken against those who failed to accomplish their assignments.

During meeting, the commissioner was briefed that the price control magistrates conducted 10927 inspections in different bazaars and markets across the division and imposed a total fine of Rs.642,500/- on

335 shopkeepers over profiteering and 321 shopkeepers over non-display of rate lists at conspicuous places in their shops and stalls during last 24 hours. The magistrates also sealed one shop and arrested 7 shopkeepers on sheer violation of price control mechanism during this period whereas 58 shopkeepers were nabbed on violation of Ehtiram-e-Ramzan Ordinance from the division.

## LCCI for resolving Kiryana merchants' problems on priority

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) has demanded of the authorities concerned to resolve the problems of Kiryana (grocery) Merchants on priority basis. The LCCI President Kashif Anwar made this demand after being briefed in this regard by a delegation of the Central Kiryana Association

Lahore during its visit to Lahore Chamber here on Saturday. The delegation was headed by the President of Kiryana Merchants Association Lahore Tahir Saqlain while other members included Patron-in-chief Naji Butt, chairman Rana Mansoor, Secretary General Maqsood Rehman Bhatti, Chaudhry Liaquat Ashraf Tabani, Khalid Rasheed and Mian Shakeel.

The delegation informed the LCCI

President about the issues being faced by the Kiryana Merchants, saying that no representative of Central Kiryana Merchants Association is invited in the meetings in which the Director General Food or DC formed the rate list and related policies. They requested the LCCI President to take up this with the Punjab government. They alleged that magistrate's private force raids on Kiryana Merchants and harasses the traders.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar said that Lahore Chamber raises its voice for the rights of all businessmen whether they are members of Lahore Chamber or not. If they are entrepreneurs, Lahore Chamber is with them in every way.

He apprised the delegation about the facilities for the LCCI members and

assured them that Lahore Chamber would raise voice at every forum. He said that the problems of Kiryana Merchants should be solved on priority basis. The delegation further informed the LCCI President that the civil administration and police staff harass the shopkeepers under the guise of business timings, which should be addressed.

They said that FBR has recently started the process of compulsory registration of retailers. Kiryana Merchants want to pay tax, but awareness workshop or seminar on this issue must be organized. In this regard, Kashif Anwar said that the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry has already raised this matter at the relevant forums and given its feedback to the government on SRO 457(I)/2024 dated March 30.

He said that the trade policy/scheme must not be implemented without awareness. The LCCI President proposed that a single page simplified Tax Return may be introduced for the retailers and shopkeepers. Furthermore, for ensuring consistency and continuity of policies, the time frame of this scheme must be for at least five years. He was of the view that the government must encourage the retailers and facilitate them to the maximum extent by introducing a simplified Tajir Dost Scheme in accordance with the suggestions of LCCI. This will help in broadening of tax base by encouraging more retailers to register under this scheme.

### COURT NOTICE

In The Court of Shadab C.J-IX Kohat

Suit no.108/1 Date of hearing, 08-04-2024  
Titled:- Yasir Ibrar Vs Excise and Taxation (etc) Notice against:- (2) Mashood Aslam Son of Muhammad Aslam R/o Mir Poor Khas A.J.K presently R/o(now in Abroad 10 Somerville Road Small Health, Birmingham ,B10 9EL, West Midlands United Kingdom) (Defendant) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a civil suit against you Defendant in which date of hearing 08-04-2024 is fixed for your appearance Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you Defendant is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 08-04-2024 otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law.order Issued on,26-03-2024 (Court of CJ-IX Kohat)



LAHORE: Waomen selecting Artificial jewelry in connection with preparations for Eid-ul-Fitr.





In brief

Tickets for T20I series sold out

DUBLIN (Agencies) : Pakistan's upcoming tour to Ireland drew massive attention from cricket fans as all the tickets for the three-match T20I series have been sold out. Taking to X, formerly Twitter, Cricket Ireland confirmed that their home series against Pakistan was a sell-out. "And that's a sell out! Thanks for your support. Further men's and women's home internationals will be announced shortly," the cricketing body stated. The Pakistan Men's Cricket Team will tour Ireland for a three-match T20I series in May 2024. All three matches will be held at Clontarf in Dublin on 10, 12 and 14 May 2024 and will start at 3 PM local time. The three-match away series will serve as a stepping stone for the Green Shirts to boast their preparations for this year's ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 in the West Indies and the United States of America (USA). Notably, Pakistan and Ireland are placed in the same group of the mega event and are slated to lock horns on June 16 at Central Broward Park & Broward County Stadium in Lauderdale, Florida. Notably, the Pakistan cricket team participated in a two-week long physical fitness camp, organised in collaboration with the Pakistan Army, to prepare for the upcoming five-match home T20I series against New Zealand. New Zealand are slated to reach Pakistan on April 14 for the crucial series, leading to the ICC Men's T20I World Cup. Rawalpindi's Pindi Cricket Stadium will host the first three T20Is between Pakistan and New Zealand on 18, 20 and 21 April. The two sides will then travel to Lahore to lock horns in the remaining two T20Is on 25 and 27 April, respectively.

'It feels like you get scared to play'

MANCHESTER (Agencies): World number one Ronnie O'Sullivan said he has gone through a period of feeling scared to play snooker as he reached the Tour Championship final. The seven-time world champion hit three century breaks as he beat Gary Wilson 10-7 on Friday in Manchester. But he revealed he felt like he has been suffering from the "yips", and has tried to "change his mindset". "I'm just trying really hard to not get down on myself," said the 48-year-old, who has won five events this season. O'Sullivan hit breaks of 102 and 110 to turn a 2-0 deficit into a 4-2 lead but fellow Englishman Wilson compiled runs of 83, 84, 82 and 96 to level at 7-7. However, he barely got a look-in from there as O'Sullivan won the final three frames, helped by visits of 98 and 129. O'Sullivan, who faces Mark Allen or Mark Williams in Sunday's final, told ITV4: "It's not easy. Maybe two weeks ago I'd have mentally thrown the towel in, just because I wasn't flowing. "But I just thought, 'just keep going, keep going' and just focus on some of the positives that might be round the corner." He says he has been speaking regularly with psychiatrist Steve Peters, adding: "I've just got to commit to it now for a good year to try to get myself out of this sort of hole I've got myself in mentally with the obsession of the game, tinkering. "I know I'm never going to stop tinkering, but I have to somehow get sort of my head strong enough to be able to deal with it and not go too deep into that horrible murky world that it is.



LONDON: Erling Haaland of Manchester City during the Premier League match between Crystal Palace and Manchester City at Selhurst Park.

Yousaf, Razzaq likely to be national team's head coaches

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has decided to appoint local coaches for the upcoming T20 series against New Zealand. Sources within the PCB revealed that Muhammad Yousaf is being considered for the role of head coach for the national team. Muhammad Yousaf, a former captain, currently serves as the head coach of the national under-19 and under-10 teams. His extensive experience both as a player and a coach makes him a strong contender for the coveted position.

In addition, the sources hinted at the possibility of Abdul Razzaq being appointed as the bowling coach for the national team. The PCB is also contemplating appointing South Africa's former batsman Gary Kirsten as the head coach for the white ball (ODI and T20I) and Australia's former fast bowler Jason Gillespie as the head coach for the red ball (Test). According to sources, the PCB had issued an advertisement for the appointment of coaches. It sought applications till April 15.

