

Drop expected in PoL prices  
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A major drop is expected in the petrol and diesel prices in Pakistan, following a decrease in the international oil prices. The government is expected to cut petrol rates by Rs13 per litre and diesel by Rs8 to Rs9.50/litre on May 16 for the next fortnight revision, according to a section of the press.



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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Korea, Mr. Park Ki Jun called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

## AJK govt swiftly accepts demands of protesters

F.P. Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq says the state government has accepted all demands of the Awami Action Committee (AAC). His announcement came as the protests in support of affordable bread and electricity had entered the fourth day.

While highlighting that the Centre assured its complete support to provide relief to the masses, PM Anwar said, "No one can reject two fundamental demands regarding roti [bread] and electricity." After the acceptance of all demands by the protesters, the AJK government issued a notification. After the formal issuance of the notification, the government hoped that peace would be restored in the area so that the routine life became functional again. According to the notification, the flour price has been reduced from Rs3,100 to Rs2,000 per 40 kilogramme.

Meanwhile, the electricity prices will be Rs3 per unit for usage between 1-100 units, Rs5 per unit for usage between 100-300 units and Rs6 per unit for

the 300-above units. Also, commercial rates of electricity have been fixed at Rs10 per unit for 1-300 unit slab and for 300 or above slab, it has been fixed at Rs15 per unit. PM Anwar called the announced package in response to protests a 'special connection' of Pakistani government with the region. He announced that Islamabad would provide Rs23 billion funds to the AJK government.

Despite the notification of subsidies and government's assurances, clashes between the AAC protesters with the 'law enforcement agencies' continued in Muzaffarabad. A man was injured during the clashes, who later succumbed to his wounds. It may be noted that a policeman was also killed during the clashes on Saturday.

The latest notifications would be read out before the protesters in Muzaffarabad before calling off the protests today. The AAC protesters had decided to continue march on Muzaffarabad, refusing to go home despite the approval of a Rs23 billion grant by PM Shehbaz on an urgent basis to resolve issues of people in the AJK.

The development came after violent protests erupted in the AJK on AAC's call against inflated electricity bills and taxes. A meeting presided by the PM that approved the grant was summoned over unrest in AJK. It was presided by the PM and attended by federal ministers and leaders of the allied parties. It reviewed the developing situation of the territory thoroughly. The Kashmiri leadership and participants of the meeting thanked the premier for the financial aid.

Meanwhile, AJK Chief Secretary Muhammad Usman Chachar said a deal regarding the AAC's demands had been reached. He told that internet services in AJK were also restored. The AAC called for a shutter down and wheel-jam strike across the state to protest the electricity price hike and taxes. However, the situation escalated as the protesters and police clashed. A sub-inspector was killed while dozens other policemen and protesters also got injured during the teargas shelling by the police and stone pelting by the demonstrators.

## PM approves immediate release of Rs23b for AJK

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday ordered an immediate release of Rs 23 billion to resolve the issues confronting the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

The prime minister decided to provide funds after thoroughly examining the situation of the territory, in a special meeting chaired by him on the subject, a PM Office press release said. Different parts of the AJK witnessed protest demonstrations during the last couple of days with the people seeking reduced electricity bills and taxes as well as subsidized wheat flour.

Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, AJK cabinet members, and senior leadership attended the meeting besides the federal ministers and leaders of the coalition parties. The Kashmiri leadership and other participants of the meeting thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz for his decision to provide funds.

## 'Accountability should begin with former dictator Ayub'

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Addressing the National Assembly session on Monday, the Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said that violators of the Constitution should be tried for treason, to which the latter countered, in strong words, that accountability should begin with former dictator Ayub Khan.

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif referenced Ayub's mentioning of Article 6, saying that the PTI government had tried to carry out proceedings against himself under the same provision. Asif said he completely supported the demand for Article 6 proceedings against violators of the Constitution.

The minister subsequently said in startling comments: "The body of the false Field Marshall Ayub Khan, who instituted the first martial law [in the country], should also be dug out and hanged as per Article 6. Begin from there and the height should be the night when the Constitution was violated and the assembly was dissolved so the no-confidence motion could not pass."

Asif said he supported the opposition leader's demands but they should apply "to everyone one by one". The minister reiterated that Article 6 proceedings should begin, adding that the Parliament's members agreed to this as well but it should start with the former military dictator.

The minister's remarks prompted commotion and uproar from the opposition benches even as the NA speaker called for calm and for lawmakers to let Asif resume his speech. Resuming his address, the minister said Ayub Khan was "the first to violate his oath" and turned the direction of the country. "The country has still not been able to stabilise," he added.

Discussions centred on the counterterrorism landscape in the region, with a focus on areas of mutual interest.

Pakistani and US senior officials emphasised the importance of expanded counterterrorism collaboration and capacity building, including exchanges of technical expertise and best practices, investigative and prosecutorial assistance, provision of border security infrastructure and training, including the United States training of more than 300 police and frontline responders since the last Pakistan-US Counterterrorism Dialogue in March 2023, and strengthening multilateral engagement such as in the UN and the Global Counterterrorism Dialogue on May 10 in Washington.

Pakistan and the United States recognised that a partnership to counter the ISIS-Khorasan — also known as Daesh — the TTP, and other terrorist organisations will advance security in the region and serve as a model of bilateral and regional cooperation to address transnational terrorism threats.

Both governments resolved to increase communication on these topics and continue collaboration to detect and deter violent extremism through whole-of-government approaches. "The Counterterrorism Dialogue reaffirms Pakistan's and the United States' shared determination to contribute to both regional and global security and stability."

## Pakistan, US stress coop in tackling terror outfits

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United States have underscored the importance of bilateral cooperation in addressing the most pressing challenges to regional and global security, including the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Daesh.

According to a statement issued by the Foreign Office on Monday, Additional Foreign Secretary for the UN and OIC, Ambassador Syed Haider Shah, and US Department of State Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Ambassador Elizabeth Richard, co-chaired the Pakistan-US Counterterrorism Dialogue on May 10 in Washington.

## Intra-party polls: ECP questions 'status' of PTI

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The submission of documents related to intra-party elections by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has seemingly not satisfied the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) as the top electoral authority raised several queries over the current "status" of the former ruling party after losing "its organisational structure on lapsing of 5 years."

A two-page questionnaire was sent to the Imran-founded party by the election watchdog after the former submitted documents related to its intra-party elections in a bid to address objections. The ECP questioned the current "status" of the PTI as a political party besides questioning why not to start the delisting process of the former ruling party's registration and imposing a fine for not hold-

ing timely intra-party elections.

The commission's first question read that the "PTI did not hold intra-party elections within 5 years, in the departure of Section 208(1). Hence, it lost its organisational structure on lapsing of 5 years. What is the status of PTI now in this perspective, as a political party?" It also questioned the legality of the party's chief organiser and federal election commissioner appointed by its General Body, while the PTI's constitution defines appointments on the former position via its National Council on recommendations of the Chief Executive Committee (CEC).

According to the ECP, a political party would be registered in accordance with the old law under the Election Act if it submits certificates within a week after intra-party polls, besides complete

records of elected office-bearers, poll data and results. Moreover, it also requires to submit relevant documents in 60 days under the Election Act. The ECP questioned why not to commence the delisting process of the Imran-founded party for not submitting the documents as per the prescribed law.

The questionnaire also raised a query regarding the imposition of a fine on the PTI under the law which allows penalising a political party for failing to hold intra-party polls. The commission asked the PTI leadership to submit its response to the observations to proceed further in accordance with the law. The recently held intra-party elections of the PTI had once again been questioned by the ECP as the latter sent a notice to the former ruling party over alleged irregularities, media reported citing sources.

# The Frontier Post

## Kakar dismisses allegations

KARACHI (INP): Former caretaker prime minister and incumbent Senator, Anwarul Haq Kakar downplayed the wheat import scandal as a 'storm in a teacup', says in media reports. "As time passes, people understand that there is neither a wheat crisis nor is this any scandal, an attempt has been made to create a storm in a teacup, there has been a big difference in production and demand targets in the country over past twelve years," Kakar said.

# Pakistan keen to learn from Korean expertise: Shehbaz

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that Pakistan was keen to learn from Korea's experience of industrialization and SME sector growth as well as in the field of Information Technology (IT), including artificial intelligence.

The prime minister, talking to Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan Park Ki Jun, who called on him, also offered to enhance export of skilled manpower from Pakistan to meet Korea's human resource needs. The Korean ambassador congratulated the prime minister on behalf of the Korean leadership upon his re-election.

The prime minister thanked the Korean leadership for the warm message of greetings that he received and expressed the desire to work closely to further strengthen bilateral ties.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that Pakistan and Korea enjoyed good relations, particularly in trade and investment sectors. He said both countries had cooperated since 1960s for economic development and conveyed admiration for Korea's remarkable transformation into a modern technologically advanced economy.

To promote mutually beneficial trade, he proposed the exchange of business delegations between Seoul and Islamabad. In this regard, Prime Minister Shehbaz said that he would instruct relevant cabinet members to coordinate with the Korean side to discuss existing investments by Korean companies as well as to explore new opportunities. He also extended an invitation to President Yoon Suk Yeol to undertake an official visit to Pakistan.

The Korean ambassador thanked the prime minister for receiving him

and conveyed the desire of the Korean government to enhance its bilateral cooperation with Pakistan in a number of areas of mutual interest, particularly trade, investment, IT, culture, tourism and people to people exchanges.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, reiterating government's sharp focus on economic advancement, said it was pursuing its agenda of growth through massive reforms and structural changes.

"My government is totally committed to bringing huge reforms and huge structural changes. We are inching towards that direction, as, otherwise, it will be a futile exercise and will not produce proportionate results. We are absolutely focused on the agenda of reforms," he said in an interview with Saudi state-owned television channel Al Arabiya.

The prime minister informed the interviewer that Pakistan was faced with huge challenges at the macro-economic level like GDP growth ratio, huge loans, energy shortage, weak power transmission system, line losses and expensive power generation. Other challenges include revenue generation, corruption, less utilisation of technology, and lack of monitoring and supervision, he added.

The prime minister spoke high of the Saudi leadership and their cooperation with Pakistan, saying that the Pakistan-Saudi Arabia relations went back to centuries and there was no parallel of this relationship on the globe. "We are brothers. We understand each other and share each other's grief and happiness. We are partners in progress and prosperity, not only in the two countries but also in the region," he remarked while explaining to a question as to why every Pakistani leader opted to pay

the first foreign visit to the Kingdom after assuming office.

Referring to recent high-level interactions between the two countries, he mentioned his two meetings with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in the Kingdom, the visit of Saudi foreign minister and a huge Saudi business delegation to Pakistan recently. "This shows that the Saudi leadership is very serious and sincere to enhance relations with Pakistan not only in diplomacy but investment, trade, culture and between the youth of two countries," he added.

Shehbaz Sharif said that during his Saudi visit, he had the "most intense and comprehensive" discussion with Saudi authorities wherein two sides had agreed to cooperate in multiple sectors. He applauded the progress achieved by the Kingdom under the Saudi crown prince's leadership, and his Vision 2030, calling it a role model for many countries.

Asked about the outcome of recent interactions, the prime minister said: "We have achieved great progress. We have identified areas of cooperation - both B2B and G2G. Now there is a clear-cut way forward for mutual cooperation in investment, mines, minerals and renewable energy."

He said Pakistan was still an agrarian economy and by using modern technologies, both countries could enhance cooperation to produce fruits, vegetables, wheat, sugarcane, and sunflower to convert them into value-added products and export to Gulf region and other countries. Similarly, Pakistan could help provide its skilled IT manpower to the Kingdom to help grow both economies. He said other countries like Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Türkiye and China could also become partners in this fields and help bring an economic revolution in the country.



RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff distributing military awards among the brave families of Shuhada.

## KP CM for allocation of adequate funds to all sectors

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting was held on Monday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair regarding preparation of draft Annual Development Program for the financial year 2024-25.

The meeting made threadbare discussion on proposed projects of Irrigation, Public Health Engineering and Road Sectors to be reflected in the upcoming ADP. Besides Provincial Minister for Irrigation Aqib Ullah Khan, Minister for Public Health Engineering, Pakhtunyar Khan, Minister for Communications & Works, Shakeel Khan and Advisor to Chief Minister on Information, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, the meeting was attended by administrative secretaries and other high ups of the

concerned departments.

The meeting was given detailed briefing about the on-going and proposed new projects of these departments to be included in the ADP 2024-25. While issuing policy directives about new ADP, the Chief Minister directed the high ups of these departments to give top priority to the ongoing schemes specially those which are due for completion in the allocation of developmental funds further directing them not to propose any such scheme for the ADP which could not be completed within the stipulated time period adding that only such schemes be reflected in the ADP which are feasible in all respects.

The chair further directed that adequate funds be allocated each year for the schemes reflected in the ADP so that they could be completed timely. The Chief Minister made it clear

that quality of work in developmental schemes would not be compromised at any cost. Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur directed the high ups of Public Health Engineering Department to come up with proposal of water filtration plants to ensure the supply of clean drinking water to the citizens of provincial capital Peshawar adding that special attention be focused on the provision of clean drinking water to the people of southern districts of the province.

He further directed the high ups of PHE department to initiate strict actions against those reportedly involved in selling drinking water of government tubewells. The Chief Minister also directed the high ups of all the works departments to enhance the capacity of their respective departments to ensure effective monitoring of developmental schemes.

## COAS confers mily awards upon Army personnel

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: GHQ Investiture ceremony was held at General Headquarters Rawalpindi. General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) conferred military awards upon Army personnel for their acts of gallantry during operations and meritorious services rendered to the nation.

A large number of senior Army officers and families of awardees attended the ceremony. Officers & soldiers were awarded medals including Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military) and Tamgha-i-Basalat. Medals of Shuhada were received by their family members.

Paying rich tribute to Shuhada and Ghazis, COAS said that there is nothing more noble than laying one's life for defence of motherland and the sacrifices of our martyrs strengthen our resolve to fight with utmost dedication and spirit of sacrifice.

COAS also lauded brave families of Shuhada for their high spirits and sacrifices rendered by them. COAS said that Shuhada and Ghazis are our national heroes and the nation owes its independence and security to the sacrifices of its valiant warriors. Our Shuhada are, indeed, the beacons of hope and resilience for the nation.

## Al-Qadir Varsity Trust: IHC seeks report

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday again sought report from chief commissioner office in plea seeking registration of Al-Qadir University Trust under Islamabad Adact.

Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the petition filed by Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI)'s founder. The petitioner's lawyer adopted the stance that the Al-Qadir University was not being registered and prayed the court to issue directives to the chief commissioner office in that regard.





KARACHI: Students congregate outside the exam center and seeking shelter from the blistering sun beneath under the tent. —APP Photo

## 718 meters disconnected on gas theft

LAHORE (APP): The Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) disconnected 718 connections during its on going crack-down against gas pilferers in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, imposing Rs 24 million fine.

According to a spokesman for the SNGPL, in Lahore and Sheikhpura, regional teams disconnected 549 connections on illegal use of gas and imposed a fine of Rs 19.6 million against gas pilferers and also lodged 21 FIRs.

In Multan and Bahawalpur, 139 connections were disconnected on illegal use besides imposing Rs 3 million fine.

In Peshawar, the company disconnected 28 connections on account of illegal use of gas.

## 98 trucks of material seized

LAHORE (APP): The metropolitan corporation, during its on going operation against encroachments, seized 98 trucks of material from the city during the last seven days.

The mobile special squads had been deployed to enforce regulations, said by Administrator Metropolitan Corporation Rafia Haider.

During the past seven days, more than 948 encroachments related materials had been seized while 3,233 banners and streamers were removed from main roads.

As many as 87 challans were issued during the operations and special monitoring of business line-marking within designated limits was also being conducted by zonal officers, she added.

Rafia said that operations in various shifts across the city would continue until permanent eradication of encroachments.

## LDA demolishes nine constructions

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) on Monday demolished nine constructions besides sealing seven properties in the city during an operation.

The teams, under the supervision of Chief Town Planner Azhar Ali, conducted operations against illegal constructions in Johar Town, Lahore Evenue, Wapda Town, IEP Town, Valencia Town and UET Society.

Plot numbers 11, 44, 45, and 46 in Lahore Evenue, plot numbers 277/2A and 7J in Valencia Town were demolished due to illegal constructions.

Farmhouses on Defence Road, plot number 2H in Johar Town, plot number 4 Block M, and plot number 12A Block F were also demolished.

Plot number 227 Block A UET Society, plot number 73 Block A2, and 72 Block D2 in Wapda Town were sealed.

Plot number 302 Block L, 197 Block L, 306, 307 Block L in Johar Town, and plot number 36 Block A3 in IEP Town were also sealed.

The notices were issued before the properties were sealed or demolished.

# CM orders sustainable water drainage system for Lahore

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, during a meeting on local government here on Monday, reviewed the state of drainage and sewerage system besides progress on repair and rehabilitation measures.

The CM said, "No street in Lahore should remain unpaved. A sustainable water drainage system should be devised."

Maryam Nawaz Sharif said that the Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA), Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL) and other bodies concerned should work in close coordination, adding that people cannot bear the inconvenience caused by standing water in a street. She said it is painful to see dirty water and overflowing sewerage in broken streets and roads.

"All institutions should not ignore problems of the people," she mentioned. She also reviewed progress on streetlights, parks and horticulture in suburban areas.

Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Provincial Minister Local Government Zeeshan Rafique and Special Assistant Zeeshan Malik attended the meeting. Chief Secretary, Chairman P&D, Secretaries, Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner Lahore, DG LDA and other relevant officers were also present.

**CM announces setting up Garment City:** Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif announced on Monday that the Punjab's first plug and play Garment City will be established in which all facilities would be available. She was chairing a special meeting about the project here on Monday. She said that government would organise technical training of workers of the garment industry.

The Chief Minister directed the authorities concerned to solicit expressions of interest from major apparel industries for the garment city, and formed a high-level committee led by Minister for Industries Chaudhry Shafay Hussain for the purpose.

Earlier, the CM was briefed that sheds and other facilities like weaving, dyeing and other related units will be established in the garment city. It was also briefed that the proposed garment city will be energized with green/solar energy systems.

Moreover, garment cities will be established in other areas gradually, after the success of the pilot project. Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Provincial Information & Culture Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari, Provincial Minister for Industries Chaudhry Shafay Hussain and MPA Sania Ashiq attended the meeting.

# Home Secy chairs meeting to tackle challenges

LAHORE (APP): Under the guidance of Punjab's Home Secretary Noorul Amin Mengal a crucial meeting was held at the Home Department to tackle the persistent challenges within the Probation and Parole Service.

During the session, DG Probation, Shahid Iqbal, presented comprehensive strategies aimed at improving the management of probationers. Notably, plans were finalized to provide additional salary allowances to service personnel, aligning them with the standards set by the Jail department.

Additionally, a proposal was put forth to elevate Probation and Parole Officers from Grade 16 to Grade 17, which has been forwarded to the Chief Minister for review, in accordance with the govern-

ment's commitment to strengthening the service.

Highlighting the Chief Minister's vision, Punjab's Home Secretary stressed the significance of modernizing the Probation System. It was announced that the OMIS Probation System would be integrated with the Police Department and Jail, streamlining operations and enhancing data accessibility.

With over 36,595 probationers under court orders, the digitalization of records will offer instant access to vital information, facilitating efficient decision-making processes. In an effort to enhance the welfare of probationers, DG Probation, Shahid Iqbal, unveiled plans to establish partnerships with various institutions to ensure comprehensive support

mechanisms. Furthermore, online training initiatives for probation officers have been initiated across Punjab, along with tailored awareness sessions catering to the needs of probationers.

Addressing concerns regarding staffing, Home Secretary Noorul Amin Mengal underscored the urgency of filling vacant positions and prioritizing promotions for eligible officers, demonstrating a commitment to bolstering the service's performance and efficacy. The coordinated efforts of the Punjab government signify a proactive approach towards reforming the Probation and Parole Service, highlighting its dedication to fostering rehabilitation and reintegration within the justice system.

# Sindh considers to form 'Dolphin Force'

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hassan Lanjar on Monday paid a special visit to the Karachi Police Office to chair a high-level meeting on law and order situation in the metropolis.

Additional IGP Karachi and other senior police officers welcomed the Minister at the KPO. A guard of honor was also presented to him by the police contingent.

The Home Minister Sindh chaired a high-level meeting on the law and order situation in the city and issued further necessary instructions after a detailed briefing on various aspects.

Additional IG Karachi Imran Yaqub Minhas presented a briefing on the measures being taken to curb street crimes including theft, robbery, and drug trafficking, and suggested the formation of a Dolphin Force similar to the Punjab Police to combat street crimes. He also recommended the provision of 1800 motorcycles for this purpose.

The Additional IG Karachi informed the meeting that the police are constantly working to protect Chinese citizens, experts, and other foreigners, and have also taken on board the relevant stakeholders in this regard.

He said that the incidents of motorcycle theft and mobile phone snatching have decreased significantly due to effective policing and constant action against criminals. He mentioned that four of our employees were martyred in the attack on the KPO, while several police personnel and law enforcement officials were also injured.

The Additional IGP Karachi briefed the meeting on the measures being taken to curb street crimes including the formation of a Dolphin Force and requested the provision of necessary resources including motorcycles and vehicles.

The Home Minister Sindh, directed that the police take effective and coordinated action against

street criminals and their groups and ensure the arrest of those involved in such activities. He said that street crime is a big challenge that needs to be tackled with determination and the best strategy. He praised the overall performance of the police and said that the measures taken by the DIG West are also commendable.

The Minister of Home Sindh said that he will again visit next month and review the progress on the instructions given. He said that he will personally visit different areas of the city and review the traffic situation.

He emphasized that no leniency or compromise should be shown on complaints of bribery and extortion and immediate action should be taken against those found guilty. He said that the police should prioritize justice in all their actions and decisions. The meeting was attended by all DIGs of Karachi Police, SSPs and other senior police officers.

# CM directs local govt to end transition period, hand over powers to local councils

KARACHI (APP):The Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has directed the local Government (LG) Department to complete the transition period of local councils, which is still in progress so that elected people can serve the people of their areas.

He also directed the Public Health dept to prepare a scheme under which unfunctional RO plants could be functionalised in the interest of the local people. He was presiding over a joint meeting of different departments which he convened after holding meetings of party workers in divisional headquarters. Those who attended the meeting include Minister Education Syed Sardar Shah, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif, Chairman P&D Najam Shah, Secretary Energy Musadiq Khan, SMBNR Baqaullah Unar, Secretary Livestock Kazim Jatoti, Secretary Local Govt Khalid Hyder Shah, Secretary IT Asif Ikram, Secretary Excise & Taxation Saleem Rajput, Secretary Environment Ms Nabila Umar, Secretary Mines & Mineral Tahir Sangi and other concerned officers.

The CM said that during his meeting with the elected representatives of

local councils in the divisional headquarters, he was told that the transition period was in progress in their areas. Secretary Local Government Khalid Hyder Shah said that some local bodies have not completed their transition work. At this, the CM directed the local government Secretary to complete the transition at once and hand over powers to the elected representatives so that they could serve their people.

Murad Shah said that he had also received numerous complaints during the meeting against the non-functioning of the RO plants installed in various villages. At this, Secretary PHE Sohail Qureshi told the CM that in March he repaired and functionalised 140 RO plants in various districts such as 26 in the villages of Badin, seven in Sujawal, 10 in Matiari, three in Jamshoro, Dadu, eight in Karachi, nine in Mirpurkhas, 10 in Tharparkar and 10 in Tando Allahyar villages and others.

The CM was told that the repair of 140 RO plants was made from the M&R budget. Mr Shah said that he has also received complaints from the Mirpurkhas division, particularly the villages of Tharparkar and Umerkot where RO plants were out of order. He directed

Secretary PHE to get them functionalised within the next two months. Secretary PHE Sohail Qureshi told the CM that the list of around 100 RO plants sent to him by the CM Secretariat includes the RO plants of various villages of Sukkur, Mirpur Mathelo (Ghotki), Khairpur, Naushehroferoze, Shaheed Benazirabad. He said that repair of the RO plants, as directed by the chief minister, would be carried out by the department within two months from the existing M&R budget.

The CM directed the PHE dept to repair and operationalise 200 RO plants of various villages of Tharparkar and Umer Kot districts during the current financial year M&R budget and report to him. Murad Ali Shah said that there was a complaint that the PHE department handed over its pimping stations and their staff to the towns but the funds for their salaries and payment of electricity bills have not been given to them. Therefore, the employees were working without salary. At this, Secretary Local Government Khalid Hyder Shah assured the CM that he and Secretary PHE dept would sit together and resolve the issue of salaries of the employees.

## IGP reviews counter-terrorism efforts

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh, Ghulam Nabi Memon Monday conducted a comprehensive visit of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), delving into the operational challenges across various crime-fighting units under its jurisdiction and issuing directives for further action.

Upon his arrival, IGP Sindh was warmly received by the Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIGP) - CTD and Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs).

## Excise Dept intensifies drive against tax-defaulting vehicles

F.P. Report

KARACHI: On the instructions of Sindh's Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Excise, Taxation, and Narcotics Control, Sharjeel Inam Memon, the Excise Department has intensified its campaign against unregistered and tax-defaulting vehicles.

During the campaign against unregistered and tax-defaulting vehicles, a

total of 1105 vehicles were thoroughly checked in Karachi. Documents belonging to 119 tax-defaulting vehicles were seized during the inspection, while the owners of 11 vehicles paid their taxes online on the spot.

Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon praised the officers of the Excise Department for their effective implementation and urged them to expedite operations to

achieve concrete results.

He stated that the aim of the campaign is to ensure compliance with registration and tax requirements. The Sindh government aims to promote a culture of accountability and responsibility among vehicle owners.

Sharjeel Inam Memon emphasized that the government is committed to complying with tax regulations and ensuring public safety on the roads.

## Minister for improving dengue surveillance

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Minister for Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education (SH&ME) Khawaja Salman Rafique chaired the second meeting of the Technical Working Group on Dengue Virus at the Institute of Public Health (IPH), here on Monday.

IPH Dean Prof. Dr. Zarfishan Tahir, Additional Secretary (Technical) P&SHD Dr. Younis, Dr. Jamshed, Dr. Irfan Ahmed, Dr. Yaddullah and Dr. Anjum from World Health Organization (WHO), Nosheen from PITB, Dengue Experts Advisory Group (DEAG) Chairperson Prof. Dr. Imran, Entomologists Prof. Dr. Waseem Akram, District Health Authority Lahore Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr. Faisal Malik and others attended the meeting.

Dr. Zarfishan Tahir briefed the minister about current situation of dengue virus across the province and measures taken to control it. Khawaja Salman Rafique reprimanded CEO Lahore Dr. Faisal for poor performance and directed to improve dengue surveillance. He said that all departments should work with eyes open to prevent the spread of dengue virus. People should ensure cleanliness in their homes, shops and other places, he

instructed. "We need to speed up and improve surveillance in the field. Field staff should be trained in this regard," he said.

The minister emphasized that the global battle against dengue virus involves multiple countries, highlighting the shared responsibility among all stakeholders to control its spread. Mobilizing field staff is imperative to confront the dengue challenge effectively.

The Punjab government is proactively formulating a comprehensive strategy well in advance of the dengue season, he mentioned. Urgent actions are required to curb larvae proliferation. Any falsified performance in the field will face consequences. Misleading dengue surveillance practices are deemed harmful to the public and will be addressed accordingly, he added.

On the occasion, Entomologist Prof. Waseem Akram stressed the importance of parental vigilance in safeguarding children from dengue. He recommended refresher training for master trainers in entomology and emphasized the collaborative efforts of health department, Parks and Horticultural Authority, and Water and Sanitation Agency to combat the disease effectively.

## Sindh Govt not to tolerate any land grabber in Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Minister for Culture, Tourism, Antiquities and Archives Sindh Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah Monday said the building mafia had converted the mega city of Karachi into a jungle of concrete and the provincial government would not tolerate any land grabber and would continue its indiscriminate action against the land mafia.

In a statement while reacting to the press conference of leader of the opposition in the Sindh Assembly, the Minister said that such pressers appeared when the govt took action against the land mafia.

Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah asked the opposition leader to avoid such irresponsible statements in future saying as govt would utilize all its resources to free the city from the land grabbers.

## 2 people shot dead in Lahore

LAHORE (INP): Two of a family including mother and son were shot dead by unidentified motorcycle riders who sped the scene here on Sunday, police said. According to details, unknown motorcyclists sprayed bullets at two people in Southern Cantonment of Lahore. As a result of firing, both mother and son were killed on the spot and assailants sped the scene.



LAHORE: A disable vendor on the way on wheelchair tricycle selling balloons to earn livelihood. —APP Photo





PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur chairing a meeting regarding draft Annual Development Program 2024-25

### Decoration, embellishment of Nishtar Hall

## Zahid shows concern over use of substandar material

#### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor for Tourism, Culture, Archaeology, and Museums to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Zahid Khan Zeb, has expressed serious concern over the use of substandard materials and slow progress in the decoration and embellishment project of the Nishtar Hall in Peshawar.

He made it clear that Nishtar Hall, situated in the heart of Peshawar, is a significant cultural center, and any compromise or negligence in its maintenance and decoration will not be tolerated.

He emphasized that the project should be completed according to international standards by next month to ensure its formal inauguration according to the scheduled plan

of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur. These concerns were expressed during a briefing on the decoration project of Nishtar Hall.

It should be noted that this was the first time the Tourism Advisor was invited to a cultural event held at the completion of the final phase of the development project, including Nishtar Hall. During the event, he took note of several deficiencies in the project.

Among them was the leakage of rainwater onto the roof of the main hall, which resulted in damage to the carpets, valuable rugs, and the installation of chairs, costing approximately 60 million rupees. The Tourism and Culture Advisor pointed out to the project officials that decoration of any building, including Nishtar Hall,

should start from the roof, not from the floor. He disagreed with the project officials' argument that the roof of the building was previously leaking, so work started on the floor.

He stated that it's time to stop causing losses to the national treasury by listening to such stories, and those in power now have a heavy mandate from the people.

He clarified that this scheme was initiated with heavy loans obtained on interest from international banks.

There is also a limit to foreign loans, and when this limit is reached, loans stop coming in. Loans are granted when the benefits of the project are evident to the lending foreign institutions.

He said that under the active leadership of Chief

Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, the current PTI government has taken steps to minimize reliance on loans at the provincial level and move towards economic self-sufficiency for the province.

Zahid Khan Zeb directed the project authorities to expedite all necessary work on an urgent basis, including beautification, parking, washrooms, boundary walls, and installation of reception gates, so that the project could be completed soon on an urgent basis. Once completed, cultural activities will once again be initiated in the venue.

He expressed the desire to organize as many cultural activities as possible to promote the diverse culture of the province and provide additional recreational opportunities for the people.

### ILA demands protection for victim of child marriage

#### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: International Lawyers' Association (ILA) Human Rights Wing has prepared a report on the forced marriage of a 13-year-old girl from Swat to a 70-year-old man. The report has been submitted to Coordinator Nasser Ghilzai advocate.

ILA demanded that the government provide complete protection to the affected family and has stated that the family members are receiving threats from opponents. According to the report, the girl, who is a 6th-grade student, had refused to marry, but her father had agreed to the marriage in exchange for Rs 10 lakh due to poverty.

When the girl refused to marry, a commotion broke out in the area, and the local police were informed, who immediately rescued the girl and took her to a local hospital for medical examination. The police also arrested the 70-year-old man. ILA members visited various places in the area and gathered information, stating that the girl's parents were happy and willing to marry her off to the 70-year-old man because he had also offered them money and a house. ILA has demanded that the government take actions against the perpetrators and provide protection to the affected family.

### Pesco notifies power suspension

#### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Monday notified that due to maintenance work power supply will remain suspended from Jamrud Grid Station on 15th May from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Taj Abad 2 feeders will face inconvenience.

Likewise, it said that power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar University Grid Station on 15th May from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. resultantly, consumers of University Campus, Canal Town, Malakandher, Engineering, Regi, Taj Abad 2, Taj Abad, Achini Mera 1,2, Hasan Zai, Sufaid Dheri, Old Abdara, New Abdara Road, JAF, Academy Town, Circular Road, DHA, HBK, Askri 6, Commercial Building Abdul Razak feeders will face inconvenience. The power supply will remain suspended from RMT Grid Station on 15th May from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Safdar Abad 2, RMT, Badizai, Dorani Media colony, Sheikh Yasin and Regi feeders will face inconvenience.

Moreover, it said that power supply will remain suspended from Peshawar Cantt Grid Station on 15th May from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. resultantly, consumers of Tehkal, Islamia College, KTH, Commercial, Jahangir Abad, University Town, NCB, Air Port, PAF Base, Saddar Road, Mall Road, MES 1,2, Old MES, Babu Ghari, Marble Industry, SAA, Palosi 1, Behari Colony, Tehkal Payan feeders will face inconvenience.

## Education dept formulates balanced ADP, claims Tarakai

#### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Minister for Education in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Khan Tarkai, has stated that the education department has formulated a very balanced Annual Development Plan (ADP) this year.

He mentioned that substantial funds have been allocated for ongoing and new projects. He said that out of the 107 ongoing projects of the education department, 90 projects are in various stages of completion.

These projects include 58 projects in merged districts, 19 in settled districts, and 30 in the tribal districts. The completion of these projects will propel the education department towards progress.

He made these remarks while presiding over the Education ADP review meeting. Secretary Education Masood Ahmed and other senior officials also attended the meeting.

They said that plans include regularizing 50 mosque schools in settled districts, construction of 200 primary schools, reconstruction of 100 schools, and establishment of a Cadet College in Mamad Gat.

Additionally, plans entail the reconstruction of 150 schools and setting up 150 middle schools in rented buildings.

The Education Minister further stated that the establishment of District Education Offices in tribal districts, especially with arrange-

ments for female officers' residence, is also part of the ADP.

He directed education officials to prepare detailed briefings for starting technology courses in middle and high schools. Moreover, he instructed to provide complete details of IT labs and IT teachers province-wide so that IT labs can be solarized as per requirement and equipment can be upgraded. Furthermore, he emphasized employing IT teachers according to their expertise.

The Minister for Education also directed the authorities to set timelines for ongoing and new developmental projects to ensure timely completion and enhance literacy rates.

### End of an era!

## Jahan Ara retires after serving ICS for 32 years

#### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Madam Jahan Ara has been retired after serving Islamia Collegiate School for 32 years of service. In addition to teaching, she also served as the head of the junior section at Islamia Collegiate School (ICS) Peshawar, on Monday.

ICS Teaching Staff Association organized farewell ceremony in honor of Madam Jahan Ara in which teaching staff president Kafeel Ahmed, Muhammad Shehzad, General Secretary, Principal Sikandar Khan, Vice Principal Hayat Khan and all cabinet members participated in the party. ICS Principal and



Teaching Staff Association president praised Madam Jahan Ara's professional services, and she also planted a tree in the school courtyard on the occasion.

## Combating poverty through promotion of livestock education: A way forward

PESHAWAR (APP): Every year, thousands of youth join Govt jobs as career, many visit abroad for employment and few try luck in the painstaking profession of veterinary medicines to serve their countrymen.

Dr Jawad Zaman, a DVM specialist of Nowshera district is among one of the talented youth of Pakistan, who have set a unique example for thousand of unemployed youth after joining the doctor of veterinary medicine's profession as a career in Pakhtuns dominated society that considered it as an unrecognized profession owing to socio-cultural barriers.

"When I joined the university of livestock and animal husbandry at DI Khan for 4 years BS DVM Degree, my friends and relatives made a mock of me, and declared it a waste of time," said Dr Jawad who opened veterinary clinic at Pabbi bazaar after completion of his professional education.

In spite of the non-encouraging behaviors, he said "I have focused on my goal. Today, I have two veterinary clinics i.e one at Pabbi bazaar and other at my hometown Mohib Banda Nowshera besides visiting as a consultant to cattlefarms, and medicine pharmaceuticals companies by earning handsome monthly packages," said Dr Jawad, adding great scope of employment was existed for youth in livestock and animal husbandry's profession in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In KP, around 30-35 million rural population were engaged in livestock raising, having household holdings of 2-3 cattle and buffalo besides 5-6 sheep and goats per family, which helped them to drive 30-40% of their income from livestock. The poultry meat also contributes 28.5% of the total meat production in Pakistan.

Despite of substantial meat and milk potential of the livestock and poultry sectors, he claimed that there was a shortage of DVM doctors in Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa where farmers often face financial losses in case of ailness or mortality of animals.

Demanding an increase of the vaternary univestries and institutes, he said quack doctors were playing with animals of poor farmers whom were largely relaying on milk business in order to feed their families.

"I had lost a cow in mysterious condition apparently due to foot and mouth disease last year due to lack of DVM doctor in my area, resulting an increase in my financial difficulties to pay the education expanses of my children and healthcare services," said Qaiser Khan, a resident of Wapda Town Nowshera.

He said the cow give about 15 kilogram milk a day which he sold in the market and support his family of six besides paying electricity and telephone bills and meeting other household expenses.

He suggested inclusion of DVM courses in school and college's syllabus and loans on easy terms and loans on easy terms and conditions to poor farmers of KP imperative to increase milk and meat production.

Dr Aftab Ahmed, Director Livestock and Dairy Development KP told APP that DVM doctors seats in DI Khan vaternary university were increased while students of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were also being sponsored at veterinary universities Lahore, Tando Jam Sindh and Faisalabad.

A mega dairy farm and livestock project has been launched with assistance of federal government for help of poor and rains/flood affected farmers in KP including merged districts.

Under the project, five imported purebred cows bearing 20 percent cost by farmers and 80 percent covered by the government was being provided.

About 160 model and livestock farms were established in all seven merged tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while work on 20 more livestock farms were in pipeline on which

work would soon start to engage more poor farmers and livestock owners this years.

The estimated cost of establishment of a model livestock farm is Rs3.5 million out of which 80 percent is being provided by the government and 20 percent shared by the beneficiary registered farmer, he said, adding the business and jobs oriented projects have started positive changes in lives of tribesmen.

He said it was mandatory for each farmer to run the poultryfarm for at least five years and properly look after animals provided by the government in a bid to increase milk and meat production besides increasing farmers' income.

One farm provides jobs to 900 people in merged areas, he said, adding the government also provides imported milking machines to registered farmers to avoid waste of milk and ensure its quality.

Keeping in view of an availability of vast land in seven merged tribal districts suitable for livestock and dairy farming, he said that another project i.e revival of existing poultry farms in merged areas under which free feed, medicines and vaccination services were being provided to the registered farmers by DVM doctors.

The objectives of these projects are to conserve livestock and dairy wealth by trying to improve the productive capabilities of livestock and poultry through effective animal health coverage and artificial insemination services, feed and fodder for benefits of tribal people.

To take advantage of the poultry farms project, he said the farmer was required to have a day old chicks while medicines and feed services were the responsibility of livestock department.

At least 45 model dairy farms with 3,000 poultry birds were established last year in merged areas.

The government is supporting farmers in construction of model semi-environmentally controlled

sheds and farms in merged areas for which Rs seven million would be provided by farmers and 10 million to 15 million by the government, he said adding the government would help registered farmers in solarization of their farms.

Each farm would have at least 30,000 poultry birds, he said, adding the project would change the destiny of tribal people.

The government, under poverty alleviation through enhancement of milk and meat value chain services in merged areas, is financially supporting farmers who have at least 20 animals and a model cattle farms, and that 20 farms were already established under this initiative.

"The interest of tribal people in these projects is overwhelming, and the department considers to extend the desired project for facilitation of more underprivileged farmers and poultry breeders."

Besides merged areas, he said about 107 model farms were being established in settled districts of the province to provide poultry and livestock meat to consumers at affordable rates.

He said approximately, 13.6million litres of milk and Rs1,360 million profit would be achieved from these farms in KP.

Dr Aftab said the trickled down positive effects of these three mega livestock and poultry projects worth Rs3,214 million started under the national emergency agriculture programme worth over Rs309.7 billion to alleviate poverty, increase meat and milk production have started visible at the grassroots level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Three federal funded gigantic projects including 'poverty alleviation through development of rural poultry' amounting Rs834 million, Save the Calf worth Rs1,554 million and Feedlot Fattening Programme of Rs826 million have provided much-needed relief to price-hike stricken people, women, persons with disabilities and under-privileged segments of society.

## POWA to observe two days strike



#### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Prosecution Officers Welfare Association (POWA) announced two-day strike on Tuesday and Wednesday across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Monday.

The strike was announced by POWA president Sangeen Shah along with cabinet members including Joint Secretary Waheed Ullah, and

Information Secretary Zulfikar while addressing press conference at Peshawar press club. They added that if their demands will not fulfill then they will decide on a future course of action.

POWA demanded establishment of a separate prosecution department. They also demanded provision of allowances and facilities to prosecutors, appointment of additional prosecutors,

residential facilities for prosecutors in each district and offices for female prosecutors in each session court.

POWA argued for amending the Prosecution Act, which has been pending since 2017. The general secretary Javed Ali Mohmand said that there are only 350 prosecutors in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which is insufficient, and more are needed.

## Mahsud assumes additional charge as CEO of WSSP

#### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR : Commissioner of Peshawar Division, Riaz Khan Mahsud, has taken charge of the additional responsibilities as Chief Executive Officer of Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP). Upon assuming office at the WSSP headquarters, senior management officials welcomed him. Later, he chaired a meeting of top executives of WSSP, where he was briefed on the company's financial, operational, administrative matters, past successes, and current challenges.

The meeting was attended by General Manager Operations Amir Hasan, GM Operations Muhammad Aijaz, GM Projects Dr. Mahboob Alam, zone managers, and other officials. The Commissioner directed to ensure the optimal utiliza-



tion of available resources and to ensure timely provision of quality services to citizens. He stated that immediate steps would be taken to address ongoing challenges, improve services further, and achieve self-reliance and goals.

Prior to this, he was informed that despite limited resources, measures were being taken to keep the environment clean and provide timely civic services. A system for self-driving of 134 tube wells has been introduced, and seven

tube wells have been shifted to solar energy. Instruments to check the quality of water have also been installed on multiple tube wells. Through Skada, the supply of drinking water at designated times is being ensured, electricity bills are being reduced, and an annual saving of approximately 800,000 rupees is expected through the transfer of tube wells to solar energy. An awareness campaign is continuously underway utilizing the services of scholars, professors, and selected representatives to raise awareness among the public. Committees and clusters have been established to establish contacts with traders and individuals from various walks of life.

Commissioner Peshawar expressed satisfaction with the performance of WSSP and reiterated his commitment to further improvement.





## In brief

### Martyred cop laid to rest F.P. Report

JAMRUD: The late police sub-inspector was laid to rest with State honor here in Jamrud, district Khyber on Monday. Sub-Inspector Abid Afridi was ambushed by unknown armed persons last evening at by pass road, Jamrud in which he embraced Shahadat while two of his colleagues sustained injuries who were shifted to the hospital for medical aid. District Police Officer Saleem K u l a c h v i, Parliamentarians, tribal elders, police officials and people from different walks of life were among the participants, attended funeral prayer held at ground opposite to Ghazali public school, Jamrud. A smart contingent of police presented a salute and the officials put floral wreaths at the coffin and offered prayers for the departed soul. Later on, the body was shifted to his native graveyard, for burial purpose.

### 2 persons shot killed in Buner F.P. Report

BUNER: As many as two persons were shot killed in two different villages in the premises of Daggar police station while the culprits of murder in the Anghapor village is unknown and case was registered against unidentified killers, on Monday. According to details, two cousins Khalid and Afzal in village Torwarsak have allegedly shot dead their cousin Hanif Khan over family disputes and thrown his dead body in a nearby graveyard the other day. While some unknown person has reportedly shot dead Anwar Ali in the suburb of village Anghapur early evening outside home and escaped from the crime scene. The Daggar police station on the complaint of Akram Khan brother of the deceased Hanif Khan charged the alleged accused and arrested them within hours after the murder. Police have yet to trace killer of Anwar Ali who are unidentified.

### Hygiene kits distributed F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Government of Punjab is taking commendable steps for the education, training and protection of special children including hearing impaired, blind, physically challenged, mentally challenged and retarded students studying in seven special education institutions in District Toba Tek Singh. Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Muhammad Naeem Sindhu's special compassion and guidance under the supervision of Chief Executive Officer (Education) Dr. Tahir Mansoor, ensured timely provision of all facilities to the children. In this context, Special Education Department Punjab along with "standard practical measures for the protection of special children and girls" as well as special "Hygiene Kits" through the mediation of DEO Special Education Faisalabad Division Madam Khalida Parveen for their hygiene," were provided. In Government Higher Secondary Special Education School Toba Tek Singh, Principal Madam Shabnam Zafar and District Focal Person Haider Ali distributed kits containing standard toothpaste, brush, soap, nail cutter, wipes and small towels among the affected students, while Government Special Education School Chah Shamoowala Kamalia, Bashir Ahmed Rabani in distributed special hygiene kits among the affected hearing students from KG to class VIII.



**HYDERABAD: Sindh Minister for Information, Sharjeel Inam Memon talking to media persons during health card distribution ceremony.**

## KKKU holds 25th academic council meeting

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University (KKKU) Karak convened its 25th Academic Council meeting on Monday. The meeting was chaired by the Vice Chancellor, Prof Dr Muhammad Naseer Ud Din. It was also attended by a prominent panel of academic and administrative experts, to decide matters of university academic journey.