Sources said the PCB would announce the appointment of both the coaches after completion of the formalities. After completing formalities by April 15, the PCB would make a formal announcement. On the other hand, a search for the assistant coach of the Pakistan cricket team has also been started for which the cricket board has given an advertisement. The aspirants can submit applications till April 20. The assistant coach will assist the coaches with red and white balls.

Bismah Maroof, Ghulam Fatima received injuries in car accident

PESHAWAR (APP): The Pakistan Cricket Board Saturday provided an update regarding two of its women players, Bismah Maroof and Ghulam Fatima, who were involved in a minor car accident on Friday night, are currently under care of Pakistan Cricket Board Medical team. It has also confirmed that despite sustaining minor injuries, both players received immediate first aid and are currently in stable condition. Both players are part of the probables attending a training camp for the upcoming series against the West Indies, scheduled to begin on April 18.

Kopecky wins thrilling women's Paris-Roubaix



ROUBAIX (AFP): World champion Lotte Kopecky won a six-rider dash for the line to claim the women's Paris-Roubaix cobbled classic on Saturday in a nail-biting finale. The Belgian came from the back of the field on the final corner after half a dozen riders had entered the Roubaix velodrome ahead of the pack after a 148.5km ride from Denain. The course included 29.2km of bone-shaking cobbles along the old mining roads of the Picardy region bordering Belgium. Italian Elisa Balsamo of Lidl-Trek was second after leading most of the two laps of the velodrome, while Briton Pfeiffer Georgi overtook Marianne Vos on the line to steal in for third. Rain during the week combined with sunshine on the day made the road surfaces slick, with huge puddles in some sections and some riders flying off the road into ditches. This was the fourth women's edition of the so called 'Hell of the North', with the 121st men's race over 260km taking place on Sunday.

De Bruyne double leads City to emphatic win at Palace

LONDON (Reuters): Kevin de Bruyne struck twice to inspire Manchester City to a dominant 4-2 win at Crystal Palace on Saturday and move the champions level on points with Liverpool at the top of the Premier League table. Stunned by conceding an early goal scored by Palace striker Jean-Philippe Mateta, De Bruyne equalised with a superb shot and after second-half goals by Rico Lewis and Erling Haaland the Belgian midfielder added his second. "It's just like every other title race. We have to win every game," the 19-year-old Lewis told TNT Sports. "There's three teams in it and we have to be the strongest team." Odsonne Edouard grabbed a late consolation for the hosts but with seven games remaining City are level on 70 points with Liverpool and two ahead of Arsenal, although both

their title rivals have a game in hand. Mateta had shocked the travelling City supporters with a goal in the third minute, but De Bruyne, who along with Haaland was rested for Wednesday's 4-1 win over Aston Villa, levelled in the 13th minute with an inch-perfect finish that had manager Pep Guardiola blowing the Belgian kisses. "I just try to be more of an example with the way I am on the pitch," De Bruyne said. "I won't be the person to tell others how to live their lives but I try to show on the pitch." Lewis put the visitors ahead soon after the interval, Haaland bagged his 19th goal of the season in the 66th minute from close range and De Bruyne netted his 100th goal for City to keep them well in the hunt for a fourth successive league title. "The main message was to keep on going," Lewis said.

"The chances would come. We needed to get into the box and that's what we did. "As a kid you dream of scoring a goal and celebrating. I want to get more goals and assists." City keeper Stefan Ortega made an important contribution late in the first half, dribbling the ball out of danger when Mateta nearly got to a reckless pass back from Rodri. "We watched City and how they pressed high and I scored early against one of the biggest teams in the world," Mateta told TNT. "In the second half they came back strongly. They are a good team." Jordan Ayew squandered a good Palace chance in the first half after picking Rodri's pocket and hammering the ball against the crossbar. Arsenal travel to Brighton & Hove Albion later on Saturday and Liverpool go to Manchester United on Sunday.

Glamorgan's Northeast hits Lord's record 335 not out

LORD'S (Agencies): Glamorgan captain Sam Northeast hit the highest first-class score recorded at Lord's as he made an unbeaten 335 against Middlesex on day two of the new County Championship season. Northeast, 34, overtook Graham Gooch's 333 for England against India in 1990. The Englishman put on an unbeaten stand of 299 with Colin Ingram (132 not out) in Glamorgan's total of 620-3 declared. Northeast's innings is also the highest Championship score ever recorded in April. Having come to the crease on Friday morning with Glamorgan's score at 16-1, Northeast faced 412 balls, hitting 36 fours and six sixes. He put on 129 with Billy Root (67) for the second wicket and 176 with Kiran Carlson (77) for the third wicket. Middlesex replied strongly when they got the chance to bat, reaching 138-1 with Mark Stoneman on 62. Northeast now has the two highest individual scores for Glamorgan after

hitting 410 in 2022, with David Lloyd and Steve James also having treble centuries to their credit. Glamorgan accumulated relentlessly in the Saturday morning session as Northeast passed the county's previous best individual score against Middlesex, 226 by newly appointed chief executive Dan Cherry. There were few fireworks in the first 90 minutes as Northeast and Ingram settled for four batting points. But Northeast stepped up the tempo with three legside sixes off Ryan Higgins before lunch as Middlesex went on the defensive. Northeast was mostly impeccable but offered a gully catch and a stumping chance late in his innings, before setting his sights on the ground record. The closing stage of Glamorgan's highest team score against Middlesex was a one-sided affair as Ingram opened his shoulders to blitz into three figures after a mostly restrained knock by his

standards, hitting 12 fours and four maximums. With 471 needed to avoid the follow-on - and in turn condemn the match to an almost certain draw - Stoneman and Sam Robson showed little sign of scoreboard pressure getting to them. Glamorgan's bowlers, featuring newcomer Mir Hamza and loanee Craig Miles, toiled as the openers added 79 before Miles produced a peach of a delivery to bowl Robson through the gate for 43. Left-handers Stoneman and Max Holden, both short of runs in division one in 2023, had few alarms in the closing stages as bat continued to dominate ball. "To break a record like that is beyond my wildest dreams. I got pretty nervous at the end when I was nearing it as it's a privilege to play here. "I didn't think about it until I was on about 330, a member told me as I was walking out [after lunch] and I forgot about it, then started thinking about it again when I got near it.

Djokovic keeping his Monte Carlo expectations in check

MONTE CARLO (AFP): Novak Djokovic admitted on Saturday that he is not expecting too much from his clay game heading into Sunday's start of the Monte Carlo Masters. The world number one who exited early on the Indian Wells hardcourts last month and did not play in Miami, had a training session at the Monte Carlo Country Club venue with fill-in coach Nenad Zimonjic. But the 24-time Grand Slam titleholder was quick to emphasise that the arrangement is so far strictly temporary following his recent split with longtime mentor Goran Ivanisevic. Djokovic said that building his clay game for Roland Garros is his main priority and that any result here will be "a bonus". "The expectations are

not very high," the 36-year-old said. "My results here in previous years (titles in 2013 and 2015) are not great. "It's all about building my game for clay courts. I want to reach my peak for Paris - that's where I want to play my best tennis. "Anything else is a bonus, so let's see what happens." The Serb shed slightly more light on his surprise split from 2001 Wimbledon winner Ivanisevic after winning 12 Grand Slam singles titles with the Croat heading his team. "We felt we gave each other the maximum, it was time to move on - it's pretty simple. "Goran remains one of the most successful coaches in the history of the game. "We've done something

that cannot be deleted, the results speak for themselves. "He also remains a dear friend of me and my family." Djokovic said that he will work to prepare for the Summer Olympic tournament to be staged in late July in Paris at Roland Garros. "But there is this little tournament called Wimbledon which comes in between (the French Open and the Games. "The Paris Olympics are very important, the Olympics have always been a priority for me. "But in the last three or four Olympics it's not been possible for me to reach the later stages. "The situation is a bit different now, we are playing our first Olympics on clay. I want to be ready physically and mentally."