The Panel included Dr Abdul Hakim Shah, Head of Physics department Dr Abdul Aziz, HoD Zoology Basar Ali, Lecturer CMS Department Faisal Nawab, Lecturer Renewable Energy department Muhammad Rahim, Controller of Examinations, Principal GPGC Prof Ajmal Khan, Principal Joint College Chokara Karak for BS, Nazia Hassan, Abdus Salam, Deputy Registrar Meetings along with Director Academics and Research, Dr Anwar Khan and Director QEC, Dr Muhammad Anwar, Sadiq



Ullah, PS to Vice Chancellor, also graced the occasion with his presence.

During the session, the Academic Council deliberated on vital academic issues and prepared recommendations to the syndicate regarding Board of Studies meetings, adoption of HEC policies, and the conduction of examinations. These discussions underscored the commitment of the council to maintain academic excellence in the university.

In his address, Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Naseer Ud Din appreciated the contributions of the council members in resolving the academic issues of the university. He reaffirmed the university's commitment to uphold a standard of education, emphasizing that educational excellence will be maintained at all costs.

The Vice Chancellor further expressed his gratitude to the council members for their dedication and acknowledged their role in shaping future of the institution. Members of the Academic Council expressed their confidence in the dynamic leadership of Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Naseer Ud Din. They pledged their support in advancing the university academic agenda.

## Traders union new cabinet take oath

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Oath taking ceremony of the new office bearers of Anjuman-e-Tajran Landi Kotal Bazaar was held in Jirga Hall on Monday. Former Senator Taj Muhammad Afridi was the chief guest on the occasion.

Beside tehsil Chairman Haji Shah Khalid, Assistant Commissioner, Landi Kotal Irshad Mohmand, Additional Station House Officer Temour Shinwari, head of Khyber Sports Club Mirajuddin Shinwari, tribal elders and a large number of local traders were among the participants.

Addressing on the occasion Senator Taj Muhammad Afridi felicitated the newly elected cabinet of the Bazaar union and said it will leave no stone unturned to work for the welfare of the local traders. Success hides in honesty and a shopkeeper who deceives his customers will get timely profit but will never develop his business, he added and said Landi Kotal Bazaar has special status that must be upheld in the form of honoring the customers.

He urged the shopkeepers to strictly follow the rules of honesty and avoid misleading the purchasers. He called upon the administration and the local bodies' representatives not to impose a firm set of laws being implemented down as the tribal traders were unfamiliar with the new system.

Prior to it, Senator Taj Muhammad Afridi administered oath the new cabinet members of the trade union comprised Chairman Naveed Shinwari, Yad Wazir Shinwari President, Nazek Shah General Secretary, Haji Sher and Attaullah Afridi as Vice- and Senior Vice President respectively and Wali Muhammad Finance Secretary. Earlier, Tehsil Chairman Haji Khalid, Maulana Ali Haidar and Kaleemullah Shinwari apprised the chief guest of the problems being faced by them.

## WWA to train teachers in S Waziristan

F.P. Report

WANA: Wana Welfare Association (WWA) will provide comprehensive training to all teachers in Lower Waziristan, commencing with a one-day teacher training workshop at Al-Khidmat Public School, Spin. All teachers from Spin and Tana are cordially invited to participate in and benefit from this opportunity.

For many years, Wana Welfare Association has consistently trained teachers in Abbottabad and will continue to do so here in Lower Waziristan, while initiating comprehensive training programs for local teachers. The association firmly believes that a trained teacher is the key to resolving all educational challenges.

Consequently, Wana Welfare Association is taking a significant step by organizing such training workshops for teachers in Lower Waziristan, which would otherwise incur substantial costs, amounting to lakhs of rupees, if conducted in major cities of the country. All school teachers, without any discrimination.

# JI not to make political alliance with other parties

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-i-Islami Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa chief Prof Mohammad Ibrahim has said the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and Pakistan Tahreek Insaf were the two sides of the same coin as they have similar policies.

He was addressing the monthly congregation organized by the Lower Dir chapter of the JI at the Ahya ul Uloom Balambat as chief guest here on Sunday night. The gathering was also addressed by the JI deputy chief Dr Attaur Rehman, provincial general secretary Abdul Wasi, district chief Izazul Mulk Afkari and others.

Prof Ibrahim said the JI was the only political party that raised voices regarding the problems faced by masses and supremacy of the constitution. He said the JI had decided after several experiences that it would never make an alliance with any party because all the political parties had different flags with a similar agenda. The JI leader urged party members to make character building their top priority and remain united and constant in every matter.

"The objective of the JI

is to establish the system of Allah on the land and make it supreme over other systems", Prof Ibrahim said, adding the JI members should not be disappointed because in the recent general election, the vote bank of Jamaat-i-Islami had increased, not decreased. He said the issue of Form 45 and Form 47 surfaced under which the JI mandate was changed in several constituencies.

He said both the PDM and PTI had done nothing for the country except inflation, unemployment, insecurity and debt of the IMF and the World Bank. The JI leader announced the party had arranged a massive Gaza March under the leadership of Hafiz Naemur Rehman on May 19 at Peshawar. He asked the JI Dir workers to participate in that March in a large number.

**Shutter down:** The chemist and druggists' association on Monday announced to fully support the shutter down strike of the traders' bodies in parts of Malakand division against the imposition of taxes on Tuesday (today). Meanwhile all private schools also announced to close their schools across the district due to traders'

call for complete shutter down and wheel jam strike.

According to the decision taken at a meeting of the chemist and druggists association all medicine markets at Timergara, Chakdara, Samarbagh, Munda, Khall, Lal Qila and Talash would remain closed on Tuesday. The meeting chaired by president of the association Bacha Munir Yousafzai, was also addressed by Muhammad Azam, Ikramullah and others. The meeting rejected the government's plan to impose taxes in the tax-free zone of Malakand division. The meeting also demanded the government and concerned authorities to take notice of the increasing prices of essential drugs.

Meanwhile the Private Education Network (PEN), a network of private educational institutions, also announced support for the traders' strike. The PEN in its circular has said that all private schools and colleges would remain closed on Tuesday (today) due to traders' strike against the imposition of taxes in Malakand division. The bars' councils in the region also announced to back the traders' strike by observing a boycott from courts in parts of the division.

# New political party 'Abdali National Alliance' launched

F.P. Report

MARDAN: Severe differences surfaced in Awami National Party (Mardan chapter) as one the party tehsil urban general secretary has resigned from party basic membership at his office.

Speaking to journalists in a press conference held in Mardan Press Club, the ANP Mardan tehsil urban general secretary Qaiser Ali Durani announced to part his ways from the party after developing strong differences with party relevant key leaders and members over some important issues.

On the occasion, he was also accompanied large number of other party members and workers. He alleged that Awami National Party had

remained no more as a political party. He claimed that he affiliated with ANP for the last fifteen years and work hard to promote the philosophy of great Pakhtun leader Khan Abdul Ghafar Khan alias as Bacha Khan Baba.

On one hand, he quitted ANP but on the other hand he announced to launch a new movement with the name of great Pakhtun leader titled as Abdali Qumi Itihad. He alleged that ANP had become as "Rajwara" party, adding that the party had divided in several groups across the district Mardan, adding that the party leadership did not bother to take any appropriate and effective steps with the purpose to remove those differences as well as reorganized the party.

Despite of the fact, he and other several party members expressed their genuine reservations before the party leadership about those issues but to no avail. He blamed that the party leadership had become weak that was why it has lost its power of decision.

He revealed that it was the differences within the party ranks which had become caused to the failure of ANP in the last general elections. He, however, lauded the role of ex-chief minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ameer Haider Khan Hoti. He reminded that the former CM Ameer Haider Khan Hoti carried out several mega projects in Mardan district. Residents of the district would never forget those good developmental projects during his tenure.

# Christian Community's role in country's uplift hailed

Saqib Mushtaq

MULTAN: Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani said that Christian community performing important role in country's uplift. He said this during lunch in his honour given by Christian Community, led by MNA Naveed Amir Jeeva, at a local hotel.

Chairman Senate observed that he himself got education from La Salle School. Commenting on services in health sector, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani observed that Mission Hospital's role was also appreciable. He hoped that the community would continue to serve society with more dedication in future also. Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani also vowed to resolve issues of the community on priority basis, especially hailing from South Punjab.

MNA Naveed Amir Jeeva, Bishop Yousuf Sohan, Bishop Leo Paul Roderick and some others hailed Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani for matchless service in South Punjab's uplift. He added that Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani ensured five percent



jobs quota for minority. Similarly, August 11 was declared as Minority Day. On this occasion, local leader PPP Khawaja Rizwan Alam, Pastor Asif Raza, Samuel Sardar, Brother Qamar Father Patrick and some others were also present.

Chairman Senate extols traders in national development: Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani commended the indispensable role of the business community in driving both economic and social progress in the country. Addressing a diverse array of delegations, including representatives from the Tanzeem Tajraan Pakistan, various political and social workers, Gillani lauded the efforts rendered by traders in fostering Pakistan's prosperity.

Chairman Senate added that traders were the backbone of the country's economy, whose unwavering dedication had consistently propelled Pakistan towards growth and matchless development. He assured the business community of his complete support in addressing their concerns, while emphasizing the importance of collaboration for the country's advancement. The chairman senate stressed that economic prosperity relied heavily on the active participation and cooperation of the business fraternity.

Gilani also reflected on his past endeavours, highlighting significant investments in education and healthcare during his tenure as Prime Minister, particularly in South Punjab.

# MNA chairs meeting on key issues of electricity

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: In order to discuss the key issues of electricity including unjust loadshedding, overbilling, transformers repairing and Barh Feeder in Kohat, an important meeting was held with Shehryar Afridi MNA in the chair at DC Office Kohat on Monday.

The meeting beside Member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Daud Shah Afridi Advocate was also attended by the authorities concerned of PESCO, WAPDA Construction, Forests and other related institutions.



The above mentioned electricity problems were discussed in detail and authorities concerned were directed to take effective measures in this regard as these problems can take dangerous situation in the future. Shehryar Afridi said, if the issue of wrong and overbilling is rectified, the issues of payment and load-

shedding can be solved simultaneously. Shahryar Afridi while referring to the recovery of Pesco, maintained that the recovery situation will automatically be resolved with stoppage of wrong and overbilling, so the PESCO authorities should pay special attention towards this important issue.

## Five people die in mishap

MATIARI (INP): In a collision between a trawler and a passenger coach on the national highway in Matiari on Monday, five people were killed and 13 injured.

Police said the passenger coach was going from

Punjab to Karachi. Two children and the coach driver are also included in the dead. The bodies of the dead and the injured were shifted to Matiari Hospital.

The police arrested the trawler driver and took the

vehicles into custody. The deceased have been identified as coach driver Malik Yusuf, Mir Hadi, Kashif, Ali, Umm-e-Hasiba, Shahzad, Mehmood, Hasan, Ajmal, Mohammad Rashid and others are among the injured.



**QUETTA: Provincial president of Grand Health Alliance, Abdul Salam Zehri addressing a press conference.**

# 15 minors admitted due to outbreak of Measles

F.P. Report

LARKANA: Since last some days, Measles disease outbreak began to spread rapidly in Larkana district and its surroundings, more than 10 children suffering from measles disease (called khura disease) were shifted to Sheikh Zayed Children's Hospital.

The victims including 9-month-old Anam, Usman, Kulsoom, 9-month-old Mudassar Khokhar, 10-month-old baby Amina, Purab Anil Kumar, Samia, Ruqia, Reema and others belonging to Larkana city, including Nodero, Qamber, Naseerabad, Ratodero, Garilo, Rashid Vigan and other small and big towns and villages transferred to Sheikh Zayed Children's Hospital where all the affected children were given medical

assistance.

On this occasion Dr. Dili Jan Baloch, Consultant Pediatrician of Sheikh Zayed Children's Hospital said that 8 to 10 children are admitted to the hospital on a daily basis. Due to measles, 4 to 5 children are transferred to Sheikh Zayed Children's Hospital. are available and children are being treated.

**Sports event continued at SMBBMU:** The ongoing sports week organized by the university administration has concluded at Shaheed Ms. Benazir Bhutto Medical University Larkana.

According to the results, Chandka Medical College has won overall, students participated in sports competitions, details. According to the Girls' Badminton Championship, Asia Zameer of Chandka was declared the winner,

while Bisma Zahid Chandio was declared the runner-up, and similarly, in the chess competition, Neha Oud won the first place, Sana Ali won the second place and Alia Ansari won the third place, on the other hand, the cricket tournament.

I Chandka 48 was declared the qualifier and the pharmacy team was declared the eliminator, while after the football final, Chandka 50 defeated the Dental College team after an exciting 0-1 match. Shaikh Winner and painter Shaikh who belongs to Chandka was declared the runner-up, on this occasion Director Sports Dr. Fahad Gibran Syal said that we are going to organize a prestigious ceremony this week in which awards will be given to students, and They will be encouraged.





JAKARTA: Wreckage of a car lies in a village affected by a flash flood in Tanah Datar, West Sumatra, Indonesia after heavy rains.

## Ukraine's military chief admits 'difficult situation' in Kharkiv

KYIV: Ukraine's military chief has admitted his forces are facing a "difficult situation" in the northeastern region of Kharkiv, where thousands more people have fled their homes as Russian forces continue to advance. "This week, the situation in the Kharkiv region has significantly worsened," Oleksandr Syrskii wrote on Telegram. "There are ongoing battles in the border areas along the state border with the Russian Federation." While admitting that the situation is "difficult" and Russian attackers had achieved "partial successes" in some areas, he said, "Ukrainian defence forces are doing everything they can to hold defensive lines and positions." The intense battles have forced at least one Ukrainian unit to withdraw, leaving behind more land to Russian forces across less defended settlements in the so-called contested "grey zone" along the Russian border. The town of Vovchansk, among the largest in the northeast with a pre-war population of 17,000, emerged as a focal point in the battle. Volodymyr Tymoshko, the head of the Kharkiv regional police, said Russian forces were on the outskirts of the town and were approaching from three directions. "Infantry fighting is already taking place," he said. A Russian tank was spotted along a major road leading to the town, Tymoshko said, illustrating Moscow's confidence to

deploy heavy weaponry. Evacuation teams worked non-stop throughout the day to take residents, most of whom were elderly, out of harm's way. At least 4,000 civilians have fled the Kharkiv region when Moscow's forces launched the operation, Governor Oleh Syniehubov said in a social media statement. Heavy fighting raged along the northeast front line, where Russian forces attacked 27 settlements in 24 hours, he said. The Russian Ministry of Defence said that its forces had captured four villages on the border in addition to five villages reported to have been seized. These areas were likely poorly fortified due to the dynamic fighting and constant heavy shelling, easing the Russian advance. Ukraine's leadership has not confirmed Moscow's gains. But Tymoshko said Strilecha, Pylna and Borsivika were under Russian occupation and it was from their direction the Russians were bringing in infantry to stage attacks in the embattled villages of Hlyboke and Lukiantsi. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that there were intense battles across parts of the region. "Defensive battles and fierce fighting continue on a large part of our borderline," Zelenskyy said, adding: "The idea behind the attacks in the Kharkiv region is to stretch our forces and undermine the moral and

motivational basis of the Ukrainians' ability to defend themselves." The gains are "significant not just because of the territory but also because in 10km (6 miles) or so they will be at a shelling distance of Kharkiv city, the second largest city in Ukraine," Al Jazeera's John Holman said, reporting from the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv. "It also means that Ukraine is so stretched paper thin on different sides of the front, and it will probably have to divert soldiers from other areas and send them to the Kharkiv region," he added. Analysts said the Russian push is designed to exploit ammunition shortages before promised Western supplies can reach the front lines. Ukrainian soldiers said the Kremlin is using the usual Russian tactic by launching a disproportionate amount of fire and infantry assaults to exhaust their troops and firepower. By intensifying battles in what was previously a static patch of the front line, Russian forces threaten to pin Ukrainian forces in the northeast while carrying out intense battles farther south, where Moscow is also gaining ground. The advance comes after Russia stepped up attacks in March, targeting energy infrastructure and settlements, which analysts predicted was a concerted effort to shape conditions for an offensive. — Al Jazeera

## Putin set to transfer Sergei Shoigu from Russian defence ministry

MOSCOW (BBC): Russian President Vladimir Putin is set to replace his long-standing ally Sergei Shoigu as defence minister, the Kremlin has announced. The 68-year-old has been in the role since 2012 and is to be appointed the head of Russia's Security Council. Papers published by the upper chamber of the Russian parliament said Mr Shoigu will be replaced by Deputy Prime Minister Andrei Belousov. Mr Shoigu has played a key role in Russia's war with Ukraine. Russian government papers show Mr Putin wants Mr Shoigu to take over from Nikolai Patrushev Get info without leaving the page. on the powerful security council. It is not yet clear what Mr Patrushev's new post will be. Mr Shoigu has close links with President Putin, often taking him on fishing trips in his native Siberia. He was given the defence portfolio despite having no military background, which rankled with some of his top brass. A civil engineer by profession, Mr Shoigu rose to prominence as the head of the emergencies and disaster relief ministry in the 1990s. He often looked out of his depth as defence minister, especially after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine more than two years ago, BBC Europe analyst Danny Aeberhard says. In 2023, Mr Shoigu became embroiled in a public feud with Wagner mercenary chief

Yevgeny Prigozhin over Russia's conduct of the war. Prigozhin, who led a short-lived mutiny against Moscow, accused Mr Shoigu of being a "dirt-bag" and "elderly clown" in audio messages that went viral. The mercenary chief died in a plane crash while flying from St Petersburg to Moscow in August 2023. The Kremlin denied it was to blame. Mr Shoigu's suggested replacement, Mr Belousov, is an economist with little military experience and will come as a surprise to some. But in the view of other analysts, the move indicates that President Putin is seeking to align the Russian economy more closely with the war effort. Kremlin press spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the proposed appointment of a civilian showed the role of defence minister called for "innovation". He said Russia was becoming more like the Soviet Union in the mid-1980s, when a high proportion of GDP went on military spending. As a result, it was necessary to make sure that military expenditure was better integrated into Russia's overall economy, he added. "The one who is more open to innovations is the one who will be victorious on the battlefield," he said. BBC Russia editor Steve Rosenberg said the replacement of Mr Shoigu did not come as a surprise, since his position had become weaker and there had been talk for some time that he could

lose his job. Russia's campaign in Ukraine has been plagued by military setbacks and big losses in men and materiel. Having an economist as defence minister reflects the changing priorities of the Kremlin, Steve Rosenberg says. The Russian economy is on a war footing now, so it is vital that the defence ministry has enough money to fund the war. According to unnamed government officials quoted by independent Russian website The Bell, Mr Belousov is seen as a "hard-line defender of the state, who believes that Russia is encircled by enemies". Like President Putin, he is close to the Russian Orthodox Church. He is said to be a martial arts enthusiast - as is President Putin - who practised karate and the Russian combat sport sambo in his youth. Before becoming deputy prime minister, he worked for several years as an aide to Mr Putin. Before that, he was economic development minister. He was reportedly the only member of the president's economic entourage to support the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Mr Putin was sworn in as president for a fifth time after winning Russia's recent election with 87% of the vote and without facing any credible opponents. He has led Russia since May 2000. Among cabinet members to keep their positions is veteran Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

## Spain's Socialists hail 'new era' in Catalonia

BARCELONA (Reuters): Spain's Socialists won the biggest share of the vote in Catalan elections, dealing a serious blow to more than a decade of separatist governance and the independence dreams still nursed by some in the wealthy northeastern region. The Socialists, led locally by Salvador Illa, had 42 seats in the 135-seat chamber with more than 99% of the vote counted, while hardline separatist party Junts was in second place with 35 seats, and the incumbent more moderate separatist party Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) had 20 seats. Spain's largest opposition party, the conservative People's Party, also had a good night, seeing the biggest increase since the last vote in 2021 from three seats to 15. Turnout for the vote was notably low at 58%. The result looks to be an existential threat for separatist governance in

Catalonia which led a 2017 illegal independence referendum and declaration of independence that caused Spain's worst institutional crisis in more than 30 years but whose movement has lost energy and unity more recently. It also represents a vindication of Spain's Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's controversial bid to normalise relations with restive Catalonia, including issuing pardons for convictions over the independence drive and, more recently, a controversial amnesty including others still facing prosecution. Speaking as the voting count concluded, Illa hailed a "new era" for the region. However, with no party holding a clear majority and deep ideological divisions between them, there remains the risk the vote will have to be repeated. The separatist parties combined

of the ERC, Junts, far-left CUP and far-right Alianza Catalana, do not have the required 68 seats to be able to form a coalition government. Illa's Socialists will also need to forge an agreement - most likely with the ERC - but separatist parties until now have rejected any suggestion of helping the national ruling party govern in Catalonia. Illa might instead attempt to form an unorthodox alliance with not only far-left Sumar, its coalition partner in national government, but also the conservative People's Party and far-right Vox, with whom the socialists have long said they would not negotiate. The ERC's leader Pere Aragones, Catalonia's outgoing president, told reporters that his party would move into opposition, effectively ruling out backing the Socialists.