NBA: PJ Washington leads Dallas Mavericks to win over Golden State Warriors



WASHINGTON (Agencies): PJ Washington scored with 4.5 seconds left to help the Dallas Mavericks beat the Golden State Warriors 108-106. The Mavericks, without Luka Doncic, led 105-99 late on but Stephen Curry levelled for the Warriors at 106-106. Washington then scored a layup before Klay Thompson missed a three-pointer for the Warriors, whose six-game winning run came to an end. Washington scored a game-high 32 points, while Curry top scored for his side with 28 points.

Elsewhere, Xavier Tillman scored with 7.4 seconds left for the Boston Celtics as they held off a Sacramento Kings comeback to win 101-100. The Celtics led by 19 points during the fourth quarter before a 16-1 run brought the Kings back into the game. De'Aaron Fox scored a game-high 40 points for the Kings, including seven three-pointers, and put his side 100-99 in front with 27 seconds left. But Tillman restored his side's lead and they held on to win their 61st game of

the season. The Milwaukee Bucks, who were without Giannis Antetokounmpo, were beaten 117-111 by the Toronto Raptors, who ended a 15-game losing streak. Gary Trent Jr top scored for the Raptors with 31 points, while Damian Lillard registered 36 points for the Bucks. There were also wins for the Phoenix Suns, who beat the Minnesota Timberwolves 97-87, and the Indiana Pacers, who emerged 126-112 victors against the Oklahoma City Thunder.

Ferrari's Leclerc out of answers at Japanese Grand Prix

SUZUKA (AFP): Ferrari's Charles Leclerc said he was out of answers after finishing a disappointing eighth in qualifying for the Japanese Grand Prix on Saturday. Leclerc came home 0.589sec behind triple world champion Max Verstappen, who made it four pole positions from four grands prix so far this season. Leclerc also trailed teammate Carlos Sainz, who qualified in fourth, with the Monegasque driver saying it was "definitely not a good feeling". "I tried many different things today and none of them worked," Leclerc told Sky Sports. "For now, I don't have the answers but



the positive thing, if we have to find one, is our race pace looks a bit stronger. "But on a track like this, qualifying position is extremely important and today we didn't do a good job." Sainz led Leclerc to a one-two finish for Ferrari

qualifying today," he said. "The feeling in the car was quite good but the pace was just not there, so we will look at the data and assess what exactly this was down to." Verstappen qualified 0.066sec ahead of Red Bull teammate Sergio Perez, with McLaren's Lando Norris coming home in third. Sainz said he thought his fourth-place finish left him "in a good position to fight tomorrow". "We've made good steps in terms of race pace and I hope we will be able to exploit it during the race and fight for a podium position," said the Spaniard.





## In brief

### Munawwar Badayuni remember

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 40th death anniversary of legendary Urdu poet Munawwar Badayuni is being observed on Saturday. Manawwar Badayuni's real name was Saqlain Ahmed and he was born on December 2, 1908 in Badayun, India. Manawwar Badayuni got fame by his Hamdiya and Naatiya poetry. He died on this day in 1984 in Karachi.

### RWMC launches Eid cleanliness drive

RAWALPINDI (APP): Waste Management Company (RWMC) launched a special Eid cleanliness drive in Rawalpindi and its tehsils including Taxila, Gujjar Khan, Kahuta and Kallar Syedan which would continue till Eid Ul Fitr days. According to the spokesman of RWMC, special arrangements had been made to sweep the surrounding areas of masjids and open places where Eid prayers would be offered. He said that RWMC workers would carry out the cleaning duties in three shifts during the three days of Eid and would remain present near every masjid or Eidgah to ensure cleanliness. All graveyards of Rawalpindi and its tehsils would be provided special services and the surroundings would be kept free from waste during these days while sanitary workers would be deployed in parks and recreational places across the city to ensure the waste picking before the Eid prayer. He said that lime powder would also be sprinkled around all masjids, Eidghas and public places while RWMC's helpline 1139 would remain alert with all resources to address waste-related complaints during Eid days. He said the cleanliness of bazaars and commercial areas would also be maintained on Chand Raat and Eid days.

### Nilofar demands justice for Falk Noor

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson National Commission on the States of Women (NCSW) Nilofar Bakhtiar has vehemently demanded justice for Falak Noor and emphasized an urgent need for intervention from the authorities. During a briefing on the Falak Noor case here Saturday, she also announced her visit to Gilgit-Baltistan, said a Twitter message shared by the NCSW. About two months ago, Falak Noor, age 13 year was allegedly abducted while on her way for religious education near a community centre in Sultanabad, Gilgit. She vanished under suspicious circumstances, reportedly after marrying her neighbor. Her father, Ahmed filed the complaint on January 20, but she has not been recovered. Her father has said that his daughter was taken to Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where they staged a marriage, "in an act of cruelty and coercion".

### IRSA releases 85,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 85,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 84,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1420.31 feet and was 22.31 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. The water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 19,100 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1099.80 feet, which was 49.80 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 30,500 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs respectively.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi chairing a meeting regarding security of foreign nationals.

## Naqvi directs foolproof measures for protection of Chinese nationals

ISLAMABAD (INP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has directed foolproof measures for the protection of Chinese nationals in Pakistan.

Chairing a meeting in Islamabad regarding security arrangements for Chinese citizens, he said

protection of foreigners, especially Chinese citizens, is the top priority. He directed to ensure implementation of SOPs for the safety of foreigners, especially the Chinese nationals. Mohsin Naqvi said the enemy does not want the

development and prosperity of Pakistan. He said we will never allow the nefarious designs of the terrorists to succeed. The meeting was briefed about the arrangements made for the protection of foreigners, especially the Chinese nationals.

## Rs 162,000 fine imposed over violation of SOPs

RAWALPINDI (APP): District Health Authority (DHA) has lodged 42 FIRs and sealed 48 premises on violations of anti-dengue standard operating procedure (SOPs) from January 1, 2024, to date.

District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC), Dr Sajjad Mehmood Saturday said that the health department, in collaboration with allied departments, had issued tickets to 99 and imposed a fine of Rs 162,000 on violations of dengue SOPs during the year. The health officer informed that four dengue patients had been reported in the district so far while the number was two in 2023 and one in 2022 during the period. Dr Sajjad added that during indoor vector surveillance, the teams checked 1,121,425 houses and larvae were detected at 2,064 sites while during outdoor surveillance larvae were found at 493 spots while inspecting 290,326 places.

## Govt cancels dance education notification in schools

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Federal Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (FMVEVT) in Pakistan has withdrawn a notification regarding dance education in government schools. This move comes after parents raised concerns about the initiative.