### 13 killed in Belgorod building collapse

MOSCOW: At least 13 people have been killed and 20 others injured when a building collapsed after being struck with fragments from a missile in the Russian border city of Belgorod, according to Russian officials. A video released by the Russian Ministry of Civil Defence, Emergencies and Disaster Relief showed firefighters and rescuers working on a huge pile of rubble. The ministry said that 13 bodies had been recovered. "The number of injured, according to the latest data, is 20 people," emergency services were quoted as saying by the Russian state news agency TASS. Earlier, the Emergencies Ministry said that 12 people, including two children, were rescued from the site. Belgorod Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov posted a video to Telegram showing a collapsed building with a large hole in it. "Following direct shell fire on a residential building... the entire entrance, from the tenth to the ground floor, collapsed," Gladkov said, condemning "massive bombings" by the Ukrainian army. The Russian Ministry of Defence later wrote on social media that the building had been struck by fragments of a downed Tochka-U TRC missile. It also said that air defences had shot down several more rockets over the Belgorod region, as well as two drones that were destroyed in a separate incident. Ukraine's military does not comment or acknowledge alleged attacks on Russia and annexed Crimea. One resident told the Russian news agency RIA Novosti she was in a building corridor and her husband was in a bedroom when the explosion hit. "He did not have the time [to escape]," she said, adding that her husband had been injured in the head and face. Air raid alerts continued across Belgorod as rescuers worked, looking for victims in the rubble. The Belgorod region, on Russia's western border, has been the target of a large number of strikes. Although most cross-border shelling has taken place in rural areas, Belgorod city, the regional capital, has previously been attacked. In December 2023, shelling in the heart of the city killed 25 people, prompting authorities to start erecting public shelters. Cities across western Russia have come under regular attack from drones since May 2023, with Russian officials blaming Kyiv. — Al Jazeera

### Rivers rise again as rain batters flood-hit Brazil

RIO GRANDE DO SUL (AFP): River levels rose again as strong rains lashed waterlogged southern Brazil, where flooding has killed 145 people and forced hundreds of thousands from their homes. Residents of the state of Rio Grande do Sul were bracing for more misery from the new rains, after two weeks of downpours saw rivers burst their banks, swallowing up towns and parts of the regional capital. More than two million people have been affected by the deluge, which experts link to climate change exacerbated by the El Nino weather phenomenon. The levels of "practically all the major rivers in the state are tending to rise," state authorities said. The probability of further flooding is "very high" in most regions of the state, according to the National Center for Monitoring and Warning for Natural Disasters (Cemaden). A total of 132 people have been reported missing and 619,000 have been forced from their homes, civil defense officials said. The new threat comes as rescue operations are still underway, with some 130 people missing, while more than 619,000 were forced to leave their homes. In the flooded historic center of

### Tunisia lawyer arrested

TUNIS (BBC): A live television broadcast captured dramatic scenes when plain-clothed security officers entered the headquarters of Tunisia's bar association to detain a lawyer. Sonia Dahmani was wanted in connection with comments she had made earlier in the week about the situation in Tunisia. As her arrest took place people can be heard shouting: "Lawyers are free, from the police they are free!" There has been growing criticism of restrictions on free speech imposed under the presidency of Kais Saied. Ms Dahmani had refused to attend a court hearing to explain why she questioned that sub-Saharan migrants would want to settle in Tunisia, her lawyer said. Then, during a live France24 broadcast, reporter Marilyne Dumas can be seen at the bar association headquarters where Ms Dahmani was thought to be. Dumas then stops mid-sentence as masked men come into shot and force their way into an office. A short while later people can be heard screaming and shouting as the masked men leave. Someone then approaches the camera to try and shut it down and Dumas is heard saying: "We are in a public place, you do not have the right to do that." France 24 has condemned what it called a "brutal intervention" by security forces that prevented journalists from practising their profession as they were covering a lawyers' protest for justice and in support of freedom of expression".

## More bodies found as flash floods killed dozens in Indonesia

PADANG (AP): Rescuers recovered more bodies Monday after monsoon rains triggered flash floods on Indonesia's Sumatra Island, bringing down torrents of cold lava and mud, leaving 41 people dead and another 17 missing. The heavy rains, along with a landslide of mud and cold lava from Mount Marapi, caused a river to breach its banks. The deluge tore through mountainside villages along four districts in West Sumatra province just. The floods swept away people and submerged nearly 200 houses and buildings, some severely damaged, said National Disaster Management Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari. Cold lava, also known as lahar, is a mixture of volcanic material and pebbles that flow down a volcano's slopes in the rain. Rescuers on Monday recovered more bodies, mostly from villages that were worst hit in Agam and Tanah Datar districts, bringing the death toll to

41, said Ilham Wahab who heads the West Sumatra Disaster Mitigation Agency. "Bad weather, damaged roads and access that blocked by thick mud and debris were hampering relief efforts," Wahab said. He said at least 19 people were injured in the flash floods and rescuers are searching for 17 villagers reported missing. Flash floods also caused main roads around the Anai Valley Waterfall area in Tanah Datar district to be blocked by mud, cutting off access to other cities, Padang Panjang Police Chief Kartayana Putra said. Videos released by the National Search and Rescue Agency showed roads that were transformed into murky brown rivers and villages covered by thick mud, rocks, and uprooted trees. Heavy rains cause frequent landslides and flash floods in Indonesia, an archipelago nation of more than 17,000 islands where millions of people live in mountainous areas or near floodplains.

The disaster came just two months after heavy rains triggered flash floods and a landslide in West Sumatra, killing at least 26 people and leaving 11 others missing. A surprise eruption of Mount Marapi late last year killed 23 climbers. Marapi is known for sudden eruptions that are difficult to predict because the source is shallow and near the peak, and its eruptions aren't caused by a deep movement of magma, which sets off tremors that register on seismic monitors, according to Indonesia's Center for Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation. Marapi has been active since an eruption in January 2024 that caused no casualties. It is among more than 120 active volcanoes in Indonesia. The country is prone to seismic upheaval because of its location on the Pacific "Ring of Fire," an arc of volcanoes and fault lines encircling the Pacific Basin.

## Rivers rise again as rain batters flood-hit Brazil

Other already overflowing rivers in the region also saw water levels continue to rise. The flooding of the Taquari River has notably put the small town of Mucum on alert, where more than 40 people were killed by a devastating cyclone last September. The town of Pelotas, south of Porto Alegre, "is facing a worsening situation" which increases the probability of flooding, warned its mayor Paula Mascarenhas on Instagram, calling for the evacuation of at-risk areas. Parts of Porto Alegre, which is home to 1.4 million people, also remain underwater. According to the National Institute of Meteorology, heavy rain will continue in the coming hours, with more than 100 mm per day in some areas. In the northeast of the state, there is a "high risk of major flooding and river overflows, as well as significant landslides". In a video published on X for Mother's Day, President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva expressed solidarity with those affected, more than 80,000 of whom are currently housed in shelters. "You are not alone," he said. The federal government this week promised some \$10 billion for reconstruction in Rio Grande do Sul.

There are lots of dead animals. It's very, very, sad." Metallurgist Antonio Vanzan, 50, described the situation as "critical." "If the rain doesn't stop falling, what is going to happen? The level of the river may increase and the water will return inside the neighborhoods." The Guaiba, an estuary bordering state capital Porto Alegre, had reached its lowest level since May 3. However, fresh rains have once again swollen the body of water, and levels are expected to again rise above five meters. Its banks overflow at three meters. The Guaiba had reached historic levels of 5.3 meters on May 5 and 6.

## Lithuania's Nauseda wins first round of polls

VILNIUS: Incumbent Gitanas Nauseda has won the first round of voting in Lithuania's presidential election, putting him on track for a second and final term in office. With nearly all of the votes counted, former banker Nauseda was on 46 percent, just short of the overall majority needed for a first-round victory. Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte was second with 16 percent and the two will now go head-to-head in a run-off on May 26 in a repeat of the last election in 2019. Eight candidates were on the ballot this time around, with campaigns largely focused on security issues and the threat posed by neighbouring Russia following its February 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine. All the main candidates agreed the country, once part of the Soviet Union and now a member of NATO and the European Union, should boost defence spending to counter the perceived threat on its borders. Nauseda, 59, said he was confident of victory in the second round and would require "no strategy" to campaign against Simonyte. Both Nauseda and Simonyte support increasing defence spending to at least 3 percent of Lithuania's gross domestic product (GDP), from the 2.75 percent planned for this year. The increase in spending would pay for the

modernisation of Lithuania's army and infrastructure ahead of the deployment of a brigade of German troops in Lithuania who are expected to be combat-ready from 2027. While agreeing on Russia policy, the two candidates differ on other issues such as same-sex civil partnerships, a contentious policy in the predominantly Catholic country with a population of 2.8 million people. While Nauseda opposes such partnerships, Simonyte, a 49-year-old fiscal conservative, is supportive. Lithuania's president has a semi-executive role, which includes heading the armed forces and chairing the supreme defence and national security policy body. The president also represents the country at the EU and NATO summits. In tandem with the government, the president sets foreign and security policy, can veto laws and has a say in the appointment of key officials such as judges, the chief prosecutor, the chief of defence and head of the central bank. In 2019, Simonyte narrowly defeated Nauseda in the first round of the presidential election before Nauseda went on to win the run-off with 66 percent of the vote. Simonyte is also facing a tough test in a general election this October, as her coalition of centre-right parties trails in the polls.

Nauseda posed for cameras on election night surrounded by the leadership of the Social Democrats, the likely main challengers for Simonyte at the general election. "I think it will be easy for us to find common ground," he said about the possibility of the Social Democrats winning. — Al Jazeera

### Georgia police push protesters away

TBILISI (Reuters): Georgia's police have begun pushing away demonstrators who staged an all-night rally at parliament in Tbilisi ahead of a lawmakers' debate of a "foreign agents" bill that has sparked a political crisis, Russia's TASS news agency reported on Monday. Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze vowed to push ahead with the law, after opponents of the bill rallied in one of the largest protests seen since independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Georgia's opposition called on opponents of the bill to stage an all-night protest outside parliament to prevent lawmakers from entering on Monday, when they are due to begin debating the bill's third reading.



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Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

Bilal Shah Afridi

Chief Executive

Jalil Afridi

Managing Editor

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Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

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

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

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

## A way back from campus chaos

**P**ROTESTING the world's wrongs has been a rite of passage for generations of American youth, buoyed by our strong laws protecting free speech and free assembly. Yet the students and other demonstrators disrupting college campuses this spring are being taught the wrong lesson — for as admirable as it can be to stand up for your beliefs, there are no guarantees that doing so will be without consequence.

The highest calling of a university is to craft a culture of open inquiry, one where both free speech and academic freedom are held as ideals. Protest is part of that culture, and the issue around which so many of the current demonstrations are centered — U.S. involvement in the Israel-Hamas conflict — ought to be fiercely and regularly debated on college campuses.

The Constitutional right to free speech is the protection against government interference restricting speech. Therefore, leaders at public universities, which are funded by government, have a heightened duty to respect those boundaries. Private institutions don't have the same legal obligations, but that doesn't relieve them of the responsibility to encourage open dialogue whenever and wherever possible on their campuses. It's essential to the pursuit of learning.

In the real world, though, this can get messy, and nuance is required when free speech comes into tension with protecting academic freedom. The earliest universities to adopt the principle of academic freedom did so to thwart interference and influence from totalitarian states and religious zealotry. Today, the American Association of University Professors defines it as "the freedom of a teacher or researcher in higher education to investigate and discuss the issues in his or her academic field, and to teach or publish findings without interference from political figures, boards of trustees, donors or other entities."

Student codes of conduct and other guidelines are meant to relieve some of the tension between free speech and academic freedom, as well as to ensure that schools are in compliance with government regulations and laws. Every campus has them. But rules matter only when guardrails are consistently upheld. It's in that enforcement that the leadership of too many universities has fallen short.

The point of protest is to break such rules, of course, and to disrupt daily routines so profoundly as to grab on to the world's attention and sympathies. Campuses should be able to tolerate some degree of disruption, which is inherent to any protest. That makes it even more important that school administrators respond when the permissible limits for speech are violated.

During the current demonstrations, a lack of accountability has helped produce a crisis.

It has left some Jewish students feeling systematically harassed. It has deprived many students of access to parts of campus life. On campuses where in-person classes or commencement exercises were canceled, students have watched their basic expectations for a university experience evaporate. And at times, the protesters themselves have been directly endangered — the disarray and violence of the past weeks has been escalated by the continued involvement of both the police and external agitators.

Amid the protests, there has been much discussion of both antisemitism and Islamophobia, and when the line is crossed into hate speech. There are profound risks to imposing overly expansive definitions of inappropriate speech, and universities have been rightly chided for doing so in the past. But it should be easy to agree that no student, faculty member, administrator or university staff member on a campus should be threatened or intimidated. School policies should reflect that, and they should be enforced when necessary.

In the longer term, a lack of clarity around acceptable forms of expression, and a failure to hold those who break those norms to account, has opened up the pursuit of higher learning to the whims of those motivated by hypocrisy and cynicism.

Editors' Picks

On Andra Day's 'Cassandra (Cherith),' a Soaring Voice Reaches Inward

Restoring a Chair Is Easier Than You Think. Ask the Brownstone Boys.

Is Everything A.S.M.R. Now?

For years, right-wing Republicans, at the federal and state level, have found opportunities to crusade against academic freedom, with charges of antisemitism on campus serving as the latest vehicle. Speaker Mike Johnson of the House of Representatives used this moment of chaos as cover to begin a legislative effort to crack down on elite universities, and lawmakers in the House recently passed a proposal that would impose egregious government restrictions on free speech. The Senate should reject those efforts unequivocally.

The absence of steady and principled leadership is what opened the campus gates to such cynicism in the first place. For several years, many university leaders have failed to act as their students and faculty have shown ever greater readiness to block an expanding range of views that they deem wrong or beyond the pale. Some scholars report that this has had a chilling effect on their work, making them less willing to participate in the academy or in the wider world of public discourse. The price of pushing boundaries, particularly with more conservative ideas, has become higher and higher. Schools ought to be teaching their students that there is as much courage in listening as there is in speaking up. It has not gone unnoticed — on campuses but also by members of Congress and by the public writ large — that many of those who are now demanding the right to protest have previously sought to curtail the speech of those whom they declared hateful.

Establishing a culture of openness and free expression is crucial to the mission of educational institutions. That includes clear guardrails on conduct and enforcement of those guardrails, regardless of the speaker or the topic. Doing so would not only help restore order on college campuses today, but would also strengthen the cultural bedrock of higher education for generations to come.

### Important Notice

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## Time for Biden to get tough on Netanyahu

Chris Doyle

**WHAT is it about American Democratic presidents and red lines? Back in 2013, it was Barack Obama who found that his red line on Syria's use of chemical weapons was actually more pink than red. Today, his then-vice president, Joe Biden, has forgotten the red line that he drew in March over an Israeli invasion of Rafah. Other international leaders also voiced their opposition but have gone mute when confronted with the reality.**

That ground invasion is now in full swing. The propaganda merchants had portrayed last week's initial forays as a limited operation. Aid agencies on the ground and Palestinian civilians hoped but never believed that was true.

US officials from the president down had talked the talk about opposing a Rafah invasion. Even last week, one spokesman stated that "any kind of major Rafah ground operation would actually strengthen" Hamas. This opposition was all half-hearted.

Palestinians and others can spot the hypocrisy of the US and other backers of Israel. They watch US actions, not words, just as they have learned to do with Israeli leaders. Yes, the US has just paused the transfer of some arms to Israel, including 3,500 bombs. The reality is that the US is still providing weapons, military assistance, vital intelligence and diplomatic cover. The trifling levels of US humanitarian assistance to Palestinians pale into insignificance compared to the billions Israel receives in lethal aid.

Remember too that the US led the Israel-inspired charge to defund UNRWA. If the Biden administration had said it would wait for Israel to provide evidence of any links between the UN agency and Hamas, it would still be receiving American aid today and no other donor state would have ever suspended their funding.

Where Israel is concerned, accountability just does not come into the equation. What happened two years ago illustrates this with excruciating clarity. This was the Israeli killing, arguably murder, of the Al Jazeera journalist and US citizen Shireen Abu Akleh on May 11, 2022. The US demanded answers. Israel spun all sorts of stories, ini-

tially blaming a Palestinian gunman and then saying it did not know, before finally admitting it was an Israeli soldier's bullet. As yet, nobody has been held accountable. What is Biden doing about it? Nothing. This was the leader who, in February, warned Iran: "If you harm an American, we will respond." If Israeli soldiers can kill US citizens

**Remember too that the US led the Israel-inspired charge to defund UNRWA. If the Biden administration had said it would wait for Israel to provide evidence of any links between the UN agency and Hamas, it would still be receiving American aid today and no other donor state would have ever suspended their funding. Where Israel is concerned, accountability just does not come into the equation.**

with impunity, what chance do Palestinians have?

Leaders often express "concern" or even "deep concern" about Israel's conduct. They will call on Israel to adhere to international humanitarian law. But what never happens is an American, British or German leader stating unequivocally that Israel has violated international law. This has certainly been the case over the last seven months. The US administration last week stated that Israel had used American weapons in a way that was "inconsistent" with international humanitarian law. To a normal person, this means illegal, but heaven forbid this should be articulated.

British leaders have done cartwheels to avoid stating this. The deputy foreign minister said last week that the government had not seen a credible Israeli military plan for its invasion of Rafah that would adhere to international law. On May 7, the day after the ground invasion began, the minister stated: "We have not seen a credible plan for military action in Rafah so far, so we are not able to judge whether it would be in accordance with international humanitarian law." In other words, because Britain has not been shown the mil-

itary plan, it will not make any judgment on whether it is illegal or not. Israeli leaders were wise not to share it.

Congress has a brigade of supporters not just of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, but also of extremists like Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich. Channeling "The Sopranos" and "The Godfather," a dirty dozen of US Republican

is listening. Following Biden's pressure, Netanyahu did lift the total siege of Gaza to allow a few aid trucks in via Egypt last October. It cost Netanyahu nothing. Palestinians were not receiving anything like the level of lifesaving aid they required.

Biden has sanctioned a number of extremist Israeli settlers and settler groups. Two things stand out. Firstly, despite the decades of evidence of massive Israeli settler violence, this has never been done before. Secondly, the Israeli government's reaction. Openly and without shame, the settler extremists in the Israeli coalition have ordered further settlement expansion and the authorization of outposts. The message is clear: if the US or anyone else tries to penalize Israel, it will punish the Palestinians.

If an American president truly wanted to shut down the illegal settlement enterprise, he has many options available. Bush did this by withholding US loan guarantees until Israel stopped building settlements. If Biden were to outlaw all funding from the US to settler groups, they would lose hundreds of millions of dollars. For all the American green lights for Israel's genocide in Gaza, the lack of any strategy is remarkable. The failure to get a ceasefire has isolated the US and smashed what is left of its reputation. It jeopardizes American strategic interests, as it risks getting sucked into a regional conflict it does not want and cannot afford. Biden is losing domestically as he is seen as weak and indecisive.

Above all, the US is isolated internationally. In Friday's UN General Assembly vote on Palestinian statehood, the US and Israel lined up with just seven other states — including Micronesia, Nauru and Palau — to oppose the resolution. China and Russia cannot believe their luck at how their foe is committing such acute self-harm. Biden needs to get tough with Netanyahu. The Israeli leader is prepared, solely for reasons of political self-preservation, to ignite the region, put hostages' lives at risk and foment enduring generational hatred that, far from defeating or destroying Hamas, will strengthen it for years. It is time for Biden to stop indulging Netanyahu in the interests of the US, Israel and the Palestinians.

senators signed a letter threatening the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim Khan, and his family with sanctions and travel bans. Khan's crime? It was merely the rumor that he might seek arrest warrants for Israeli leaders on war crimes charges; in other words, doing his job.

Netanyahu has long since worked out how to play American presidents. He has done so ever since 1996 and even before. As US secretary of state under President George H.W. Bush, James Baker claims to have banned Netanyahu from the State Department. The Israeli PM has mastered the dark arts of deception, bluff and counter-bluff. He appreciates that, ultimately, given the makeup of US domestic politics, no American president is going to sever the umbilical cord that ties the country to Israel, not least in an election year.

Despite rumors and briefings of an angry Biden, the reality is that, no matter how appalling the Israeli bombing and starvation of Palestinians in Gaza, the American president will not fundamentally shift his position. Every now and then, Netanyahu throws Biden a few crumbs, pretending he

## How Israel empowered Palestinian media

Dr. Ramzy Baroud

**BY granting its 2024 World Press Freedom Prize to Palestinian journalists covering the Israeli war on Gaza, UNESCO has acknowledged a historic truth.**

Even if the decision to name Gaza's journalists as laureates of its prestigious award was partly motivated by the courage of these journalists, the truth is that no one in the world deserves such recognition as those covering the genocidal war in Gaza. "As humanity, we have a huge debt to their courage and commitment to freedom of expression," Mauricio Weibel, chair of the international jury of media professionals, which made the recommendation for the award, truthfully described the courage of Gaza's journalists.

Courage is an admirable quality, especially when many journalists in Gaza knew that Israel was seeking to kill them, often along with their families, to ensure the horror of the war remains hidden from view or, at best, contested as if a matter of opinion.

Between Oct. 7, 2023, and May 6, 142 Palestinian journalists in Gaza were killed by Israeli bombardment or were assassinated or executed. This is higher than the number of journalists killed in the Second World War and the Vietnam War combined.

This number does not include many bloggers, intellectuals and writers who did not have professional media credentials. It also excludes the many family members who have been killed along with the targeted journalists.

But there is more to Gaza's journalists than bravery. Whenever Israel launches a war on Gaza, it almost always prevents international media professionals from entering the Strip. This go-to strategy is meant to ensure the story of the crimes that the Israeli army is about to commit goes unreported.

The strategy paid dividends in Operation Cast Lead in 2008-09. The true degree of the atrocities carried out in Gaza during that war, which resulted in the killing of more than 1,400 Palestinians, was largely known when the war was over. By then, Israel had concluded its major military operation and the corporate mainstream Western media had done a splendid job in ensuring the dominance of the Israeli political discourse on the war.

Israel's behavior since that war has remained unchanged: barring international journalists, placing a gag order on Israeli journalists and killing the Palestinian journalists who dared to cover the story.

The August 2014 war on Gaza was one of the bloodiest for journalists. It lasted 18 days and cost the lives of 17 journalists. Palestinian journalists, however, remained committed to the story. When one fell, 10 seemed to take their place.

The Occupied Territories have always been one of the most dangerous places to be a journalist. The Palestinian Journalists' Union reported that between 2000 — the start of the Second Intifada — and May 11, 2022, the day Israel murdered the iconic Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, 55 journalists were killed by the Israeli army.

That number might not seem too high if compared to the latest onslaught on Gaza

but, as per international standards, it was terrifying. And it was based on an equally disturbing logic: killing the storyteller is the quickest way to kill the story itself.

For decades, Israel, an occupying power, has managed to depict itself as a victim in a state of self-defense. With few critical voices in the mainstream media, many around the world believed Israel's deceptive discourse on terrorism, security and self-defense.

The only obstacle that stands between the truth and Israel's engineered version of the truth is honest journalists — thus, the ongoing war on the media.

What Israel did not anticipate is that, by blocking international media access to Gaza, it would inadvertently empower Palestinian journalists to take charge of their own narrative.

"Interpretations depend very much on who the interpreter is, who he or she is addressing, what his or her purpose is, at what historical moment the interpretation takes place," late Palestinian intellectual Edward Said wrote in "Covering Islam."

Like any other form of intellectual interpretation, journalism becomes subjected to the same rule of positionality in academia, as in the relationship between the identity of the researcher and the social or political context of the subject matter.

Palestinian journalists in Gaza are both the story and the storytellers. Their success or failure to convey the story with all its factual and emotional details could make the difference between the continuation or the end of the Israeli genocide.

Though the war is yet to end, Gaza's journalists have already proven to be deserving of all the honors and accolades, not only because of their courage but because of what we actually know about the war, despite the numerous and seemingly insurmountable obstacles created by Israel and its allies. Most people all over the world want the war to end. But how did they acquire the information that made them realize the extent of the horror in Gaza? Certainly not through Israel's cheerleaders in the mainstream media. Rather, it was through Palestinian journalists on the ground using every means and every available channel to tell the story.

These journalists include self-taught youngsters, like 9-year-old Lama Jamous, who wore a press vest and conveyed the details of life in displacement camps in southern Gaza, reporting from Nasser Hospital and many other places with poise and elegance.