The original notification, issued at the request of UNESCO, called for a dance competition in schools. However, it sparked immediate opposition from parents who urged the government to cancel it. In response to the controversy, the FMVEVT issued a clarification. The ministry acknowledged UNESCO's role in

promoting education and cultural exchange globally. It emphasized that the "Dance for Education" program was not mandatory and was only intended to raise awareness about UNESCO's initiatives.

The FMVEVT spokesperson further clarified that neither the ministry nor Pakistan's National Commission for UNESCO directed or organized the program. The notification, they explained, was solely for informational purposes.

The ministry concluded the statement by expressing regret for any misunderstanding caused and reiterated its commitment to educational development.

## ANF recovers 485 kg drugs in five operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting five operations across the country managed to recover over 485 kg drugs and arrested eight accused said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday.

He informed that 3.4 kg hashish was recovered from a passenger going to

Sharjah at Peshawar Airport. In another operation, 300 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of two accused netted from Indus Highway Kohat. 168.9 liters Ice was recovered from two suspects rounded up at Karachi International Container Terminal. 600 grams opium, 2 kg heroin and 6 kg hashish were

recovered from an accused arrested in Choniani.

In fifth operation, 4.5 kg weed was recovered from two suspects nabbed from Coastal Highway Gwadar.

Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against all the arrested accused while further investigations are under process.

## ICP ensures comprehensive security measures in high-security zone

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Police (ICP) ensured comprehensive security arrangements to deal with any untoward incidents during the protests of religious and political parties in the High Security Zone. According to the details, the Islam Capital Police is constantly engaged to maintain the law and order situation in the federal capital, ensuring the safety of lives and property of the citizens.

In this regard, the officers

and officials of the Islamabad Capital Police are performing their duties effectively to ensure security arrangements and deal with any untoward incidents during the protests of religious and political parties in the high security zone.

A public relations officer on Saturday said that the senior police officers issued instructions to the officers and personnel posted on duty and said that the protection of all public and private

offices and embassies located in the high security zone is of utmost importance. Islamabad Capital Police is using all resources to maintain the law and order situation in the Federal Capital Islamabad. Citizens are requested to call "Pucar-15" or report via the "ICT-15 App" regarding any suspicious person or activity. Protection of life and property of citizens is among the top priorities of the Islamabad Capital Police.

## Malaysian delegation along with IMRF visits AIOU

ISLAMABAD (APP): An eight-member Christian delegation, consisting of four Malaysian missionaries and four Pakistanis, led by the Chairman of the Implementation Minority Rights Forum (IMRF), Samuel Payra, visited Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU).

Dean, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Prof. Dr. Shah Mohyuddin Hashmi presided over the ceremony while Chairman IMRF the chief guest.

In his address, Samuel Payra stated that all the institutions of Pakistan stand with the minorities and are at the forefront of securing their rights.

He emphasized that the constitution of Pakistan protects minorities and highlighted that a significant amount of work is being done to promote inter-faith harmony in Pakistan, which is unparalleled in any

other country. Additionally, there are numerous buildings in Pakistan named after minority leaders, serving as evidence of the mutual love and brotherhood within the country.

Dr. Shah Mohyuddin Hashmi stated that both the Muslim and Christian religions were revealed by God and share common traditions and values. He also mentioned that the Department of Interfaith Studies at AIOU is open to collaboration on matters related to peace and harmony. Members of the Malaysian delegation, including Darren Philip, Sonita Anglik Philip, Jason Philip, and Alvin, expressed their appreciation for the love and hospitality they received from Pakistan. The event was attended by all the faculty members of Arabic and Islamic Studies.

## Muslims across Pakistan gear up for Laylatul Qadr with prayers, Quran recitation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Mosques and homes across Pakistan are set to observe Laylatul Qadr (widely known as Night of Power) on Saturday with fervent prayers and Quran recitation.

As Laylatul Qadr approaches, mosques and homes across Pakistan were prepared for a night of devout prayer and reflection, reported a private news channel.

During this auspicious occasion, Muslims engage in fervent prayers, Quran recitation, and the sharing of sweet dishes like halwa and seviyan as acts of charity and goodwill.

Laylatul Qadr, often referred to as the Night of Power or Decree, holds profound significance in Islam and believed to be

the night when the Quran was first revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Described as better than a thousand months, Laylatul Qadr is a time of immense spiritual blessings, forgiveness of sins, and answered prayers.

Yesterday, On Friday night, millions of Muslims converged at the Haramain Sharifain in Makkah and Medina on the 27th night of Ramazan to offer Taraweeh and special prayers, commemorating the revelation of the Quran.

During the Taraweeh prayers at Masjid al Haram, the surrounding areas, roads, rooftops, hotels, and commercial centres were filled with worshippers.

## RDA gives concession to educational institutions till end of academic year 2024

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on the directives of Director General (DG) RDA, Kinza Murtaza has given concession to the educational institutions till end of the academic year 2024.

According to a RDA spokesman, the Land Use and Building Control Wing of RDA on the requests of the owners of the schools had suspended the legal action against illegal educational institutions till the end of the academic year 2024.

He informed that the authority on the directives of the DG had decided to give concession to the owners of the schools so that the educational activities of the children are not interrupted due to the legal action of Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) and the children could complete their academic year 2024 without any hindrance.

The spokesman said that in the light of this decision, all school owners who had established schools in residential buildings without approval were directed by the DG RDA to immediately get regularized the schools as per law or

stop the illegal use of the buildings in residential areas.

The school owners had also been instructed to submit an affidavit within 15 days to the Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) that they are ready to get regularized their illegal schools or stop the illegal use of the buildings, he said adding, the owners of the buildings will have to pay Rs 1000 fine per day until the schools are regularized or the buildings being used for the commercial purposes are vacated.

He said, "Since the illegal school owners have not filed the affidavit yet, they are given a last chance in this regard to file the affidavit within 7 days, otherwise legal action will be taken against them and the school will be closed while fine will also be imposed. The term of the academic year 2024 will be till 30 April 2024," he added.

If the affidavit is not submitted within seven days, legal action would be taken against the rules violators and the schools would be closed, he added.

## Broader collaborations among public, int'l organizations key to achieve health rights: Speakers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Speakers at a webinar on World Health Day Friday demanded broader collaborations among the government, private, civil society and international organizations to achieve health rights for all. The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) organized a special webinar on World Health Day under the theme "My Health My Right". In his opening remarks, Executive Director SDPI, Dr Abid Suleri said the theme for this year's serves as a clarion call reminding us of the intrinsic rights of every individual as health and well being.

He added that the challenges in health sector are clear in Pakistan that demands to broaden the discussion on health. "It takes us beyond healthcare encompassing physical, mental, social well being, right to earn livelihood and get nourished food and also encompasses our right to clean drinking water and WASH," he said.

Dr Suleri mentioned that after 18th Amendment health was a provincial matter. "Although constitution talks of people unable to earn their livelihoods due to infirmity or sickness and I would suggest that it was not all about infirmity and sickness as health is a right and we need to start a dialogue a shared conservation between the federal and provincial governments and the civil society to make health more accessible and resilient for provision of a healthy lifestyle," he added. Moreover, he said citizens should be proactive stewards of their health and advocating for their rights and contributing to a health conscious society.

Health Policy Advisor SDPI, Dr Razia Safdar presented a detailed presentation on the healthcare landscape and its associated bottlenecks. She said right to health is not related to health but other human rights and a legal binding commitment of the governments globally which was also part of the international human rights declaration. She also shed light on the human rights treaties discussing health and human rights based approach towards access to health. She also presented brief audio, video display on civil society comments on World Health Day.