As for the accuracy of information provided by these journalists, they were certainly professional enough to be verified by numerous human rights groups, medical and legal associations and millions of people around the world who used them to build a case against the Israeli war. Indeed, all we know about the war — the death toll, the degree of destruction, the daily human suffering, the mass graves, the famine and much more — came from these Gaza-based reporters.

The success and the sacrifices of Gaza's journalists should serve as a model for journalists and journalism around the world, as an example of how news about war crimes, sieges and human suffering in all its forms should be conveyed.

marker with which, if faced by the Israeli soldiers charging into his home, he will throw at them in self-defence. Isn't it the absolute truth? That all an artist has is his humble tools to fight against injustice and the ugliness of the world.

These names are some of many who have suffered and perished for their truth. Israel's well documented systematic targeting of truth seekers is a grave crime against humanity. It is an inexcusable eradication of a people's interaction with the hideousness of their reality. The poet Maya Angelou spoke of why the caged bird sings and of the courage it takes for literature to crush racism and face trauma. Angelou said the caged bird sings when his wing is bruised and he beats his bars to be free, here's hoping that every cage be broken through and every bruised wing be healed by the joy of freedom so that it could soar. There are no gardens in prison for the poet to see yet his words make the cage bloom.

seven or eight times in the hope that some make it out of the prison gates. Shaweesh likes to write while smoking and drinking coffee in a garden but there are no gardens in a prison and so at times he is carried on the shoulders of fellow inmates to look through a narrow window of the cell for a glimpse of nature surrounding the prison walls.

In his last interview Palestinian literature professor and poet Refaat Al Areeer pleaded, his voice breaking as he feared the worst with Israeli bombs hailing from the dark skies. His now famous poem If I Must Die has become an ode to survival and a hopeful reminder that although the poet is no longer with us his words live on.

One is haunted by his words in that interview, this writer often thinks about them in moments of darkness, as Alareer spoke of being an academic whose most lethal weapon is a

## In Palestine poetry escapes prisons

Aysha Taryam

of his seventeen-year-old niece. The genius cartoonist Najj al-Ali, father of the infamous ten-year-old boy caricature Handala, who became a symbol of resistance, was shot in the neck by a suspected Mossad gunman outside the London offices of Kuwait's al-Qabas. Some of the greatest minds insidiously buried before their time, silenced yet remain heard.

The world is continuously led to believe that this war against the arts is waged only in non-democratic nations and that the ones who preach the sanctity of free expression do not partake in such unjustness.

Yet here is Israel, the West's greatest accomplishment in the Middle East, the government that prides itself on being 'the only democratic' one in the region, since its inception partaking in the imprisoning and cold-blooded murder of those who practise this sanctified democratic right. Israel has waged 15

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# Saudi-Greek cooperation helping both nations fulfill their ambitions

THE 203rd anniversary of the Greek Revolution and our country's independence will be marked this year and, here in Riyadh, we celebrate together not only our own but also our common history.

Both our countries were home to ancient civilizations and shared important land and sea trade routes and relations, being at the crossroads of different continents.

Both our national states are relatively young, although they are the guardians of ancient and respected histories and traditions. More recently, since the 1960s, Greek companies have participated in the building up of Saudi Arabia through its civil, marine and oil and gas infrastructure, shipping and many other fields.

For Greece, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a key partner in the region and beyond. We share the same values, upholding international law, the law of the sea and international humanitarian law, as well as the principle of good neighborly relations in our regions.

Greece, both nationally and as an EU member, values dearly not only our close cooperation with the Kingdom but also with the Gulf Cooperation Council, an important and multifaceted regional organization of increasing global importance.

We support Saudi Arabia's efforts to achieve peace in Yemen and progress in the Middle East peace process. We both support a stable and peaceful Middle East, which requires a mutually agreed two-state solution with an independent and viable Palestinian state, in line with the relevant UN resolutions. We both deplore the terrible situation in Gaza.

The EU and its member states have committed more than \$750 million in assistance to the Palestinian people and we need

to do more to establish a permanent ceasefire and avoid further regional escalation. Greece and Saudi Arabia's foreign policy aims at de-escalation and confidence-building in order to promote peace and security in both our regions.

During the last four years, the partnership between Greece and Saudi Arabia has become strategic, covering several different sectors, including political, military, economic and cultural cooperation.

Our ministers of foreign affairs and defense, as well as the chief of staff of our armed forces, recently visited Riyadh and held fruitful meetings with their counterparts. Our cooperation also goes beyond these fields; it is wide and multilayered.

Our bilateral cooperation with Saudi Arabia is developing steadily in the fields of interconnectivity and energy.

The Greek Public Power Corporation and the Saudi Telecommunications Company are together building the East-Med Corridor, a data cable that will connect Europe with Asia via Greece and Saudi Arabia.

Our energy ministries also have close cooperation in the fields of renewable energy and green hydrogen. Greece's strategic position as a gateway to Europe makes it an ideal hub for the export of Saudi hydrogen to the EU.

The Greek Independent Power Transmission Operator and the Saudi National Grid established a joint company last September and are planning an electricity interconnection project between our two countries.

The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor, announced at last year's G20 meeting in New Delhi and in which Saudi Arabia is the only Arab country, provides further

Alexis Konstantopoulos

potential for the prospects of our bilateral economic and energy cooperation, since both Greece and Saudi Arabia connect different continents and also enjoy excellent bilateral cooperation with India.

The implementation of Saudi Arabia's spectacular Vision 2030 transformation process has attracted many foreign companies, including several Greek ones, such as Archirodon, SETE Saudia, Salfo and CCC, who have proved to be solid and valuable partners and provided expert know-how and important added value. Several Saudi companies have also invested in Greece, including in several traditional fields such as real estate and entertainment, but also in other tech and innovative sectors.

Foreign direct investment inflows to Greece are fast increasing, with investors wanting to seize the opportunity to benefit from our economy's steady growth. In times of increasing geopolitical challenges, Greece offers a safe haven of stability, growth and promising opportunities to investors from Saudi Arabia and throughout the world.

People-to-people relations, as well as culture and tourism, are an important bilateral link. We are happy and honored to welcome an increasing number of visitors from Saudi Arabia, supported by extra direct flights, who not only enjoy but also appreciate our country's natural beauty and understand our hospitality, as well as our culture and traditions.

Greece is a unique destination in many aspects, as Saudi citizens have discovered, not only in our main cities and islands, but also beyond thanks to our lesser-known landmarks.

Greece was among the EU countries that strongly advocat-

ed for the extension of Schengen visas' validity to five years for Saudi citizens.

Thanks to all our common efforts, and the European Commission implementing the decision, EU embassies can now provide five-year Schengen visas to Saudi citizens. In the future, we need to work on a visa waiver for Saudi citizens, avoiding the visa process altogether.

The first meeting of the high-level Greek-Saudi strategic council, which will take place soon, will provide the required comprehensive framework for our bilateral relations and allow us to fully mutually profit from the important common opportunities that our cooperation and economies can provide.

A lot has been done already and a lot more can be done to fulfill our mutually high ambitions.

Both our countries, which are acquiring increased importance in our respective regions, have more ambitious roles to develop. Our cooperation can only support this national and regional transformation process for the benefit of peace, stability and prosperity. Both our regions need to be less polarized and more stable.

In the years to come, we look forward to continuing to work together closely to build on our current cooperation and develop new partnerships and joint investments in additional fields, such as sport, culture, food security and shipping.

Finally, I would like to thank the Saudi authorities for the warm hospitality they extend to our mission and the many Greek nationals working and living in Saudi Arabia, who are actively contributing to the country's growth and development.

They make us proud, as we are also proud to serve Greece in a country as special as Saudi Arabia.

# Memories that attack like a dagger

GIVEN his experience, Yahya Sinwar knows that nothing can break the will of an Israeli government and its generals like one of its soldiers being taken prisoner by the Palestinians.

In 1988, Sinwar was arrested, not for the first time, and sentenced to four life terms. But in 2011, he was freed, along with more than 1,000 other Palestinians, after Hamas agreed to release Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, whom it had abducted five years earlier. The prime minister at the time was Benjamin Netanyahu, who responded to last year's Al-Aqsa Flood operation with the ongoing bloodbath in Gaza and his current attempt to invade Rafah.

It is the norm that Israel will never abandon its efforts to release any soldier who is held captive. It could resort to force to ensure their

Ghassan Charbel

were both armed. I asked the companion where we were going and he said he had yet to receive the details. After some 20 minutes, the car veered off the main road and we changed cars. I asked them why and they said: "Israel is watching on the ground and in the air." My excitement only grew from there.

Reaching our destination, the companion asked me if I recognized the place. I said I did not, when indeed I did. It was Abra, east of Sidon in southern Lebanon, only a few kilometers from my own village. I did not tell him I knew where we were because I did not want to ruin the trip.

We then headed to a residential building, where we were welcomed by some obviously nervous men. Entering an apartment, I found myself face to face with an Israeli prisoner. It was the

flying in from Israel was also there, carrying 66 Palestinian prisoners. With tensions riding high, the Red Cross carried out the swap. Amram was not allowed to get out of the Bulgarian plane before all Palestinians had exited the Israeli aircraft.

The Palestinians were overjoyed with their newfound freedom. Amram's jet flew toward Tel Aviv and the liberated prisoners were flown to the Libyan capital, where they were received at Tripoli airport by PFLP-GC leader Ahmed Jibril and Abdessalam Jalloud, who was representing Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi.

As I recall this incident, I need to recount some testimonies. Fatah's Abdullah Hilal Tohma recalled how he infiltrated Palestinian territories in 1967 with another Palestinian called Yasser Arafat. They parted ways in Nablus city. Tohma

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release, even if the price it pays is costly. Should that fail, then it could turn to arduous and costly negotiations.

The issue of prisoners and exchanges is old and painful. Every prominent Palestinian leader dreams of earning the medal of liberating Palestinians from their torture in Israeli prisons.

CNN this week aired a report about the suffering of Palestinian prisoners at an Israeli military base-turned-detention center in the Negev desert. It spoke of rotting wounds and limbs being amputated due to prisoners being shackled for too long. The report jogged my memory. During the early days of my career, my profession allowed me to learn about the suffering of prisoners and a captive country called Palestine. The country witnessed a river of prisoners and several exchanges, but the river of blood and detainees will never stop without the birth of an independent Palestinian state.

I will share a few memories with the reader. Back in 1979, Fadel Shourour, a leading member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine — General Command, asked me if I wanted an intriguing story. No young journalist would pass up such a proposal. I asked him about the time and place. Smiling, he replied: "A car will come to pick you up."

I waited in front of the An-Nahar building in Beirut and, soon, a car with tinted windows drove up to me. The driver and his companion

first time I had ever found myself under the same roof as an Israeli, a soldier no less.

I asked him who he was and he identified himself as Abraham Amram. He revealed that he was taken prisoner during the Israeli invasion of southern Lebanon in 1978. Then, like all prisoners, he went on to criticize the Israeli government and urged it to comply with the demands of his captors. He also said the PFLP-GC had treated him well and provided him with medical care. However, after his return to Israel, he published a book in which he said his captors had held him in Syria and that he was severely tortured during his detention.

On the way back to Beirut, the companion apologized for the security measures of the journey. He said the area was at the mercy of Israeli jets and that Israel would not have hesitated in carrying out a ground operation had information about the meeting been leaked.

Later, on March 14 the same year, I was at Damascus airport for a flight on a Bulgarian Tupolev plane that was transporting Amram. Shourour was in charge of the trip and he worried that Israel would hijack the Tupolev. Amram himself was worried that Menachem Begin's government would make a move that would lead to his death. He tried to conceal his fear by asking whether his wife and children would be waiting for him when we arrived at our destination.

The plane landed at Geneva airport. A plane

would be detained and held prisoner by Israel, while Arafat would later become the guardian of the Palestinian dream.

Hafez Dalqamouni recalled the horrific torture he endured during his time in Israeli captivity. He said an Israeli doctor insisted on amputating his leg and that, later, during interrogations, his captors would beat the leg that was amputated.

A.A.A. recalled how she was paraded naked in front of Israeli soldiers and how they attempted to penetrate her body using a stick. She was serving two life sentences.

The "mother of all horrors" was recalled by R.Y.A. of the PFLP who was imprisoned after carrying out several attacks against Israel. One attack targeted the British consulate. She recalled: "They stripped me naked, brought in my father and ordered him to have sex with me. He fainted from horror."

I am now using the initials of the two liberated women prisoners. Back then, I was a young journalist with few reservations. I released their full names along with their photos. In Beirut, famed poet Mahmoud Darwish read their recollections and told me: "This killed me. This is peak brutality. I couldn't sleep that night."

I have heard many painful recollections throughout my career. But R.Y.A.'s statements were the most brutal. The CNN report reminded me of the suffering of prisoners. The recollections living in my memory attacked me like a dagger.

# Xi's European tour exposed the EU's persisting divisions

“In May, when the fragrance of flowers and grass on the Great Hungarian Plain fills the air, I will pay a state visit to Hungary at the invitation of President Tamas Sulyok and Prime Minister Viktor Orban.” This was Chinese leader Xi Jinping waxing lyrical in an official statement about his landmark trip to Budapest on May 9, part of a tour that also included France and Serbia.

As the rest of the European Union was marking “Europe Day”, honouring the 1950 Schuman Declaration kick-starting the European integration project, Orban praised Xi's China as “one of the pillars of the new world order”.

Xi's visit to Hungary saw the announcement of a two-billion-euro (\$2.1bn) railway project, adding to a growing number of large industrial projects funded by China. In December, top Chinese carmaker, BYD, announced it will build a factory for the production of electrical vehicles (EVs), while CATL, another Chinese firm, has undertaken a 7.3-billion-euro (\$7.86bn) project for a battery plant.

China is the biggest foreign investor in Hungary, having poured some 16 billion euros (\$17bn) into various projects.

It was the Chinese leader's second trip to the country that many perceive as China's Trojan horse within the EU. Orban did little to dispel such views. He basked in the glory of the special relationship with Beijing.

While the Hungarian government cosies up to Beijing,

Dimitar Bechev

Europeans, by and large, perceive China as posing major strategic challenges. Whether it is the war in Ukraine, the nuclear arms race, international efforts to fight climate change or concerns about unfair trade practices, policymakers and strategic thinkers in Brussels and key member states are keeping a wary eye on Beijing's role in world affairs.

“We must behave respectfully towards China in terms of trade,” French President Emmanuel Macron said in a recent interview with The Economist magazine, “but in a way that defends our interests, is reciprocal and promotes national security.”

Europe wants China to be a partner but also is aware of the risks of too much economic dependency, especially in emergent sectors such as green technology where the Chinese have an edge. Last October, European Commission launched a probe into Chinese-manufactured EVs sold on the EU market benefitting unfairly from Chinese state subsidies.

The shift to a more defensive posture reflects a mood change in some parts of the EU. Even those sceptical of Macron's views in favour of “strategic autonomy” recognise that the Union should be protected from external threats and risks and among them is China.

In the good old days, when the EU rode the wave of globalisation and pioneered open markets and the free flow of capital, it was easier to think of relations with Beijing as a win-win. It was

all about economic efficiency.

Yet the tune changed in the 2010s as the West reeled from the global financial crisis and China became more assertive across many parts of the world, Europe included. The EU's trade deficit with China more than tripled to nearly 400 billion euros (\$430bn) between 2013 and 2022. The COVID-19 pandemic and the disruption of worldwide supply chains along with Russia's all-out invasion of Ukraine cementing an historic rapprochement between Moscow and Beijing, dealt a final deadly blow to the bullish vision of China-EU ties. Currently, the EU characterises Beijing as “partner for cooperation, an economic competitor and a systemic rival”.

Last year, the European Commission's President Ursula von der Leyen called for “de-risking” from China. Reflective of the new mood, the first leg of Xi's European trip included talks with Macron and von der Leyen on the continuing trade disputes and China's policy on Ukraine. However, little progress was achieved.

The problem is that de-risking is not universally embraced across the EU. Hungary is perhaps the most flagrant example, but far from the only one. It is obvious that Germany has not fully signed up for a new, tougher approach either. To be fair, during his visit to Beijing in mid-April, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz sang from the same hymn sheet as Macron. In relation to Ukraine, Scholz appealed to the Chinese to “make it clear

that this senseless imperialist war must end”.

The chancellor has made tough statements on China's disruptive trade practices, too. Yet extensive trading links and the presence of big German business on the Chinese market, notably carmakers such as Volkswagen, push government policy towards engagement. Furthermore, Scholz could have come to Paris in a show of unity with Macron and von der Leyen. Yet he did not.

The hardliner stance of the EU's closest ally, the United States, is also a factor. There is a bipartisan consensus in Washington that China is a top geopolitical adversary. Most EU countries – France and Germany certainly – would rather remain neutral in this fight. Visiting China last year, Macron warned of the danger of “getting caught up in crises that are not ours”.

Many in the EU are fearful of the impact of the economic and technological competition between the US and China, with both dishing out billions in subsidies to support their economies and thus eroding the global position of European industries.

Yet the achievement of strategic autonomy remains a tall order, not least because of the dependence on American military power to protect Europe. There is no easy recipe for how to navigate the China-US rivalry.

Xi's European tour highlights tensions, but also the desire of leading EU powers to maintain a productive relationship with Beijing. However, it appears that currently, China has more cards to play than Europe does.

Somdeep Sen

“We educate future generations.”

“We strive to take humanity forward.” “We want to create a great world.” “We are committed to the betterment of our global society.”

In the past few months, such university mottos have proven to be nothing other than rapid slogans.

Student-led sit-ins have popped up across US college campuses. Protesting students are demanding that their institutions call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and divest from companies doing business with Israel.

But instead of engaging with their demands in good faith, university presidents set loose the notoriously unrestrained American law enforcement on students standing in solidarity with the Palestinian people, who are facing genocide. The police have entered campuses in riot gear, violently dismantled encampments, brutalised protest-

ers, and arrested hundreds. Watching all of this, we are reminded that the contemporary university is not a place that cares to inspire change or build a better tomorrow through higher education. It is only beholden to the political and economic interests that often converge within its walls.

So, it is now time for us, educators, to step up and protect our students.

Indeed, many brave faculty members have put themselves in the line of fire.

On April 22, New York University (NYU) faculty were seen forming a chain around the Palestine solidarity encampment when protestors were preparing to pray. They did the same the next day when the New York Police Department (NYPD) entered campus to dismantle the encampment after the university administration asked them to step in.

The NYPD accused the faculty of being violent with law enforcement. But

witnesses said that they were simply protecting their students “against full-gear riot cops”. Afterwards, faculty from several departments at NYU wrote letters to the university leadership, condemning the intervention of the NYPD. The letter from NYU School of Law called the police intervention “a stain on the university”.

On May 1, on the third day of the encampment at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the university administration called in campus and state police. As they tore down the encampment, the faculty remained on the front lines. Associate Professor Samer Alatout, who was present at the protest and was detained, told reporters: “They targeted me specifically for violence...they did not come to me and say, ‘come with me.’ They pushed me to the ground.” Professor Alatout added that he was hit several times in the face. After his release, he

returned to the encampment “with cuts and blood on his face”. Professor Sami Schalk was also detained. After her release, she announced on social media: “I’m home. I’m significantly bruised, in a lot of pain & my shoulder is sprained. I’ve been told to return to the hospital if certain things happen which might be signs of internal damage, esp from the strangulation...”

At Virginia Tech, the leadership also asked law enforcement to take down the solidarity encampment. This resulted in 82 trespassing arrests, including of assistant professors Desiree Poets and Bikrum Gill who stood alongside protesting students. And when the police stormed the encampment at Washington University in St Louis, 65-year-old Professor Steve Tamari of Southern Illinois University Edwardsville was “body slammed and crushed by the weight of several St Louis County

police officers and then dragged across campus”. Professor Tamari broke his hand and ribs as a result of the assault by the police. In a statement, he said: “One doctor told me I am lucky to be alive; my lungs could have been punctured and I could have died on the ground as they abused me.”

By standing between the students and law enforcement, these faculty members have reminded us of our responsibilities as educators.

As our students are completely abandoned by university administrators, we are reminded that we too have a duty of care. In part, this means that as our students are forced to confront violent law enforcement, we have a quite literal responsibility to take care of their wellbeing, health and safety.

Equally, it means safeguarding the core function of the university and the role of our students in it. Here I’m reminded of the

words of the American educator Robert Maynard Hutchins who once said the purpose of education is not to teach facts, theories and laws or to “reform” and “amuse” students. Rather, it is to teach students to “think”; to “unsettle” their minds, to “widen their horizon” and “to inflame their intellects”.

This is where we see the crucial role of the knowledge that we impart in the classroom and the impact it has on the world outside. The dilemma of the contemporary university was aptly captured by a placard at the encampment at Columbia University that said, “Columbia, why require me to read Prof Edward Said, if you don’t want me to use it?” Indeed, we need to remember that what we teach in the classroom is not words on paper, a metaphor for real-world problems or an abstract discussion of issues elsewhere.

For students, the readings we assign are a primer for understanding the

world and their place in it. When they read Edward Said, WEB Du Bois, Merze Tate, or Frantz Fanon they think of the legacies of colonialism, imperialism and racism and how they shape their lives today. When they read about ethnic cleansing, massacres and genocides, these are not just history lessons to them. Students wonder why such atrocities were allowed to be perpetrated and what could have been done to stop them. Of course, this understanding of education runs counter to the logic of the neoliberal university where the degree is just a commodity that equips students to enter the labour market, earn a living and hopefully recoup to financial investment they made when pursuing a higher education.

But through these encampments, we are witness to students embodying the “origin story” of the university. Their inflamed intellect and widened horizons teach

them about the complicity of their institutional positionality and how “business as usual” in the place where they live, work and study allows a genocide to continue unabated thousands of miles away in Gaza. It is then our role as educators to care for and protect them, as they put into practice outside the classroom, what they have learned in the classroom, and demand action from those that lead our universities.

What we are witnessing is in no way just an American problem. At the time of writing, social media was flooded with videos of law enforcement violently dismantling student encampments in Berlin and Amsterdam. Encampments have also appeared elsewhere in Europe, Australia, Mexico and Japan.

The global resonance of this student movement is self-evident. And educators will have to decide what side of history they wish to be on.





# Stock Exchange stays bullish, gains 713 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bullish trend on Monday, gaining 713.61 points, a positive change of 0.98 percent, closing at 73,799.11 points against 73,085.50 points the previous trading day.

A total of 721,597,885 shares valuing Rs 25.649 billion were traded during the day as compared to 741,196,400 shares valuing Rs 25.268 billion the last day.

Some 387 companies transacted their shares in

the stock market; 241 of them recorded gains and 120 sustained losses, whereas the prices of 26 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Cnergyco PK with 64,224,241 shares at Rs 4.74 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 51,639,862 shares at Rs 1.48 per share and Hum Network with 29,028,603 shares at Rs 9.82 per share.

Sapphire Fibres Limited witnessed an increase of Rs 63.04 per share price closing at Rs 1,463.04, whereas the runner-up was Service

Industries Limited with Rs 56.35 decline to close at Rs 834.83.

Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 86.50 per share closing at Rs 7,401.00, followed by Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited with Rs 82.30 decline to close at Rs 19,007.70.

**Gold rates dip by Rs1,200 per tola to Rs242,300:** The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 1,200 and was sold at Rs 242,300 on Monday compared to its sale at Rs 243,500 on last

trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 943 to Rs 207,733 from Rs 208,762 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs 190,422 from Rs 191,365, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers' Association reported.

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

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$10 to \$2,349 from \$2,359, the Association.

## U Bank, Raqami Islamic Digital Bank enter interoperable partnership

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: U Microfinance Bank (U Bank) and Raqami Islamic Digital Retail Bank Ltd. (RIDBL) have entered into a strategic interoperable partnership to enable access to branch banking services to RIDBL customers through U Bank, marking a significant milestone in the digital banking landscape of Pakistan.

With this innovative collaboration, U Bank will extend the Shari'ah-compliant services of its extensive branch and branchless banking channels, including its network of 375+ brick-and-mortar branches nationwide to RIDBL, facilitating their digital banking clientele with seamless physical Cash In/Cash Out (CICO) transaction services and other branch banking facilities. This collaboration signifies the coming together of the traditional and digital banking worlds, opening a new era of accessibility and convenience for customers

across Pakistan. The regulatory framework for digital banks, which was unveiled by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) in January 2022, encourages such partnerships in a bid to maximize the utilization of brick-and-mortar infrastructure, with specific objectives to optimize financial access to the citizenry while driving down the cost of financial services for the end customer.

The partnership was officiated in a recent ceremony held in Islamabad in the presence of Mr. Mohamed Essa Al Taheri, President & CEO - U Bank and Mr. Umair Aijaz, CEO - RIDBL, as well as other members of both organizations.

Mohamed Essa Al Taheri, President & CEO - U Bank, stated, "With this partnership with RIDBL, we are not only facilitating transactions for a wider segment of customers, but we are furthering our agenda of financial inclusion and economic empowerment in Pakistan. At U

Bank, we believe in the power of collaboration to drive positive change and we look forward to leveraging our combined strengths with RIDBL to deliver unique financial solutions in line with the evolving needs of customers."

Commenting on the partnership, Mr. Umair Aijaz, CEO Raqami Islamic Digital Bank Ltd., stated, "At Raqami, we actively nurture the vision of a transformative banking landscape-one where accessibility evolves into empowerment. Along with U Bank, we are not merely reimagining banking; we will fundamentally reshape it, ushering in new standards for seamless Islamic digital experiences."

Such strategic collaborations and relentless innovation open avenues to explore additional use cases to expand digital banking in Pakistan and reinforce both the organizations' shared vision for a more inclusive and accessible banking ecosystem in the country.

U Microfinance Bank Ltd. (U Bank) is a wholly-owned subsidiary of PTCL - e&G Group (formerly known as Etisalat Company). The bank has a network of more than 375+ branches, across 210 cities and rural areas in Pakistan and offers a wide range of micro financing products, deposit products, and branchless banking solutions. U Bank's branchless banking offers services under the banner of UPaisa in collaboration with Ufone (Pak Telecom Mobile Limited).

RIDBL is one of five aspirants for the Islamic digital retail bank license, which is to be awarded by the State Bank of Pakistan under the Licensing and Regulatory Framework for Digital Banks (the Framework) 2022 and after incumbents achieve operational readiness and successfully conclude a pilot. At Raqami we actively nurture the vision of a transformative banking landscape-one where accessibility evolves into empowerment.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Republic of Türkiye Mehmet Pacaci meeting with Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema.

### Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships, Apollon-D, MSC Prelude-V, Sea Galaxy and Limra, scheduled to load/offload Container, Condensate and LPG, berthed at Container Terminal, Oil Terminal and Engro Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile four more ships, Aljalaa, Chemroad Journey, Rigel and Hanyu Freesia scheduled to load/offload Fuel oil, Palm oil and Chemicals also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours.

A total of ten ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a Liquid Natural Gas carrier 'Lusail' left the port on today morning, while seven more ships, Apollon-D, MSE Prelude-V, Federal Iberville, Marina Aman, Limra, MH Sandef Jord and Ever Success are expected to sail on same day.

Cargo volume of 201,368 tonnes, comprising 121,290 tonnes imports cargo and 80,078 tonnes export cargo carried in 6,289 Containers (3,133 TEUs Imports and 3,156 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 9 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Capricorn, Asia Inspire and Hanyu Freesia & two more ships, Horizon-I and MSC Silvia scheduled to load/offload Iron Ore, Palm oil, Chemicals, LPG and Container are expected to take berths at MW-2, LCT, EVTL, SSGC and QICT on today.

While two more container ships, Maersk Columbus and Amoureux are due arrive at Port Qasim on Tuesday.

## PCJCCI, FTO hold awareness session

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) organized an awareness session for "Outreach programmes with respect to Role and functions of FTO (Federal Tax Ombudsman) office on account of redress of complaints of taxpayers against FBR" here at the PCJCCI Secretariat on Monday.

The speakers for the event were Dr. Ahmed Shahab, Advisor, Adeela Rehman, Advisor FTO and Nazim Raza, Director FTO. The session was attracted by huge interest from diverse stakeholders comprising representation from companies and young entrepreneurs.

Adeela Rehman, Advisor FTO, briefed that Federal Tax Ombudsman is working tirelessly for the improvement of tax services and systems in the coun-

try. She said that the main purpose of FTO is to redress the injustice done to taxpayers by FBR, Revenue Division and Government of Pakistan. "We try our level best to deal and resolve the complaints within 45 days. Complaints of tax malfeasance are dealt through prompt, fair, impartial and independent investigation," she added.

Dr. Ahmed Shahab, Advisor FTO, shared that it is the need of the hour to get the country out of this economic crisis and the business community can play a key role in this regard and to achieve this goal, we are trying to play an active role and cooperate fully with the business community. He added that the Federal Tax Ombudsman has organized such sessions to guide the business community in all

the major chambers of the country and meetings have also been held with various tax bars and SMEs to create awareness.

Col. Rana Ashraf Chaiman Standing Committee on HR and Finance, PCJCCI, appreciated the efforts of FTO in creating awareness and termed it a very important initiative because a large number of people are still not fully aware of the function of the Federal Tax Ombudsman and its benefits, due to which they are facing many difficulties in solving tax related issues.

Salahuddin Hanif, Secretary General PCJCCI, thanked the participants and hoped that such innovative and informative sessions will definitely help the young entrepreneurs and business community to get an awareness and knowledge about the active working of FTO.

## UBL to build regional office at Naya Nazimabad

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: United Bank Limited (UBL) - a leading bank of Pakistan, has acquired a 14,092 sq. yards commercial plot in Naya Nazimabad, Karachi, to build its regional office. Naya Nazimabad is located at the cusp of District West and Central of Karachi. The area is a major hub for the professional talent pool of the city and represents the largest enrolment at the city's educational institutions.

Naya Nazimabad is a master-planned gated com-

munity designed for integrated living for the middle and upper middle strata of Karachi. This transaction marks a major transformational addition to its character as now office space shall be added to its portfolio of residential, retail, social and entertainment related assets.

This acquisition will allow UBL to attract professional talent from the area and utilize it more effectively. Its strategic location will substantially reduce the travel time and related stress for its employees. This is also

likely to be, economically, highly effective for the bank. The plot is in close vicinity of world class retail, sports and social amenities.

This acquisition highlights the foresightedness of UBL's leadership and its commitment and its capacity to play a lead role in development and progress. It is anticipated that more professional and progressive organizations shall follow suit for timely capitalization of opportunities in terms of acquiring strategic locations for their operations.

## Aga Khan Hospital & HMC hosts Mother's Day health camp



### F.P. Report

HYDERABAD: Aga Khan Hospital, Hyderabad, in collaboration with the Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, organized a free health camp at the Hyderabad Club to celebrate Mother's Day. This endeavour brought together medical experts and civic

leaders to promote community health.

The health camp offered consultations spanning various health areas including women and children's health, heart health, eye care, endocrinology, internal medicine, and physiotherapy. To further increase access to quality care, complimentary services such as

ECGs, blood sugar tests, and eye examinations were provided. The event drew an impressive turnout of approximately 300 patients.

The success of this initiative was made possible through the dedication and expertise of esteemed medical professionals, including Dr Nigar Jabeen, Dr Qamarunnisa Mohabbat

Khan, Dr Atiya Unar, Dr Heeramani Lohana, Dr Sofia, Dr Gulshad, Dr Muhammad Shafique Bughio, Dr Muhammad Saleem, Dr Abeer Memon, Dr Rizwan Channa, Dr Raheel Shaikh, and Dr Shumaila Aijaz alongside the nursing and management team of the Aga Khan Hospital, Hyderabad.

Mr. Kashif Shoro, Mayor of Hyderabad District, graced the event as the chief guest. Mr. Shoro, along with his team, actively participated in the proceedings, affirming his support for initiatives aimed at enhancing public health and well-being.

The event concluded on a celebratory note with a cake cutting ceremony led by the Mayor, symbolizing unity and collaboration in the pursuit of better healthcare for mothers of all the age groups and their families.

## Emirates Group announces 2023-24 results

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Emirates Group on Monday released its 2023-24 Annual Report, hitting new record profit, revenue, and cash balance levels. Both Emirates and dnata saw significant profit and revenue increases in 2023-24, as the Group expanded its operations around the world to meet strong customer demand for its high-quality products

and services.

For the financial year ended 31 March 2024, the Emirates Group posted a record profit of AED 18.7 billion (US\$ 5.1 billion), up 71% compared with an AED 10.9 billion (US\$ 3.0 billion) profit for last year. The Group's revenue was AED 137.3 billion (US\$ 37.4 billion), an increase of 15% over last year's results. The Group's cash balance was AED 47.1 billion (US\$ 12.8 billion), the highest ever reported, up 11% from last year.

Combined Group profits for the last 2 years, at AED 29.6 billion, surpass pandemic losses of AED 25.9 billion during 2020-2022.

Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chairman and Chief Executive, Emirates airline and Group

said: "The Emirates Group has once again raised the bar to deliver a new record performance. Throughout the year, we saw high demand for air transport and travel related services around the world, and because we were able to move quickly to deliver what customers want, we achieved tremendous results. We are reaping the benefit of years of non-stop investments in our products and services, in building strong partnerships, and in the capabilities of our talented people.

"Huge credit is also due to the UAE's visionary leaders, especially HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. It is thanks to their leadership and the nation's progressive policies that the Emirates Group is able to flourish. Both Emirates and dnata have forged successful business models leveraging Dubai's unique advantages, in turn generating enormous value for Dubai and the communities they serve around the world."

Sheikh Ahmed added: "The Group's excellent financial standing today places us in a strong position for future growth and



success. It enables us to invest to deliver even better products, services, and more value to our customers and stakeholders."

Many major projects are already underway, including: a multibillion-dollar aircraft fleet and cabin renewal programme; new catering, cargo, and ground handling capabilities; advanced technologies to support the Group's operations; expanded training and people development programmes; and initiatives to progress the Group's sustainability agenda.

In 2023-24, the Group collectively invested AED 8.8 billion (US\$ 2.4 billion) in new aircraft, facilities, equipment, companies, and the latest technologies to support its growth plans.

The Group's total workforce grew by 10% to 112,406 employees, its largest size ever, as Emirates and dnata continued recruitment activity around the world to support its expanding operations

and bolster its future capabilities.

The Group took significant strides in its sustainability journey during 2023-24, putting into action numerous initiatives focussed on the environment, its people, customers, and communities.

Environmental topics were high on the agenda during the year, as the UAE hosted the world's biggest conference for climate action, COP28, in Dubai.

In 2023-24, Emirates signed new supply agreements to uplift sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) at its Dubai hub for the very first time, and also in Amsterdam and Singapore. The airline operated the first A380 demonstration flight using 100% SAF in one engine, collecting data to support industry efforts to enable a future of 100% SAF flying.

Recognising that airlines today have the limited viable solutions to meaningfully reduce carbon

emissions, Emirates established a US\$ 200 million fund to support R&D projects that focus on reducing the impact of fossil fuels in commercial aviation. It also became a founding entity of Air-CRAFT, a UAE-based research consortium for renewable and advanced aviation fuels; and joined The Solent Cluster, a UK initiative focused on producing low-carbon fuels for a variety of sectors, including aviation. dnata continued to invest and induct more electric and hybrid vehicles to its global fleet of ground support equipment (GSE), adding new baggage tractors, cargo loaders, and pushback tractors to its USA operations. It also converted and refurbished diesel-powered GSEs in Italy to run on Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil and electric power. dnata's UAE businesses including dnata logistics, Arabian Adventures, Alpha Flight Services and City Sightseeing Worldwide, transitioned to biofuel for its landside fleet of vehicles.

During the year, dnata became the first combined air services provider to receive the International Air Transport Association's environmental management (IEnvA) certification for its commitment to sustainabili-

ty across its UAE businesses; and Emirates achieved IEnvA Stage One and the IEnvA Illegal Wildlife Trade module certifications, for its efforts in environmental stewardship and anti-wildlife trafficking.

The Group ramped up investments in people development, rolling out a comprehensive programme of learning and training options for its workforce in partnership with top universities and key industry partners. A Gender Balance Council was established to champion and promote gender equality within the Group.

The Emirates Group has expanded its ESG reporting in its latest 2023-24 report and are adopting aspects of the GRI standards. It plans to evolve its reporting to meet ISSB and CSRD

requirements in the coming years[1].

Sheikh Ahmed said: "We enter our 2024-25 financial year on strong foundations for continued growth. Emirates will receive delivery of 10 new A350 aircraft in 2024-25, adding to our fleet mix and supporting the next phase of its network growth. dnata will continue to leverage synergies and scale across its business divisions to grow its footprint and capabilities. In tandem, we are investing resources to minimise our environmental impact, develop our people, look after our customers and the communities we serve."

"The business outlook is positive, and we expect customer demand for air transport and travel to remain strong in the coming months.

### SUIT NOTICE

In the Court of Miss Ambareen Navid Judge Banking Court-1 Peshawar Federal Judicial Complex, Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar Case No: 30/1 of 2024, Date of hearing: 18-05-2024, Suit for the recovery of Rs. 2649500/- M/S Askari Bank Ltd: through Branch Manager, Cantonment Branch, The Mall Mardan VS Ihsan Gul Notice Versus: Ihsan Gul S/o Barat Gul, R/o Village and Post Office Machi, Rustam, Tehsil and Dist: Mardan, Where as the plaintiff bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of Rs. 2649500/- Against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institution (Recovery of Finance) Ordinance 2001, you are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/publication of the notice in the newspapers. Failing which an ex parte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs. Issued today on 21-03-2024 under my signature and seal of the Court. Registrar, Banking Court, 1 Peshawar

### Court Notice

In the Court of Janhar Ali Safi Civil Judge-I/Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar. Suit No. 148/1, Institution 7/2/2023, date of hearing 17/5/2024. Taj Mohamad Vs. Amer Haider etc. Notice to No. (2) Amer Jafar s/o Ashrafudien resident of Bajkatta, Tehsil Gagra District Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorised agent or pleader in the court at 8.00 am dated 17/5/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court,

### Father's name correction

My father correct name is Malang but in Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) written as incorrect Hayat Khan son of Shah Wali by mistake. It is requested to correct it as Hayat Khan son of Malang resident of Skardu, currently residing in Mardan district.





## In brief

KU clinch  
Intervarsity  
Chess title

KARACHI (APP): In the 8th HEC All Pakistan Intersvarsity Chess Championship 2024 hosted by Rawalpindi Women's University, in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission, Karachi University (KU) won the title by beating last year's champion University of Lahore. Players Uraiba Hasan, Aisha Manzoor, and Adeena Shoaib Ansari played exceptional games and managed to maintain an impressive score of 6.5/7 in the whole tournament, said a news release issued here on Monday. Team manager Batool Kazim was always at the forefront and managed the team impressively through the ups and downs of the tournament. Team coach Mustafa Adil helped the players secure the win with his amazing insights into the game. Aisha Manzoor managed to draw a game with the top female player and National Champion, Mehak Gul. Adeena Shoaib Ansari remained the undefeated Board 1 player throughout the tournament. Uraiba Hasan, President UOKSS, showed exceptional tactical skills and dominated her games since the start.

U-12 tennis  
team to leave  
for Nepal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan 12 & under tennis team is gearing up to depart for Nepal on May 17 to feature in an ATF South Asia team competition. The event - ATF 12 & Under South Asia Team Competition is slated from May 20 to May 24 in Kathmandu, Nepal, said a press release issued here on Monday. The event will witness participation from teams representing Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka. The Pakistan players selected for the tournament include Rashid Ali Buchani (Sindh), Muhammad Shayan Afridi and Muhammad Junaid Khan (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). Currently, the players are undergoing training under the auspices of the Pakistan Tennis Federation at PTF-SDA Complex Islamabad.

Wapda bags  
National title

ISLAMABAD (APP): Wapda emerged victorious in the final of the National Challenge Cup 2023-24, outplaying SA Gardens by 1-0, here at the Jinnah Stadium of Pakistan Sports Complex. Muhammad Yousaf scored the goal of the match in the 17th minute, securing Wapda's triumph. Wapda's team demonstrated exceptional skills and strategy throughout the match, outplaying their opponents to lift the coveted trophy. This victory marks a significant achievement for Wapda, solidifying their position as a dominant force in Pakistani football. A total of 16 teams participated in the National Challenge Cup (NCC), divided into four groups, each comprising four teams. Group A: PACA, Pakistan Army, NIMSO and HEC; Group B: KRL, Pakistan Navy, SA Farms and Masha United; Group C: Otto Crains, Wapda, WSTC, and Pakistan Police; Group D: PAF, Asia Ghees Mills, SA Gardens and Pakistan Railway.

## Ireland to tour Pakistan next year in August for Test series

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Ireland men's cricket team will tour Pakistan next year in August-September to play a Test series, confirmed the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

Ireland was originally scheduled to tour Pakistan for three ODIs and as many T20Is in September and October of 2025.

However, as per the PCB, the European side will now tour Pakistan in August-September next year and will instead play a Test series.

The confirmation regarding Ireland's tour to Pakistan came after PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi met Cricket Ireland Chairman Brian MacNeice in Dublin on Sunday.

MacNeice warmly welcomed the PCB chairman and thanked him for visiting the country. Chairman Cricket Ireland also presented Mohsin Naqvi with a souvenir shirt and cap of the Irish team.

The discussion regarding organizing a series between the women's cricket teams of both nations also took place in the high-profile meeting. Cricket Ireland Chairman MacNeice also welcomed Pakistan as the hosts of the ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

"Hosting the Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan was a welcome decision. Pakistan had always provided excellent security for international tournaments," PCB quoted MacNeice. In response, PCB chair-

man Mohsin Naqvi appreciated Cricket Ireland for making excellent arrangements for the Pakistan team's ongoing tour of Ireland, adding that the Pakistan team received a lot of support during their tour of Ireland.

Naqvi further vowed that fool-proof arrangements would be made for all the participating teams in the Champions Trophy 2025.

It is worth mentioning here that Pakistan and Ireland are currently competing in a three-match series, levelled at 1-1 with a game to spare, in a build-up to the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024. The two sides will also lock horns in the mega event on June 16 at Central Broward Regional Park in Lauderdale.



LAHORE: Chairman Prime Minister Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan in a group photograph with students participating in Talent Hunt Youth Sports Judo League at Lahore College for Women University. —APP Photo

Shahid Afridi lauds  
Pakistan team

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Skipper Shahid Afridi was all-out for praise for the Pakistan team for outplaying Ireland in the second T20I saying we needed this win.

Following Pakistan's impressive victory over Ireland on Sunday, Afridi took to social media to express his appreciation for the team's performance.

He particularly highlighted the outstanding contributions of Mohammad Rizwan and Fakhar Zaman, whose match-winning knocks were instrumental in Pakistan's success.

In his post, Afridi also congratulated his son-in-law Shaheen Afridi for reaching a significant milestone marking a remarkable achievement in his cricketing career.

In the second T20I match against Ireland, the Green-shirts faced a challenging target as Ireland posted 193 runs after losing seven wickets in the first innings.

Despite early setbacks with the dismissals of key players like Babar Azam and Saim Ayub, Pakistan came back strong with exceptional batting performances.

"We needed this win. Well done team, sp the way Rizwan and Fakhar played. We need the same mindset in the World Cup and similar strike rates for most batsmen. Congrats to Shaheen on 300 intl wickets, well done," Afridi posted as quoted by cricketpakisthan.com.pk.

Meanwhile, former Pakistan cricketer, Ramiz Raja, has addressed Pakistan's bowling woes, against Ireland where they conceded 193/7.

"They conceded 200 runs against Ireland and it seemed as if our bowlers were behind. If they had taken the catches of Rizwan and Zaman it would have become difficult for Pakistan to chase the target," Raja said.

He said Pakistan's top

bowlers were giving away so many runs against Ireland. Pakistan's forte, and success are based on the bowlers, especially pacers, they have been struggling since last year's World Cup. Two balls are good and then three deliveries are bad, this makes the situation tough, he said.

He expressed skepticism about the effectiveness of Saim Ayub as an opening batsman, emphasizing the need for consistency and reliability at the top of the order.

"If you don't score 50 off 30 balls then breaking Rizwan and Babar's opening duo doesn't make any sense," Raja said.

Raja also pointed out on the coverage of the matches. "These matches are appearing as some club matches. There are only a couple of cameras, no DRS, no replays, lack of clarity in boundaries, there is no real enjoyment in watching shot or a good ball. This is hurting our brand," he said.

Gavaskar  
lashes out  
at England  
players

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Former Indian captain Sunil Gavaskar has criticized England players' decision to leave the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) for the T20I series against Pakistan.



He also demanded the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) take action and penalise the players for pulling off from the playoff stages of the IPL.

"I am all for players choosing country before anything else but having assured various franchises about their availability for the full season, if they pull out now, it will be letting down the franchises which probably pay them more money in one IPL season which they don't earn in a few seasons with their country," Gavaskar wrote in his column for Mid Day.

"The franchises should not only be allowed to deduct a substantial amount from the fee that the player was bought for but also not give the Board, to which the player belongs, the stated 10 per cent commission of the fee that each player gets."

England's Jonny Bairstow, Sam Curran, and Liam Livingstone are representing Punjab Kings in the IPL, while Will Jacks and Reece Topley are playing for Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB).

Jos Buttler is representing Rajasthan Royals, Phil Salt is playing for Kolkata Knight Riders and Moeen Ali is with Chennai Super Kings.

England announced a 15-member squad for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 and the four-match T20I series against Pakistan.