Chief Executive Officer Punjab Health Initiative Company, Dr Ali Razaq said the Punjab government is fulfilling its commitment to achieve universal health coverage as its budgetary allocations and different projects providing healthcare facilities are indicative of its commitment.

He said the health insurance program and health card scheme has played a pivotal role in improving health coverage in Punjab. However, the Sehat Sahulat Program led to the growth of the private sector that catered for 110 million population with a budget of Rs468 billion with a 100 percent increase for past three years in budget. The project, he said had ensured 15% health in terms of percentage in the population with 51% male, 49% female and 43% children as its beneficiaries. Under the initiative, there are 206 public hospitals with a total of 43,550 beds and 160 private hospitals with a total of

23,055 beds, whereas over 6.5 million patients have availed treatment worth Rs 151 billion under the Sehat Sahulat Program since its inception in 2016, he added. "The private sector hospitals have been reduced and only Pakistan Healthcare Commission registered are part of Sehat Sahulat program because quality assurance in the service is the top priority," he mentioned. Dr Shahzad Ali Khan said the general public feels handicapped in terms of proper treatment and biased urban approach towards treatment facilities amassed in urban areas further aggravates the crisis. He added that most of the healthcare is pro urban and poor health services are rendered for the poor.

"The topic for today has been under great debate for past many years and SDPI has always taken lead in taking health as a right," he said.

Dr Shahzad noted that there was a need of consistent advocacy on health as a right. He also noted that there was a great leadership crisis in health sector advocacy realm that needs to have consensus and unity to draw leadership as it would then ensure that policy makers would pay heed to our policy proposals. Mansoor Riaz, Senior Program Officer, Pathfinders International presented a brief account of his organization's four decades long experience in women health advocacy and its current initiatives in the four provinces including Gilgit Baltistan on water conservation, kitchen gardening, recycling and postpartum planning.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan called on Federal Minister of Industry and Production and National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain.



### Six people publicly flogged

LOGAR (Ariana News): Six people, including a woman, who were accused of sodomy and adultery have been publicly flogged in Afghanistan's central province of Logar, the Supreme Court announced on Saturday. They had been sentenced to 25-39 lashes and 1-2 years in prison by the primary court of Mohammad Agha district, Supreme Court said in a statement. The verdict had been approved by the Supreme Court.

### 'Afghanistan Journalist award

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Afghanistan Journalists Center announced the winners of the "Afghan Journalist of the Year" award. They awarded prizes to journalists who have conducted professional, impactful, and special interviews. The jury of this competitive program selected five journalists from three media outlets as the top journalists of the year and jointly awarded the "Journalist of the Year" prize to Mitra Majidi, Faridullah Mohammadi, Nasir Ahmad Salehi, Mohammad Taher Ahmadi, and Mohammad Amin Kaveh.

## Afghan kids learn in makeshift schools six months after major quake

ZINDAH JAN (AFP/APP): Children sit shoulder to shoulder crammed in rows on the floor of a shipping container with lesson books in their laps, the remains of their school unrepaired in the six months since a major earthquake devastated their village in western Afghanistan. Hundreds of schools are still damaged since a series of strong quakes jolted Afghanistan's Herat province in October, with many students returning to lessons in tents and containers in March, according to the Herat education department. Girls and boys in the village of Nayeab Rafi in Zindah Jan district studied in a packed container tucked between tents and small, blue homes newly built on a barren stretch of land. "I really want to study, to have a school, and become a teacher to teach my friends," said 11-

year-old Siyah Gul. She wants to make the most of her lessons in the makeshift classroom before she is soon excluded under Taliban government rules which bar girls and women from secondary education and universities. The October quake killed more than 1,500 people and damaged or destroyed more than 63,000 homes, according to an assessment published in February by the United Nations, the European Union and the Asian Development Bank. Many people are still living in tents and temporary shelters, the World Health Organization said in February. Education is the second-most affected sector, the report said, with nearly 300 public schools and other learning centres damaged and 180,000 students facing learning disruptions. In the village of Chahak, deep cracks scar

the walls and ceilings of its pale blue schoolhouse. Broken windows still hang from their hinges and piles of dust fill the corners of classrooms. "Chahak village was completely destroyed by the earthquake and we still haven't been provided with permanent shelters," said teacher Mohammad Naseem Nasrat. "Our school too, which was wrecked by the earthquake, has not been restored so far. I don't know if there are plans to or not," said the 25-year-old, adding that the village's children "face an uncertain future" without proper schools. Decades of conflict have devastated Afghanistan's education system, with an estimated 3.7 million children out of school, 60 percent of them girls, according to the UN children's agency UNICEF. Poverty and access to schools in remote

areas are major hurdles, while cultural norms often prevent girls from attending school. One in five children aged between five and 17 are engaged in child labour, according to the United Nations, in a country facing deep economic, humanitarian and climate crises. Eleven-year-old Sefatullah's school in Kashkak village was destroyed by the recent quakes. "We don't have books and notebooks to study and write in," he said. Four children were killed when the school collapsed, said teacher Mohammad Dawood, who now gives lessons in a framed tent with a large UNICEF logo on the outside. The makeshift school serves two villages, six classes and has only one teacher -- Dawood. "On days when it is windy or raining, we are in big trouble, we can't carry on with this situation for much longer," he said.

## Taliban leader emphasizes regional relations in Eid message amid the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The National Television of Afghanistan, under Taliban control, broadcasted an Eid message attributed to Hibatullah Akhundzada, the leader of this group, on Saturday. He stated that the Taliban government is advancing with all regional countries in the enlightenment of the sacred religion of Islam in the arenas of balanced politics and economy-focused approaches, desiring diplomatic and economic relations with everyone. The leader of the Taliban added that it is the duty entrusted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to create a better atmosphere of confidence among all countries, especially the Islamic world.

In the Eid message, it is also stated: "Our sustenance and protection come from Almighty Allah, the powers of the world cannot take away your sustenance nor can they sever it." The message also emphasizes that the world's major powers "cannot take away the lives" of Taliban members. The Eid message attributed to the Taliban leader makes no mention of the millions of dollars in cash aid from the United States and the United Nations entering Afghanistan as "humanitarian aid."



The issue of protecting the lives of Taliban members and the implicit reference to the threat from "major powers" is raised in the Eid message attributed to Hibatullah Akhundzada, as it was reported last Tuesday that the Taliban leader was forced to change his residence due to the flight of unmanned aircraft over his office. In recent days, the flights of American drones over the skies of Afghanistan have increased. According to a report, Hibatullah, the

leader of the group in Kandahar, was compelled to relocate due to the fear of drone flights over Kandahar. According to sources, the Taliban moved their leader to the "Talokan military base" in the Panjwai district of Kandahar. In the Eid message, he stated that esteemed scholars and influential councils are currently working together with officials to adapt religious decrees. He added that councils of scholars and influential figures will also be established in all districts following the

provinces. He reiterated that the Taliban regime prioritizes the implementation of Islamic law for achieving the goals of holy jihad and safeguarding the sacrifices of the mujahideen. He emphasized that to achieve this, justice, Sharia boundaries, and Sharia punishments are administered by courts by Sharia principles uniformly. However, reports reveal disturbing actions by the Taliban, including flogging, beating women, and extrajudicial killings of former police and soldiers across various provinces.