They announced that the players who are participating in the IPL will come back to the country to play series against Pakistan.

"Selected players, currently playing in the Indian Premier League, will return in time for the series against Pakistan, which gets underway at Headingley on Wednesday 22 May 2024," ECB said in the press release.

England squad for Pakistan series and T20 World Cup: Jos Buttler (c), Phil Salt, Will Jacks, Jonny Bairstow, Ben Duckett, Harry Brook, Liam Livingstone, Moeen Ali (vc), Sam Curran, Chris Jordan, Tom Hartley, Adil Rashid, Jofra Archer, Mark Wood, Reece Topley.

Fakhar Zaman says  
“Pakistan needed  
wake-up call” before  
T20 World Cup

DUBLIN (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's left-handed batter Fakhar Zaman asserted that the national team needed a wake-up call ahead of the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, scheduled to be held in the West Indies and the USA in June.

Fakhar, in a video released by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Digital, asserted that the shock loss in the first T20I against Ireland fuelled every player with determination to give their best in the next fixture.

He further acknowledged the need to carry the same momentum heading into the T20 World Cup. "We needed a wake-up

call considering the way we lost the first game. So it was in the back of our minds while we were playing the second game and that is why everyone was giving their best," Fakhar said.

"We hope to carry the same momentum till the World Cup," he added.

Set to chase 194 in the second T20I, Pakistan had a shaky start as they lost young opener Saim Ayub (6) and skipper Babar Azam (0) with just 13 runs on the board inside the first two overs.

Following the slump, Fakhar Zaman joined Mohammad Rizwan at the crease and the duo turned the tide in Pakistan's favour with a marathon

140-run partnership.

Fakhar remained the top-scorer for Pakistan with a blistering 78 off 40 balls, featuring six fours and six sixes while Mohammad Rizwan made an unbeaten 75 off 46 balls with the help of six fours and four sixes, which earned him the Player of the Match award.

"Our plan was to counter attack despite losing two wickets early. There is pressure when you lose early wickets, but since we have planned to play attacking cricket, it releases all pressure," Fakhar told PCB Digital.

"Our plan was to chase the score before the 18th over," he concluded.

Guardiola urges Man City to  
seize chance to make history

LONDON (AFP): Pep Guardiola said "history is in front of us" as he prepares his Manchester City team for a potentially tricky match at Tottenham on Tuesday that could ultimately decide the destination of the Premier League title.

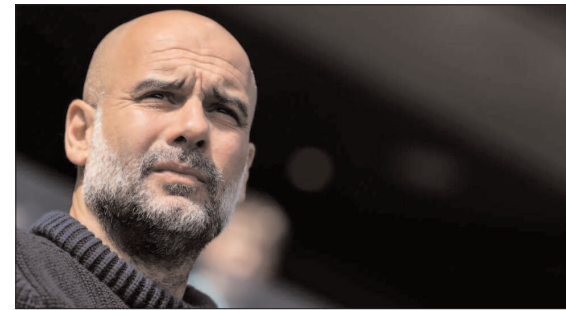
City, chasing an unprecedented fourth straight top-flight English league crown, are one point behind leaders Arsenal but crucially have a game in hand.

If City beat Spurs they will be able to seal the championship with a win at home to West Ham on the final day of the season on Sunday, when Arsenal host Everton.

Guardiola's men are charging towards the finishing line, hitting 28 goals in their past seven Premier League matches and conceding just five times.

But the City boss, who said he was relishing the high-pressure title run-in, denied that the race was already effectively over.

"Fifteen goals (in four matches) is fine, it gave us the points to be here but it doesn't give you an extra thing for tomorrow when you start the game,"



Guardiola told Monday's pre-match press conference.

"The mindset is easy, in terms of if we don't win we are not going to win the Premier League and this is what we have to do."

City have never won a league match at Tottenham's new stadium, which opened in 2019, and have not even scored a goal, though they won there in the FA Cup in January.

Guardiola said despite his team's poor record at the ground, they had played well there "many times". "But to do something in this country that has never been done before you have to do something special, exceptional I would say," he said.

"It's not ever happened in the Premier League. We have to do it this time. History is in front of us and we have to accept we have not done it. It's the time to do it, otherwise Arsenal will be champions."

Guardiola said he had "huge respect" for Spurs boss Ange Postecoglou, whose team still have an outside chance of securing a Champions League place for next season, though a win for Aston Villa against Liverpool later on Monday would end those hopes.

"The difficulties are there but at the same time we know what we are playing for -- to give us the chance for the last game at home depending on us," he said.

"This is the mindset that we have."

Swiatek battles past  
Kerber as climate protesters  
invade courts

ROME (AFP): Iga Swiatek saw off Angelique Kerber 7-5, 6-3 at the Rome Open on Monday to set up a quarter-final clash with Madison Keys, who beat Sorana Cirstea despite her match being interrupted by climate activists.

World number one Swiatek is yet to drop a set and is favourite for a third Foro Italico crown before she begins her French Open title defence later this month. The three-time Roland Garros champion arrived in the Italian capital off the back of a thrilling triumph in Madrid, her third WTA 1000 title of the season after also winning at Indian Wells and Doha.

But the 22-year-old didn't have it all her own way against former world number one Kerber, a three-time former Grand Slam champion who at 331st was the lowest-ranked player ever to reach the last 16 in this tournament.

Swiatek battled to the first set in just under an hour and was frequently put to the test by 36-year-old German Kerber, who fell behind after saving five set points in game 10 and then succumbing two games later. Kerber went two ahead in the second set but Swiatek fought back and after the Pole broke serve in game eight she held steady to close out the match.

"I'm a perfectionist but it's impossible to play perfect tennis, so you always have to be humble and not take anything for granted," said Swiatek.

"The pressure is there for sure but this year has been pretty good for me. I started the season well so I



don't feel like I have to chase anything." Not the greatest feeling? Swiatek will face Keys whose 6-2, 6-1 win was suspended for half an hour by a court invasion from activists from Ultima Generazione (Last Generation).

Wearing orange vests, protesters threw a liquid and confetti onto the Pietrangeli court, where Keys was playing, and court 12 where a men's doubles match was taking place. There were also protesters in the stands with a tournament spokesman telling AFP that at least one person had tried to glue their feet to the floor in order to slow their removal.

"Obviously it's not the greatest feeling when you're on court, your first reaction is kind of your own safety," said Keys. "It's obviously something that's becoming more of an occurrence and something that tournaments are going to have to figure out how to stop."

Daniil Medvedev will continue his title defence against Serbian qualifier Hamad Medjedovic while open following a series of big-name exits, the latest being fourth seed Andrey Rublev. Rome is missing the world's top three men

following Novak Djokovic's early elimination on Saturday, with Italian world number two Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz both withdrawing ahead of the event.

Rublev, Osaka out And Russian Rublev, fresh from claiming the Madrid title, suffered a shock third-round defeat by French qualifier Alexandre Muller, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Sixth seed and reigning Monte Carlo champion Stefanos Tsitsipas is still in the fray after beating Briton Cameron Norrie in straight sets 6-2, 7-6 (7/1). Naomi Osaka's return to the Rome Open was ended at the last 16 by China's Zheng Qinwen who breezed past her four-time Grand Slam winning opponent 6-2, 6-4 to set up a last-eight clash with third seed Coco Gauff.

Japan's Osaka, who has never won a title on clay, was playing at the Foro Italico for the first time in three years after taking a break from the tour to have her first child and is ranked at 173 in the world.

Later Australian Open champion Aryna Sabalenka will face Elina Svitolina for the first time since their handshake row at last year's French Open.





## In brief

### 226,400 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 226,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 250,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1470.00 feet and was 72.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 64,700 cusecs and 63,900 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1172.45 feet, which was 122.45 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 65,200 cusecs and 42,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 119,900, 59,000, 42,000 and 13,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 87,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 18,800 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Five killed, 13 injured

ISLAMABAD (APP): Five persons were killed and 13 others injured when a speeding coach overturned in Matari near Hyderabad in the wee hours of Monday. According to rescue sources, the accident occurred on the National Highway in the jurisdiction of Sikhat Police Station in Matari. As a result, five people were killed, private news channels reported. According to police, the speeding coach overturned after colliding with a long vehicle. Rescue teams reached the spot and shifted the dead and injured to a nearby hospital.

### NUST film making contest

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National University of Science and Technology (NUST) on Monday announced a film making competition for its students to provide them a platform for utilizing their creative talents. According to the NUST, the film enthusiasts having a story to tell or a vision to share with the world can showcase their work through the creative genre of film making. "Whether you're a seasoned filmmaker or just starting out, this is your chance to share your story with the world", a NUST news release said. For entering in the film competition, the participants are required to create a film with a runtime of not more than 10 minutes and send their entry to nustmarcoms@gmail.com with their name, contact information, and a brief description of their film. The entries can be submitted by May 17 which is the last date. The winners will get a lucrative prize and a chance to get featured on NUSTgram.

### Alauddin remembered

ISLAMABAD (APP): Famous film actor Alauddin was remembered on his death anniversary on Monday. He was born on February 2, 1920, in Rawalpindi. Alauddin ruled the Pakistan film industry for many decades due to his versatile acting. First, he tried his luck in the Indian film industry as a singer and did some minor roles as an actor. After partition, he joined the Pakistani film industry courtesy of producer and director A R Kardar and he became one of the pioneer figures of the Pakistani film industry. Till 1980, he performed in hundreds of movies as a hero, villain, and character actor. His accent and style were emulated by several actors but he was unmatched among them all.

# Pakistan, Turkiye vow to further solidify their economic ties

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Turkiye have resolved to further solidify their economic ties by increasing investments and bilateral trade volume.

The commitment was expressed during meeting between Ambassador of Turkiye to Pakistan Mehmet Pacaci and Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema in Islamabad today.

The meeting discussed holding next session of High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council soon to work on ways for increas-

ing bilateral trade volume to five billion dollars.

The meeting was centered on enhancing brotherly relations with a focus on elevating economic cooperation to new heights. In this regard, establishment of a branch of Turkish bank in Pakistan was also discussed.

The Minister reiterated Pakistan's commitment to continue working closely to realize the full potential of the bilateral relationship and enhance cooperation across various sectors.

He highlighted that Special Investment Facilitation Council aims at attracting investments from

friendly countries and there is huge potential for Turkish investment in Agricultural Machinery and Equipment and Large Scale Corporate Farming.

The Minister stressed the importance of enhancing collaboration through Government-to-Government (G2G) and Business-to-Business (B2B) arrangements.

On the occasion, the Ambassador reiterated Turkiye's eagerness to explore avenues for expanding bilateral trade and fostering cooperation in energy, banking, commerce, railways, and tourism.

## Army inaugurates girls' school, dispensary

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant milestone, the Pakistan Army has inaugurated a girls' school and a dispensary in Darra Musa, near Peshawar, as part of its efforts to promote education and healthcare in the region.

The school, which is a testament to the success of the Pakistan Army's "Ilm Tolo Da Para" initiative, aims to provide quality education to girls in the area, PTV reported.

In addition to the school, the Pakistan Army has also launched several skill development programs aimed at empowering youth and women in the area. These programs have already benefited a large

number of individuals, who have acquired new skills and are now contributing to the local economy.

The newly inaugurated dispensary will provide basic health facilities to the people of the area, who previously had to travel long distances for medical care. The dispensary is equipped with modern medical equipment and staffed by trained medical professionals.

Residents of the area have expressed their gratitude to the Pakistan Army for the inauguration of the girls' school and dispensary, which are expected to have a positive impact on the lives of the local population.

"This is a historic moment for our community," said a local resident. "We are grateful to the Pakistan Army for providing our girls with access to quality education and our people with basic health facilities. This will go a long way in improving our lives and empowering our youth."

The Pakistan Army's initiatives in Darra Musa are part of its broader efforts to promote peace and stability in the region. By investing in education and healthcare, the army is helping to create a more prosperous and secure future for the people of Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq presiding the meeting to discuss matters related to present and upcoming Budget Session of National Assembly at Parliament House. —APP Photo

## MoRA to ensure all available facilities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MoRA) and Director of Facilitation and Coordination at the Pakistan Hajj Mission in Madinah, Ahmed Nadeem Khan, said on Monday that all possible efforts were being made to facilitate intending pilgrims.

Talking to Radio Pakistan, he affirmed MoRA's commitment to spare no effort in fully supporting and cooperating with Pakistani pilgrims during Hajj in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Pre-Hajj Flight operation to airlift intending pilgrims to Saudi Arabia is in full swing, he informed.

He assured that all possible measures were being taken to ensure the quality and hygiene of the food served to the pilgrims. Furthermore, Nadeem Khan stated that Pakistani pilgrims who complete their eight-day stay in Madinah will soon start departing for Makkah. He said that ministry is fully prepared to provide all necessary facilities and support for their final journey.

## Climate change Summer Camps soon

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam on Monday said that summer camps would impart special education on climate change to students for sensitising them on pressing issue of global warming and environmental degradation.

She said this during a meeting with UNICEF Country Director for Pakistan, Abdullah A. Fadil here, a news release said. Romina Khurshid Alam apprised the UNICEF Country Director that with the collaboration of Secretary Federal Education & Professional Training and Chairman Higher Education Commission, the climate change related contents were being incorporated in the curriculum.

# ANF seizes 287 kg drugs in 10 operations; arrests 16 accused

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 10 operations across the country managed to recover 287 kg drugs and arrested 16 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed that 8400 intoxicated tablets were recovered from a parcel booked to UK at a courier office in Rawalpindi.

108 kg hashish, 3.6 kg opium and 2 kg Ice were recovered from an accused rounded up near

Expressway Islamabad.

In another raid, 72 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused arrested near Ring Road Peshawar.

48 kg hashish was recovered from an area near M-1 Islamabad while 24 kg opium was recovered from three suspects arrested near Kala Shah Kaku Toll Plaza Sheikhpura.

12 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects in Sohrab Goth Karachi and 8 kg hashish was recovered from two accused in

Tondojam Hyderabad.

5.8 kg hashish recovered from 5 accused in G9 Islamabad.

2 kg opium was recovered from a drug smuggler held near Burhan Interchange Attock and 105 grams Ice was recovered from an accused apprehended near a university in Islamabad.

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

## Crackdown on price gouging: ICT admin arrest 20, seals unscrupulous shops

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration on Monday launched a series of inspections targeting price gouging and regulatory violations, in a decisive move aimed at ensuring fair prices and consumer protection in the Federal Capital.

According to the Spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration, the Assistant Commissioners were taking a firm stand against unfair pricing practices that burden consumers and undermine the integrity of the market.

On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz

Memorandum, Assistant Commissioner Shalimar, conducted rigorous inspections at F-10 area. These inspections have led to swift action, with nine individuals apprehended and the closure of two naan/tandoor shops for flouting the government rates.

Meanwhile, the Assistant Commissioner Industrial Area, conducted inspections and vendors found guilty of overcharging and failing to comply with pricing regulations faced the consequences, as authorities cracked down on unethical practices.

Similarly, Assistant Commissioner Pothohar paid a surprise visit to I-10

Markaz. During inspections, five tandoor owners were apprehended for selling roti and naan at exorbitant prices, demonstrating the authorities' commitment to upholding fairness and accountability in commercial transactions.

Additionally, Assistant Commissioner Pothohar also visited the Sabzi Mandi, six individuals were arrested for overcharging, sending a clear message that such practices will not be tolerated. As the crackdown continues, ICT admin was determined to root out any instances of exploitation and uphold the principles of fairness and equity in Islamabad markets.

# AIOU's annual conference from Oct 15

ISLAMABAD (INP): Preparations for Allama Iqbal Open University's (AIOU) 37th Annual Conference of the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU) scheduled to be held from October 15 to 17 this year are in full swing.

More than 100 international dignitaries, including vice-chancellors, rectors, professors, and researchers from open universities in Asian countries will participate in the conference, as well as around 250 national academicians and researchers, will present research papers, said AIOU.

The conference schedule was available on the web-

site aao2024.aiou.edu.pk.

As per the schedule, the deadline for abstract submission was June 10.

The acceptance notification will be issued on June 25, and complete papers can be submitted by July 31. The Early Bird Registration deadline is August 31, and the last date for registration is September 30, 2024.

Please note that abstracts and full papers will be published in the conference proceedings, and the best papers will be awarded the AAOU Award. Additionally, the papers presented at the conference will also be published in AIOU research journals.

Vice Chancellor, of AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has described this conference as an important tool for making distance education more effective through interaction with Vice-Chancellors, teachers, and scholars from open universities across Asia.

Dr. Nasir emphasized that this conference was an opportunity for open universities to exchange ideas and collaborate in the fields of education and research.

The Vice-Chancellor has given instructions to make the necessary arrangements to make this conference historic and memorable.

# Administrative issues halt pension processing of retired teachers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Due to a shift of administrative and financial powers from the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) to educational institutions, the processing and finalization of pension cases for retiring teachers have ground to a halt, leaving many in a state of uncertainty.

The teachers find themselves moving from pillar to post in pursuit of their pension cases but are unable to complete the pension process due to administrative deadlock.

This deadlock arises from the objection raised by the Accountant General Pakistan Revenues (AGPR) regarding the delegation of administrative powers to educational institutions by the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training (MOFE&PT).

On April 19, the MOFE&PT executed a significant restructuring, decentralizing authority to educational institutions of Islamabad. This shift, aimed at streamlining decision-making processes and empower principals and heads of institutions, has inadvertently sparked a conflict over the handling of pension cases.

Previously, pension cases were routed through the FDE, with principals and heads of educational institutions sending the necessary documentation to the FDE for onward transmission to the Accountant General Pakistan Revenues (AGPR). However, following the delegation of powers, the responsibility for forwarding pension cases directly to AGPR fell upon the principals and heads of institutions.

This transition has hit a snag, as the AGPR has raised objections and concerns regarding the financial and administrative authority now vested in the educational institutions. In a letter addressed to the education ministry seeking clarification, the AGPR halted the processing of pension cases.

According to APP, the repercussions of this bureaucratic deadlock are felt acutely by retired teachers like Mr. Khumar Gul, an Associate Professor at Islamabad College for Boys G-6/3. Mr. Gul retired on March 2, 2024, and submitted his pension papers to the FDE for onward transmission to the AGPR. However, instead of forwarding the

papers, the FDE redirected them back to his college, citing the change in the delegation of powers to the educational institutions.

Confounded, the college administration then attempted to send the papers directly to the AGPR, but the fate of these documents remains unknown. Muhammad Shafiq, another retired associate professor of Islamabad Model Postgraduate College of Commerce H-8/4, shared his plight.

Despite the timely submission of pension documents through his principal, the maze of administrative confusion has left him without his rightful pension. Similarly, Muhammad Shamoon, another retiring associate professor of Islamabad Model Postgraduate College H-8, faced a similar dilemma when his principal attempted to submit his pension papers to FDE, only to be turned away, citing the transfer of administrative powers to educational institutions. With no clear directive on how to proceed, Shamoon's pension papers join the growing list of unresolved cases, adding to the mounting frustration among retirees.

# IESCO issues power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued a power suspension programme for Tuesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 08:00 AM to 1:00 PM, Islamabad Circle, Lohi Bhir, Rahara Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Nust Road, New

Malpur, Miltabad, Ghousia Colony, E Block Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Murat, Major Riaz, Lalazar, Jhawara, Shah Jeevan, Quid-e-Azam, Dharmyal, Lalkarti, UC Lakhana, Gulshan Saeed, Cantt, Qasim Base, Japan Road, Kahota City-II, Hanif Shaheed, Sep Abrar, Panjar, Khawaja, Nar, Fuji Foundation, Mehboob Shaheed, AOWHS, Wilayat Complex, X-Liar Colony, Pindi Board, Morgah, Park View, Car Chowk, Jail Park Feeder,

Attock Circle, Mansar, Haji Shah, Wahadat Colony, Malhwali Feeder, Jhelum Circle, Mandi Bhalwal, Fatehpur, Sarai Alamgir, Military College, Mohalla Shaheedan, Shamsabad, Shukrila, Chapran, Captan Nisar Shaheed, Express Mangala, Madu Kalus, Scheme-I, Islampura Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Bisharat, Lawah Feeders, GSO Circle from 07:00 AM to 05:00 PM, Onaha Town-I & II, Bilalabad, Mugla Feeders and surrounding areas.



### Woman commits suicide

PARWAN (Khaama Press): Local officials in Parwan province say that a woman has committed suicide in this province. The Parwan Provincial Security Command reported on Monday, that the incident occurred in the village of Qala-e-Boland in the Bagram district of Parwan province. According to officials, the incident occurred around midday on Monday. Based on reports, the young woman was 32 years old and hanged herself at home.

## The Frontier Post

# AFGHANISTAN

Ziqaad 05, 1445 — Tuesday, May 14, 2024

### Saqib meets Erdogan

KABUL (Ariana News): The spokesman of the Islamic Emirate says that the acting minister of Hajj and Religious Affairs met with the President of Turkey at a consultative meeting of scholars from the Islamic world. Zabiullah Mujahid wrote on X that Noor Mohammad Saqib, Acting Minister of Hajj and Religious Affairs, met and talked separately with Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President of Turkey, at the meeting.

## Afghanistan can become important industrial center



KABUL (Ariana News): Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs Abdul Salam Hanafi says Afghanistan has the potential to become one of the most important industrial centers in the region.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the national and international expo on the occasion of Industry Week, Hanafi said that the growth of industry lays the foundation for the growth of other economic sectors and that the Islamic Emirate fully supports domestic

production in the country. "Afghanistan has important and rich factors for industrial production, which can become one of the important industrial centers in the region. The growth of industry will be the basis for the growth of

other economic sectors, especially agriculture," said Hanafi.

Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce, Nooruddin Azizi, added that the IEA has programs in the fields of industry development and support for the private sector that will make Afghanistan self-sufficient.

Azizi stated that Afghanistan's industrial sector is currently progressing and the quality of export goods has also improved.

Some investors said at the ceremony that after the return of the IEA, the country's exports have increased and the number of manufacturing companies has also increased.

This expo is open to visitors for seven days, and industrial products are showcased in 450 booths.

Women in business also attended the meeting.

## Baradar visits Baghlan

BAGHLAN (Ariana News): Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, Economic Deputy Prime Minister of Afghanistan, visited flood-hit areas in Baghlan province in northern Afghanistan on Monday to assess the devastation inflicted on the area.

After visiting the affected areas, Baradar met with local officials and gave instructions to them and representatives of working committees to provide the necessary assistance to the flood victims.

Baradar meanwhile pointed out that extreme damage had been caused in the flood-hit districts. "It is necessary that the [disaster management] organization accelerates its efforts to provide food, medicine and shelter for the displaced citizens and aid to the flood affected areas," said Baradar.

Baghlan and other northern provinces were hit by heavy rains and flash floods on Friday, which left more than 300 dead and over 1,600 injured.

Hundreds of homes were damaged or destroyed and livestock wiped out.