## Herat residents resent lack of trashcans

HERAT CITY (Pajhwok): A number of citizens of the capital of western Herat province have expressed their concern about the shortages of garbage bins in most parts of the city. They complain the absence/shortage of trashcans has led to dirtiness of the city and compromise on sanitation. In the interest of public health and hygiene, citizens asked the municipal administration to pay more attention to sorting out the problems. In remarks to Pajhwok Afghan News,

resident Karim Poya said the availability of garbage bins was considered an integral part of the urban culture, but most parts of the city were without such cans. Growing garbage heaps around the city caused the spread of different ailments, he regretted, asking the government to pay special attention to the issue. Mohammad Ayub Irshad, another inhabitant, also emphasised on the municipal to address the issue through a comprehensive plan to prevent disorder in the city.

He urged the municipality to task a team of workers with install trashcans, collecting garbage from the city and promoting the urban culture. Social affairs expert Mohammad Haris Sharifi viewed the lack of garbage bins in some parts of the city as a serious challenge and urged the municipality to install garbage bins in specified locations. Sharifi called for awareness about the importance of cleanliness and putting the requisite arrangements in place across the provincial capital. Without commenting on citizen demands, officials of the municipality said they had devised a plan for garbage bins' installation. The plan will be implemented during the current year. Nasir Armal, spokesperson for the municipality, said the garbage bins would be installed after the conduct of a survey and specification of locations. Armal urged citizens to observe the urban culture and cooperate with the municipality's cleanliness department in keeping the city clean.



## Over 2,000 prisoners will be freed ahead of Eid al-Fitr

KABUL (Ariana News): The Supreme Court officials say that based on the decree of the Islamic Emirate's leader, more than 2,000 prisoners will be released from the country's prisons on the occasion of Eid al-Fitr. The Supreme Court said that in the first step, 406 prisoners including 40 women and 28 children were released on Saturday from Pul-e Charkhi prison in Kabul. The court officials stated that the prison is not a place of punishment, adding that it has turned into a reform center. However, they consider publishing reports of mistreatment, beatings and torture in prisons as propaganda and the work of intelligence circles. According to the officials, the detainees who

were released from Pul-e Charkhi prison were involved in various crimes. Meanwhile, a number of newly released prisoners

say that they had access to health and recreational services in prison and that they were not tortured in prison.

According to reports, 17,000 people are imprisoned in the country's prisons and are spending their prison terms.



## JAC-R condemns Pakistan's decision to begin 2nd phase of Afghan refugees' repatriation

KABUL (Ariana News): The Joint Action Committee for Refugees (JAC-R), a platform of Pakistani politicians, activists, and lawyers, has condemned Islamabad's decision to begin the second phase of repatriation of Afghan refugees after Eid on April 15th. In a statement, the committee said that the decision to uproot the lives of hun-

dreds of thousands of people who have considered Pakistan their home and their country is not only unconstitutional but also violates several international laws. It said that the Pakistan brutally expelled 500,000 undocumented Afghan Refugees in the most degrading, cruel and inhumane way imaginable. According to the statement, the government of

Pakistan has made a list of 800,000 registered Afghan refugees that it will expel in 2 weeks time on April 15th 2024. Although the Islamic Emirate has condemned the forced expulsion of Afghan immigrants from Pakistan and considers it against international laws, it emphasizes that government is fully prepared to provide facilities to the returnees. "We have reminded about

the deportation of Afghan immigrants from Pakistan that this action is illegal and should not be done. Of course, if Pakistan still does it, the Islamic Emirate and the Afghans are ready to provide services for the migrants and relocate them and take care of them as much as possible," said Zabiullah Mujahid, the spokesman of the Islamic Emirate.



## UN requests \$620 million to support Afghan migrants in Iran and Pakistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The UN High Commissioner for Refugees office in South Asia has stated that it needs \$620 million to protect and support Afghan migrants in Iran and Pakistan. The organization said in a message on its social media platform X, on Friday, April 5th, that the situation in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries will be challenging in 2024. According to the UNHCR report, 4.8 million Afghan migrants and 2.5 million members of their host communities will be assisted in 2024.

This entity stated that alongside the expulsion of Afghan migrants from Pakistan and Iran, devastating natural disasters, the crisis of climate change, and deadly earthquakes have worsened the situation in the country in 2022 and 2023. The UNHCR, referring to the urgent need for humanitarian assistance for 23.7 million people to survive, has described the human rights situation, especially the rights of women, girls, and religious and ethnic minorities, as dire. According to the report, Iran and Pakistan host

around 7.7 million Afghan citizens, approximately 1.6 million of whom entered the country since 2021. Meanwhile, Amnesty International and some human rights organizations have expressed concern about the continuation of the process of expelling Afghan migrants from Pakistan and demanded a halt to this trend. According to an Amnesty International official, "The plan to repatriate undocumented foreign nationals in Pakistan violates the rights of refugees and international human rights law, especially the

principle of non-refoulement, endangering the lives of all Afghan refugees, especially women, girls, journalists, and human rights defenders." Since the forced deportation of Afghan refugees from Pakistan in November 2023, over half a million migrants have been repatriated to the country. However, they are facing several challenges amid a dire humanitarian crisis. Many returnees are struggling with the lack of basic amenities such as shelter, food, and healthcare, exacerbating their already precarious situation.

## Pistachios prices 40 percent up in Balkh this year

MAZAR-I-SHARIF (Pajhwok): The price of local pistachios has increased by nearly 40 percent, but interestingly the prices of other dried fruits have gone down ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr this year compared to their last year's rates in northern Balkh province. Afghans wear new suits on Eid days and after offering Eid prayer, they visit relatives and friends at their homes and serve guests with different kinds of fruits, cakes and cookies. With the Eid festival

closing in, bazaars are fully crowded as Afghans are making special preparations and purchase Eid-needed food stuff. Jamshid, a grocery seller in Mazar-i-Sharif, said their business flourished ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr compared to last year. He said dried fruits prices had decreased while the price of pistachios had significantly increased. He added one kilogram of pistachio was sold for 700afis last year, but its price this year surged to 1,100afis Hasibullah, another

shopkeeper, also confirmed their business had improved this year. He said the price of one kilogram pistachio surged by about 400afis. He added one kilogram pistachio was sold for 650afis last year, but this year the price increased to 1,100afis. The prices of other dried fruits decreased this year. The price of one kilo of raisins fell by 50afis, the price of one kilo foreign chickpeas by 70afis and one kilo almonds by 100afis, he explained.

Meanwhile, Mehran Wahid, an inhabitant of the provincial capital, who was buying dried fruits, also acknowledged the prices of dried fruits had decreased this year. Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock Department officials link the increase in pistachio price to its decreased yield and surge in exports. Mohammad Hussain Azimi, an official of the department, said cold weather damaged pistachio trees last year in the province.





GAZA: Palestinians gather to pray on the night of Laylat Ul-Qadr near the debris of al-Faruq Mosque in Rafah.

# Gaza truce talks on, after aid worker death outcry

GAZA (AFP): American, Israeli and Hamas negotiators are expected in Cairo over the weekend in a renewed push for a ceasefire and hostage release deal in a war that reaches the half-year mark on Sunday. Egypt's Al-Qahera News said CIA Director Bill Burns and Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani would join Egyptian mediators for Sunday's indirect talks between the Israeli and Hamas delegations.

Ahead of the talks Hamas, confirmed its core demands — a complete ceasefire in Gaza and withdrawal of Israeli forces. The ceasefire attempt comes after Israel's military made a rare admission of wrongdoing and said it was firing two officers over the killing of seven aid workers in Gaza where humanitarians say famine is imminent. The admission did not quell calls for an independent probe, however.

The deaths of the workers from US-based World Central Kitchen (WCK) on April 1 led to a tense call between US President Joe Biden and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Biden urged an "immediate ceasefire" and for the first time hinted at conditioning US support for Israel on curtailing the killing of civilians and improving humanitarian conditions.

The bloodiest-ever Gaza war began on October 7 with an unprecedented attack from Gaza by Hamas militants resulting in the death of 1,170 people in southern Israel, mostly civilians, Israeli figures show. Palestinian militants also took around 250 Israeli and foreign hostages, about 130 of whom remain in Gaza, including more than 30 the army says are dead.

Vowing to destroy Hamas, Israel has relentlessly bombarded the territory, killing at least 33,137 people, mostly women and children, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory. The UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths decried Israel's war against Hamas and called for a "collective determination that there be a reckoning for this betrayal of humanity." Fears that the war could spread intensified after Iran

vowed retaliation after seven Revolutionary Guards were killed in an air strike Monday on the consular annex of its embassy in Damascus.

Ahead of the weekend talks, Biden wrote to the leaders of Egypt and Qatar urging them to secure commitments from Hamas to "agree to and abide by a deal," a senior administration official told AFP. Stop-start talks have made no headway since a week-long truce in November saw some hostages exchanged for Palestinian prisoners detained by Israel.

The White House confirmed negotiations would occur this weekend in Cairo, and Hamas said its delegation would head there on Sunday. But Hamas also restated its key demands. "Hamas confirms its adherence to the position it presented on March 14 ... and we will not back down from this position," a statement said.

"The demands ... are complete ceasefire, withdrawal of the occupation forces from Gaza, the return of the displaced to their residential areas, freedom of movement of the people, offering them aid and shelter, and a serious hostage exchange deal," it said. Biden's Thursday call with Netanyahu included discussions on "empowering his negotiators" to reach a deal, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said. Washington blames the lack of a deal on Hamas's refusal to release sick and other vulnerable hostages. Qatar has said Israeli objections to the return of displaced Gazans are the main hurdle.

Biden is under pressure over massive US military aid to Israel which, so far, Washington has not leveraged despite increasingly critical comments about Israel's conduct of the war. The Israeli military announced it was firing two officers after finding a series of errors led to the drone strikes that killed the WCK workers. WCK said its Gaza operations remain suspended after the attack, while other global aid groups said relief work in the territory has become almost impossible.

The army said a commander "mistakenly assumed" Hamas had seized the aid vehicles, which were moving at night. Australia's Foreign Minister

Penny Wong said Saturday Canberra had "not yet received sufficient information" from Israel about the death of Lalezami "Zomi" Frankcom and the other aid workers. "It cannot be brushed aside and it cannot be covered over," Wong said.

WCK said Israel "cannot credibly investigate its own failure in Gaza." Britain called for a "wholly independent review," while Poland sought a "criminal" probe. Hours after Biden and Netanyahu spoke, Israel announced it would allow "temporary" aid deliveries through Ashdod port and the Erez border crossing. UN chief Antonio Guterres called for a "paradigm shift" rather than "scattered measures."

Mahmud Bassal, spokesman for Gaza's Civil Defense agency, told AFP on Saturday that aid reaching Gaza is "absolutely not sufficient" for its 2.4 million people, with basic necessities "extremely scarce" particularly in the north. "Children are dying from hunger" there, he said. Around 1.5 million Gazans are sheltering in the territory's far south, in Rafah.

"We are ordinary citizens and human beings," Siham Achur, 50, said in the tent that is now her family's home. "Why did they bomb our house?" They had lived in Khan Yunis for 30 years, Achur said, but those memories "have become dust." On Saturday, Israel's military said warplanes had killed Akram Salamah, a "senior" militant it said held several positions including Hamas's deputy chief for Khan Yunis. Troops also recovered from Khan Yunis the body of Elad Katzir, who was abducted on October 7 and "murdered in captivity" by Islamic Jihad, a group fighting alongside Hamas, the army said.

The Israeli ambassador to Warsaw, Yacov Livne, said on social media that Katzir had dual citizenship with Poland. The Polish foreign ministry said it had received news of his death with "sadness." His sister Carmi Palty Katzir blamed the Israeli authorities for Elad's death, saying he would have returned alive had the authorities agreed to a new truce. — Arab News

## Celebration of DC's transfer FIR filed against resident for aerial firing Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In a concerning turn of events, an FIR (First Information Report) has been lodged against a resident of Orakzai for engaging in aerial firing to mark the transfer of the Deputy Commissioner of Orakzai district. The incident has sparked discussions about the performance and reception of the outgoing Deputy Commissioner.

The act of celebratory gunfire, though often seen as a traditional practice in some regions, has raised eyebrows due to its potential dangers and legal implications. According to sources, the firing occurred in the vicinity of the district headquarters, alarming local residents and authorities.

This incident has shed light on the sentiments within the community regarding the performance of the outgoing Deputy Commissioner. The fact that residents resorted to such measures to express their emotions suggests dissatisfaction with the administration's handling of affairs in the district.

## PTI won't boycott Senate chairman election: Zafar F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: PTI leader Senator Ali Zafar has dismissed the possibility of boycotting the upcoming election for the chairman and deputy chairman of the Senate.

Senior lawyer confirmed that while some party leaders had contemplated boycotting the Senate chairman election, the majority view within PTI does not support such a move. Zafar clarified that the decision regarding the Senate election has been left to the party members by PTI Founder Imran Khan.

"I personally believe that if we don't become a part of the system, we will remain out of it," he remarked, adding, "Whether the election is legal or illegal, we have to stay in the system." Despite acknowledging the slim chances of PTI's success in the chairman and deputy chairman election scheduled for April 9, Senator Ali Zafar asserted that PTI would participate symbolically. However, he revealed that the party has yet to decide on its candidates for these positions.

Furthermore, Senator Zafar highlighted that the PTI had yet to decide its nominations for the Senate chairmanship and deputy chairman, as well as for the opposition leader. He added that decisions regarding this role would be made in discussions with Imran Khan. Shifting focus, the senator addressed the issue of discussing the IHC judges' letter in parliament, noting that while it could be done, the Constitution did not permit discussions on matters currently under trial. He suggested that the National Assembly could provide guidance on this matter through a ruling. With Senator Ali Zafar's remarks, PTI's stance on the upcoming Senate election becomes clearer, signalling the party's intention to actively participate in the democratic process despite the challenges it may face.

Meanwhile, the Sunni Ittehad Council has submitted an application to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) urging the halt of the upcoming election for the chairman and deputy chairman of the Senate. The application, submitted by SIC head Sahibzada Hamid Raza, cites the incomplete electoral college of the Senate due to the absence of Upper House elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) as grounds for the request. In the petition, Raza has implored the election commission to utilize its authority to suspend the election for the Senate chairman and deputy as it did in KP. With the election for the chairman and deputy chairman scheduled for April 9, the council asserts that the electoral college's incompleteness poses a significant challenge to the legitimacy of the upcoming election.

Furthermore, the council has called upon the commission to promptly announce Senate elections for the 11 vacant seats in KP. week Israel said it will reopen the Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing with northern Gaza for aid, hours after a warning from Biden for it to take steps to protect civilians and humanitarian workers following the Israeli military's strikes on US-based food charity World Central Kitchen (WCK). "While we appreciate your administration's recent efforts to increase the delivery of desperately needed humanitarian aid to Gaza, these efforts will not be sufficient to meet the extraordinary need on the ground," the letter read. The legislators also called on the Biden administration to conduct its own investigation into the Israeli attack that killed seven WCK members in central Gaza. On Friday, the Israeli military dismissed two officers and formally reprimanded senior commanders after an inquiry into the aid workers' deaths found serious errors and breaches of procedure. "Over 200 aid workers have been killed since the start of the war. These

# KP CM directs good quality food to prisoners

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The chief minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has decided in principle to change the diet menu of prisons across the province in order to ensure provision of good quality food to prisoners, and directed the quarters concerned for necessary steps to increase the annual budget of prisons in the head of food from Rs. 1.5 billion to Rs. 2.00 billion.

He had directed that all the deputy commissioners would be responsible to carry out regular quality inspection of meal items being served to inmates in the prisons of their respective districts. The Chief Minister further decided provision of free legal aid for those prisoners, who cannot afford to hire lawyer to pursue their cases, and directed the concerned authorities to get the services of competent lawyers for this purpose, and said that expenditures incurred on this, would be borne by the provincial government.

He was presiding over a meeting of prisons department, held here at chief Minister's house the other day. Additional Chief Secretary Home Muhammad Abid Majeed, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan, IG prisons Muhammad Usman Mehsud and others attended the meeting.

The Chief Minister has emphasized the need to accelerate work on priority development projects being executed in the various prisons of the province, and directed the finance department to provide funds required for this purpose. He also decided to provide Rs. 1.00 billion to meet out previous liabilities under various expenditures including food items, medicines and maintenance and repair works.

Ali Amin Gandapur on this occasion, agreed to make circle and region wise recruitments, but he directed that staffing in the prisons should be done purely on the basis of domicile. Expressing his satisfaction over the reforms so far introduced by the department, he said that imparting skills development training to Jail inmates is a commendable initiative. The Chief Minister has directed to prepare a formal plan for branding and marketing the products made by prisoners and to organize a proper showroom for this purpose, adding that the furniture made in prisons should be purchased by the government departments without tendering.

Income earned from the said products

# PTI holds rally in Karachi demands release of Imran

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) staged a rally in East Karachi district, on Saturday demanding release of its founder chairman, Imran Khan, the participants of rally made protest against theft of PTI mandate, and demanded judicial freedom.

The rally commenced from Hakim Saeed Ground University Road near Baitul Mukarram Masjid of Gulshan-e-Iqbal Karachi, a spot in Karachi accessible from various routes, reached Shahrah-e Quaidin. The event saw the participation of prominent PTI leaders, including Haleem Adil Sheikh, President of PTI Sindh, along with Raja Azhar, President of PTI Karachi, and other key figures of PTI like Jamal Siddiqui, Arslan Khalid, Fahim Khan, Amjad Jah, Nazirullah Mehsud, Waqas Khan, Agha Arslan, Sarina Adnan, Aftab Jahangir, and others.

Joining the rally were representatives from various wings of PTI, including the Insaf Lawyers, Women Wing, Insaf Youth Wing, Insaf Student Federation,

and others. Participants of the rally vigorously expressed their demands for Imran Khan's release and vehemently condemned the theft of the mandate and demand for freedom of judiciary.

Addressing the rally participants, PTI Sindh President Haleem Adil Sheikh reiterated the unified voice of the nation in demanding Imran Khan's release. He warned the government to heed the anger of the youth, stating that failure to do so would leave no path for their return. The streets of Karachi are filled with people, echoing the singular demand across the nation: "Free Imran Khan."

Sheikh highlighted the critical state of affairs in Pakistan, emphasizing that while the people's mandate is being stolen, attempts are being made to snatch away the mandate they provided. He asserted that Karachi's mandate has been snatched and handed over to an anti-state party; he said we are united for peace, rule of law, and constitutionalism. He defended the right to protest, stating that holding rallies is their constitutional right; he said Pakistan and

its towns, its streets, and even the armed forces belong to us.

Haleem Adil Sheikh urged the people of Karachi to attend the massive gathering planned at Bagh-e-Jinnah on April 28, where over a million participants are expected. He urged one million voters to join the event and show those who stole the mandate that the nation stands united against them.

Promising a vigorous campaign against Imran Khan's imprisonment and mandate theft, Sheikh vowed that their struggle would continue until Khan is freed and the stolen mandate is returned. He expressed confidence that Imran Khan would soon be free and would become the Prime Minister of the country.

PTI Karachi President Raja Azhar, speaking at the rally, announced a grand gathering in Karachi on April 28 and said Imran Khan will soon be with us and addresses the people of Karachi. He clarified that PTI workers are not terrorists but peaceful citizens, and the rally faced no road-blocks or interruptions.

# Pelosi joins US Democrats call for Biden to halt arms transfer to Israel

WASHINGTON: More than 30 Democratic members of the US House of Representatives have called for a full halt to the transfer of weapons to Israel, in a letter to President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

"In light of the recent strike against aid workers and the ever-worsening humanitarian crisis, we believe it is unjustifiable to approve these weapons transfers," read the letter signed on Friday by the lawmakers, including former House speaker and Biden ally Nancy Pelosi.

Pressure has been mounting on the White House and Western governments to stop arming Israel with no let-up in the Israeli military's bombardment of the Gaza Strip, where the death toll since October has crossed 33,000. There appear to be dim prospects of a ceasefire and no progress in getting more humanitarian aid into the enclave where famine has set in, despite Israel pledging to reopen a crossing to northern Gaza. This

week Israel said it will reopen the Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing with northern Gaza for aid, hours after a warning from Biden for it to take steps to protect civilians and humanitarian workers following the Israeli military's strikes on US-based food charity World Central Kitchen (WCK).

"While we appreciate your administration's recent efforts to increase the delivery of desperately needed humanitarian aid to Gaza, these efforts will not be sufficient to meet the extraordinary need on the ground," the letter read.

The legislators also called on the Biden administration to conduct its own investigation into the Israeli attack that killed seven WCK members in central Gaza. On Friday, the Israeli military dismissed two officers and formally reprimanded senior commanders after an inquiry into the aid workers' deaths found serious errors and breaches of procedure.

"Over 200 aid workers have been killed since the start of the war. These

attacks and deaths are having a chilling effect with the World Central Kitchen and other humanitarian groups now suspending their operations in Gaza," the letter noted. Hassan Barari, a professor at Qatar University's Department of International Affairs, said the letter represents a "change in the American scene", adding that "the whole Democratic party is moving to adopt this position, so it has become a mainstream position".

The United Nations Human Rights Council on Friday adopted a resolution calling for Israel to be held accountable for possible war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Gaza, and demanding a halt to all arms sales to the country. While countries like Canada, the Netherlands, Japan, Spain and Belgium have suspended arms sales to Israel, several other Western nations continue to supply lethal weapons despite mounting criticism over the growing civilian casualties. — Aljazeera