Officials said huge financial losses have been incurred.

Appeals have been made by numerous organizations to aid agencies to step in to help the victims.

## US partners mobilizing aid for flood victims

KABUL (Ariana News): Thomas West, the US special representative for Afghanistan, said Monday the United States is deeply saddened by the devastating floods in different parts of the country and that its partners in the country are mobilizing emergency aid, including food and water.

Karen Decker, the US Embassy's charge d'affaires for Afghanistan, also posted a message on X and said the US is heartbroken by loss of life in Baghlan and elsewhere in Afghanistan after heavy rains and flash floods.

"The United States joins others in mobilizing emergency relief, food, and medical supplies through partners to support recovery efforts," Karen Decker said.

The occurrence of devastating floods in several provinces of the country, especially in Baghlan, has caused casualties and huge financial losses to local residents.

Based on the latest statistics, more than 300 people have died in two districts of Baghlan.

A large number of aid organizations, including the



European Union's Office for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid, OCHA, the International Organization for Migration and the World Health Organization, are providing assistance to the flood victims.

## Herat initiates community aid for Afghanistan's flood victims

HERAT (TOLONews): The aid campaign for the flood victims of the country has begun by the people in Herat province.

Citizens, to the extent of their ability, are collecting financial and non-financial aid for these flood victims and will later deliver it to the flood-affected areas.

Abdul Qudoos Khateebi, the organizer of the campaign, said: "We considered it our religious and moral duty to do whatever we can, little or much, to at least provide some help for the needy of our country in

these critical conditions."

According to the organizers of this campaign, a shipment of these public donations has been sent to the flood victims in Ghor province.

Ramez, who came to help the affected, says that in the current situation where the flood victims in Baghlan, Takhar, Ghor, and some other provinces of the country have lost everything, it is necessary for citizens to cooperate with them to the extent of their ability.

Ramez Yousufi told TOLONews: "Disasters like earthquakes and floods have happened in Afghanistan, and we brought tents and clothes because these will not be lost before God."

A number of Herat residents are asking the citizens of the country not to forget the victims in Baghlan and other provinces.

Hafizullah, a resident of Herat, said: "We should provide help for the flood-affected people as much as we can; they were our brothers who helped us during the earthquake, now it's

our turn."

Khaled, another resident of Herat, said: "People should help with whatever they can, be it tents or clothes."

Recent floods in some provinces of the country, including Baghlan, Takhar, Ghor, Badakhshan, and Samangan, have taken the lives of hundreds.

Residents of these provinces have also lost homes, properties, agricultural lands, livestock, and orchards in these floods and are in need of immediate help.

## Gemstones smuggled into Iran

KABUL (Khaama Press): Qadir Qiafeh, deputy head of Iran's Chamber of Commerce, stated that gemstones from Afghanistan are smuggled into Iran and sold illegally, as reported by Iranian media.

In an interview with an Iranian media outlet, Qiafeh stated that gemstones mined in Afghanistan enter Iran through unofficial channels and trade in their markets.

ILNA news agency reported on Sunday, May 12, that Qadir Qiafeh emphasized Iranian investment in Afghanistan mines.

Meanwhile, he said, "The extraction of these stones could be a potential area for cooperation between Iran and Afghanistan."

The Taliban has not commented on Qiafeh's remarks yet.

He also reported that several large Iranian mining companies have formed a consortium to enter the Afghan mining market, and a major Iranian steel company has serious plans to do so.

According to him, negotiations and exchanges focusing on mining have occurred between Iran and Afghanistan over the past several years.

However, he says no bank in the country can provide financial backing of \$400 to \$500 million for Iran's cross-border projects and support Iranian mining business owners.

Since the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, there have been good relations between the Taliban and the Iranian regime. However, the Islamic Republic of Iran, like other countries, does not officially recognize the Taliban but maintains extensive diplomatic and economic relations with the group.

KABUL (BNA): The Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, in a meeting with the Director of Operations and Advocacy of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), stated that Afghanistan does not contribute to climate destruction but has been greatly affected by this phenomenon.

In a promising development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced in a newsletter that Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi, the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs, engaged in a productive meeting with Ms. Edem Wosornu, the Director of Operations and Advocacy of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

At the outset of the discussion, Ms. Wosornu extended sincere condolences for the recent floods devastating several regions of the country and expressed the organization's readiness to promptly dispatch teams to the affected areas to provide assistance and support.

Additionally, she conveyed gratitude for the proactive initiatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in facilitating the establishment of a coordination committee between the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and the United Nations offices.

For his part, Amir Khan Muttaqi, extended appreciation for OCHA's endeavors in attracting and orchestrating aid efforts. Addressing the recent floods in the country, he

reiterated Afghanistan's non-involvement in climate destruction while emphasizing its disproportionate vulnerability to its impacts.

"Afghanistan needs help as much as it has been harmed, and its position should be heard in regional international forums, accessing climate change financial resources." He further remarked.

He emphasized that the recent catastrophic flooding demands significant assistance.

Despite the efforts of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan to allocate all available resources to assist affected communities, given the scale of the disaster, international organizations and relief agencies must also step up to provide support and fulfill their responsibilities.

## Non-discriminatory governance demanded



KABUL (TOLONews): A number of Shia scholars asked the Islamic Emirate to govern Afghanistan without discrimination. They said that the Shia people have been cooperative with the caretaker government under all circumstances and will support the Islamic system.

These religious scholars expressed their demands in a program titled "The Role of Scholars in the Spiritual Life of Muslims."

"The leaders of the Islamic Emirate and scholars who are at the helm should think about religion in Afghanistan according to the Islamic system, without discrimination, prejudice, and personal inclinations," said Bazel, a religious scholar.

"There must be elements and factors for a society to be alive and have a spiritual life," said Misbah, another religious scholar.

According to them, for the betterment of society, it is necessary for religious scholars and the government to work together collaboratively.

"Both religious scholars and the government have a responsibility that is shared between the scholars and the rulers, which must be fulfilled for the people," said Ali Dad, a religious scholar.

"If we say that the limits must be enforced, it is the duty of those who can implement God's decree," said Sadiq Afghan, another religious scholar.

Aminullah Zahed, head of Vice and Virtue at 18thPD, who was also present at the program, emphasized Islamic veiling in society.

"Currently, some women appear in the market looking like men, their hair and adornments visible from afar," said Aminullah Zahed, head of Vice and Virtue at 18thPD.

Participants in this program once again emphasized the prevention of evil in the country and called for the creation of job opportunities for the youth.

## Afghanistan proposes fiber optic expansion with China



KABUL (TOLONews): Najibullah Haqqani, the acting Minister of Telecommunications and Information Technology, has called for the expansion of the fiber optic cable at the border between Afghanistan and China up to Wakhan in Badakhshan by this country.

Najibullah Haqqani made these remarks during a meeting with the Chinese ambassador in Kabul.

According to the spokesperson for this ministry, the Chinese ambassador in Kabul, Zhao Xing, said during this meeting that Beijing is interested in extending the optical fiber through Wakhan.

Enayatullah Alokozay, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology, said: "China can use Afghanistan's geographical

position instead of using the long route of neighboring countries to connect to a shorter and easier path with Afghanistan. In this meeting, the acting minister added that China and Afghanistan can expand their economic relations with mutual respect."

Enayatullah Alokozay quoted the Chinese ambassador in Kabul as writing that Beijing has had good

relations with Afghanistan throughout history and is striving to strengthen and stabilize these relations.

A number of political affairs experts believe that to solve some of the current challenges in the country, the caretaker government should further secure its good relations with China.

Amanullah Hotaki, a political affairs expert, said: "In the current situation where the world has cut off interaction with us, we need interaction with even a small country, but interaction with a country like China is a necessity that needs to be done."

Sayed Akbar Agha, a political affairs expert, said: "China is not genuinely interacting with us. If there is real interaction, it is both in the interest of the people of Afghanistan and the people of China. We Afghans need better interactions because we are unemployed."

The Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology wrote, quoting the Chinese ambassador, that Beijing will consult with experts on this matter.

## Iran reports increase in saffron exports to Afghanistan



KABUL (Khaama Press): Iranian media, citing an official source in the country, have reported that Iran's saffron exports to Afghanistan have tripled. Rokna News Agency cited Rouhollah Latifi, an official from Iran's Rural Cooperation Organization, as saying on Saturday,

May 11, that Iran's saffron exports to Afghanistan have increased by about 198 per cent.

The Iranian official, noting that Iran's saffron exports reached 221 tons to 55 countries directly in 2023, emphasized, "With the increase in exports in terms of weight and the

high price of this product, Iran's international markets have decreased by 15.7 per cent."

According to Latifi, Afghanistan now meets its 50-ton saffron demand from India through Afghanistan's saffron.

The Iranian official has attributed the decrease in Iran's direct exports to India to the joint agreement between Afghanistan and India, under which saffron from Afghanistan is exported to India without customs duties.

Meanwhile, according to statistics from the Ministry of Industry and Commerce of Afghanistan in 2023, Afghanistan exported 67 tons of saffron worth \$49 million to 9 different countries.

Moreover, Iran's largest saffron exporting countries have been mentioned as the UAE, China, Spain, Afghanistan, Italy, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, and France.

So far, the officials of the Taliban government have not responded to the claims made by the Iranian official.





ISLAMABAD: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Opp in PA slams KP govt over worsen situation

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: The opposition leader in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Dr. Ibadullah, while starting debate on the budget on Monday said that there is confusion regarding the budget as the chief minister is saying that there is no fund in the province while the Finance Advisor is claiming that the budget is surplus. Dr Ibadullah said that the province has been destroyed from all aspect which is financially or law and order.

He said that the constituency of chief minister has been declared no go area. Dr Ibad raised question that police stations have been established in public property and rented buildings at merged districts so where is the Rs1000 billion in the context of the war on terror gone. He said that the situation has reached such a point that the session judge is being kidnapped. According to media reports, a transaction was made for payment of ransom. If the government has made this transaction, then it is supporting the terrorists to buy weapons and target the poor people, then how can we expect peace and order from the government, said Dr Ibad.

The Chief Minister himself has confessed that he is paying extortion so how the other people will be safe. The province has been looted in the name of health card is there any audit of the billions of rupees that

have been spent on it, said leader of the opposition. I have information that thousands of bogus registrations have been done in the health card, people are being treated in private hospitals, 148 appendix surgeries have been done in my village, although the easiest surgery is for appendix. No medicines are available in government hospitals, BHU, DHQ, adding Khan's cousin Dr Naushirwan Barki has destroyed the whole health department. Dr Ibad further said that 80 percent universities are running without vice chancellors in the province. Double shift teachers are not paying salaries. More schools should have been built in hilly areas, especially in the earthquake-affected districts.

Even after fifteen years, children are forced to study in tents. The government's focus is only on conversion and to criticize others. The people of this province have given you the government for the third time so what is the progress of the government. Earlier, the top three positions in the CSS exams used to belong to this province, but now there is no member of the province in the top 20. What kind of educational emergency is this, said Dr Ibad. For the first time, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif gave six billion rupees in the name of net profit for electricity in the 90s, due to which the budget became surplus so the house should be informed about Imran Khan regime as there were

four members of PTI in CCI.

In 1993, an electricity unit was worth two or three rupees and today it is worth 26 rupees due to wrong policies of PTI government. Chief Minister is ready to attack on Governor House at first he should facilitate masses as he is chief of the province. Dr Ibad said that the provincial government has no solution to run Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) so how it will start another mega project in the province. He said that the government believes on hollow slogans instead of works, adding the opposition is ready to support for the rights of the province. Arbab Usman, the parliamentary leader of ANP, said that the government cannot reduce the prices of flour.

He said that the development work belongs to local bodies so why the government did not release funds to it. He said that the resources of the province should be utilized instead of criticizing others and hollow slogans. Under the Ehsaas program, whether it is true that the beneficiaries have received the amount of ten thousand rupees. Health public sector hospitals are deteriorating while private sector hospitals are being promoted through health cards. The province is bankrupt and the basic needs are being neglected. Actions should be taken for the welfare of public and development of the province, said Arbab Usman.

## Ayub demands judicial body to probe May 9 events

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Opposition Leader in National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan expressed concerns over the current state of democracy in Pakistan.

Addressing the National Assembly session on Monday, the opposition leader called for the formation of an independent judicial commission to investigate the May 9 events. Omar Ayub stated that he was appointed as the opposition leader by his leader. He highlighted the essence of upholding the narrative of the PTI founder.

He also criticised the lack of significant change in President Asif Zardari's speeches over the years and regretted the absence of true democracy in the country. The opposition leader objected to the involvement of establishment in politics. He raised concern over the disappearance of CCTV footages from the judicial complex and demanded accountability for those liable.

The opposition leader urged for the formation of an independent judicial commission to investigate the Hamoodur Rehman, Ojhri Camp, Abbottabad, and Army Public School incidents. He also highlighted the alleged interference in the judiciary, referencing the closure of social media accounts and the disappearance of the Rawalpindi commissioner. He also highlighted incidents such as the intrusion into the PTI founder's house and the targeting of the PTI government. He said that Defence Minister Khawaja Asif had confessed in an interview that they had a dialogue with former army chief Gen Bajwa.

## Imran may face fourth Toshakhana case: Gohar

**F.P. Report**

RAWALPINDI: PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan says efforts are afoot to file a fourth case against the party founder related to Toshakhana. He alleged that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) was being used against the PTI founder.

Speaking to media outside the Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, Barrister Gohar quoted the PTI founder as having said apology should be sought from him (and not the other way round). He (founder) condemned the May 9 violence and underlined the need for a judicial commission to investigate the matter. The PTI founder insisted he would pursue dialogue, not deal, for the betterment of Pakistan. He stressed that personal interests would not drive these discussions. However, he lamented a lack of progress by the negotiation committee.

Addressing concerns raised by the former prime minister regarding tax collection and the IMF programme, Barrister Gohar said power should emanate from democratic channels. Gohar urged the judiciary to expedite the hearing on the Iddat case and decide it without further delay. Also, he mentioned plans to move court on a statement made by former caretaker prime minister Anwarul Haq Kakar regarding Form 47.

The party chief highlighted the PTI founder's concerns regarding Azad Kashmir protests for relief and patience instead of violence. He said Rana Sanaullah's statement (about PTI) corroborated its status.

# Foreign powers still supporting Imran: Sharjeel

**F.P. Report**

HYDERABAD: Sindh Senior Minister and Provincial Minister for Information, Transport and Mass Transit, Excise Taxation and Narcotics Control Sharjeel Inam Memon has said that there have been various political organizations in the country, but the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has been a pioneer in advocating for freedom of expression. Serving the media has been a top priority for the PPP.

The late martyr of democracy, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, fought for press freedom during the reign of dictators. Despite severe criticism, campaigns, and attempts to tarnish its image, the PPP and its leadership have consistently shown tolerance and respected press freedom.

While speaking as the chief guest at the health card distribution ceremony to journalists by Hyderabad Union of Journalists, in Hyderabad Press Club, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that I am delighted today to distribute health cards among journalists. During the caretaker government, the press club in Hyderabad attempted to facilitate the distribution of health cards among journalists. I am grateful to the journalists for their immense respect. It is our duty and responsibility to provide health cards to journalists.

He said that the People's Party has been responsible for numerous historic achievements in the country. It provided the constitution, established the nuclear force, and advanced missile technology. Additionally, it played a crucial role in renaming Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and enacting the Eighteenth Amendment, which granted media freedom in Pakistan.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that during a historic flood in Sindh, millions of people were rendered homeless. In response, the Pakistan People's Party initiated the construction of 2.1 million houses in the affected regions. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the PPP demonstrated exemplary service to the public, standing by them during challenging times.

He said that the hospitals in Sindh are unparalleled in Pakistan. People from other provinces as well as from

Iran and Afghanistan seek treatment in Sindh. Cyberknife treatment is not only benefiting Pakistan but also Iran and Afghanistan.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the pledge of providing food, clothing, and shelter is exclusive to the Pakistan Peoples Party. The PPP has fulfilled its commitment to ensure these basic necessities for the people. He said that in the current circumstances, I will appeal to the Chief Minister to enhance the grants allocated to journalists. From the leadership of the Pakistan People's Party to organizational officials, there is unanimous support for the media. I assure the journalists of Hyderabad that their grants will be augmented. Furthermore, if a journalist requires medical treatment in the US, the Sindh government will cover the expenses.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the Sindh government is actively combating drug abuse, and the journalist community should rally behind these efforts. Drug addiction affects our children as well as yours, and it's imperative to safeguard the new generation from this menace. To address this issue, the government plans to establish rehabilitation centers for drug addicts, facilitating their reintegration into society.

He said that restoring the country's economy stands as our greatest challenge, and it demands the collective effort of every individual. Bringing more people into the tax net is crucial for progress. With concerted efforts, we anticipate an improvement in the country's situation. Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari emphasizes the need for all stakeholders to come together, advocating for a collaborative approach to address national issues and overcome negative thinking.

Sharjeel Inam Memon said that President Asif Ali Zardari has issued stringent directives concerning drugs, street crime, law and order in Kucha, and land grabbers. In compliance with his instructions, the Sindh government is operating with heightened efficiency.

He said that the weakest democracy is far superior to the strongest dictatorship. While the country may encounter challenges, they will even-

tually dissipate as democracy endures. Sharjeel Inam Memon said that a person who arrives in Lahore and holds a successful rally while being idolized by supporters, even though the attendance numbers might not be accurate. Additional attendees are purportedly brought in via chartered planes. Such individuals pave the way for manipulated democracy.

In response to a question, he said that it has become easy to criticize the police. However, there are both good and bad individuals in every school of thought and institution. Presently, the Sindh Police boasts competent officers who are playing a crucial role in preventing the most perilous incidents of terrorism in Karachi. While the police force is performing admirably, there is always room for improvement in every sector, including law enforcement.

In response to another question, Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the People's Bus Service is operational in Karachi, Larkana, Sukkur, Hyderabad, and Mirpurkhas. The vision of President Asif Ali Zardari, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto, and Chief Minister Sindh is to extend this bus service to districts and tehsils.

In response to a question, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the caretaker government of the first three months lasted for eight months. If there were re-elections, it would have taken eight years. Therefore, Pakistan People's Party unconditionally supported PML-N for the survival of democracy.

In response to a question, Sharjeel Inam Memon said that foreign powers are still supporting Imran Khan. While some people may draw their red line at Imran Khan, our red line is Pakistan itself. Imran Khan has crossed this red line several times, yet facilities are still being extended to him.

He said that twenty-nine years ago, Dr. Israr had predicted that Israel would use Imran Khan against Pakistan. Imran Khan has consistently disparaged Pakistan's economy, constitution, laws, institutions, and integrity, yet he continues to enjoy impunity. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon distributed health cards among the journalists.

## ECP suspends MPs elected on reserved seats denied to SIC

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: After the Supreme Court order on Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) petition regarding reserved seats, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Monday suspended 77 lawmakers elected on seats denied to the party.

The issue of reserved seats had been a point of contention between the SIC, which primarily comprises Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-backed independent candidates, and the ruling parties notably Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), and others. Dozens of members of the PPP, PML-N, MQM-P, JUI-F and others had taken oath on reserved seats in different assemblies across the country following the PHC's verdict.

The ruling PML-N is the biggest loser as 44 of its members have been suspended while 15 lawmakers from PPP, 13 from Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) and one each from

MQM-P, Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party, and Awami National Party, Pakistan Muslim League and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians. Following the top court's order, the ECP today withdrew the notification of 22 returned candidates who were allotted seats in the National Assembly. Out of the 22, 11 of them are female lawmakers given seats in the NA from Punjab, 8 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 3 minority seats in the lower house.

On the other hand, in KP Assembly 21 lawmakers on reserved seats for women and 4 for minorities have been de-notified. In the Punjab Assembly, 24 women lawmakers and 3 non-Muslim legislators have been de-notified. While in the Sindh Assembly, the commission de-notified 2 female MPs and a minority member. All the lawmakers that have been de-notified belong to the PML-N, PPP, MQM-P, JUI-F, Awami National Party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-Parliamentarians (PTI-P), Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q)

and Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP).

Last week, the apex court suspended the Peshawar High Court's (PHC) verdict on reserved seats while accepting the SIC's plea against the high court's ruling. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had rejected the party's plea depriving it of reserved seats. "[We are accepting the [SIC's] pleas [against the PHC verdict], Justice Mansoor Ali Shah stated, and asked under what law [reserved] seats were allocated to other parties. A three-member bench headed by Justice Shah and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Athar Minallah heard the SIC's plea filed through Advocate Faisal Siddiqui last month. Barring the members, who have taken oath on the reserved seats, from casting their votes in legislation, the SC said that it will hear the case on a daily basis from June 3. Furthermore, the court noted that the said issue only concerns the additional reserved seats allotted to the political parties later on.

## IMF, Pakistan begins talks on new loan programme

ISLAMABAD (INP): An International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission has reached the Finance Ministry to commence discussions regarding a new loan program and the upcoming budget for the new financial year.

Led by Mission Chief Nathan Porter, the IMF delegation has initiated an introductory session with Pakistan's economic team, headed by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb. The consultations, expected to last approximately two weeks, aim to cover a new loan programme as well as the budget for the new financial year. Pakistan is expecting a substantial bailout package of over \$6 billion from the IMF to bolster its economy and address pressing fiscal concerns. Sources say the Finance Ministry's economic team has diligently prepared for the negotiations, ensuring all the necessary groundwork is in place for fruitful discussions.

Key agenda items include deliberations on the Extended Fund Facility loan program, for which a comprehensive working paper has been prepared by the finance ministry. Additionally, the two dozen-member IMF mission will engage in consultations regarding the formulation of the national budget for the upcoming financial year. On Sunday, the IMF's resident representative in Pakistan, Esther Perez Ruiz, confirmed that a mission of the Fund will hold talks with Pakistani officials on a new loan programme next week. According to Ruiz, the purpose of the negotiations is to lay the foundation for better and stronger governance. The IMF representative said that the parties will also discuss sustainable economic development, which will benefit all Pakistanis.

Also on Sunday, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said the government would provide all facilities, but not back down from expanding the tax net. "We are moving towards complete digitalization; it will increase revenues and also bring transparency," he said further. Addressing a pre-budget conference in Lahore, the minister said there was a need for structural reforms, adding that a lot of reforms had to be carried out regarding tax-to-GDP, energy and privatization issues.

## Recovery of 3 abductees: IG appears before PHC

**Humayun Khan**

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Ijaz Anwar annoyed police role and observed his disappointment due to failure in recovery of three kidnapped persons from Hayatabad while ordered submission of comprehensive report within 15 days, on Monday.

Inspector General (IG) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police Akhtar Hayat Gandapur, Capital City Police Officer, Advocate General along with other officials appeared before PHC due to police failure in recovery of three individuals kidnapped from

Hayatabad.

During hearing Justice Ijaz Anwar remarked that people are being kidnapped while police are unaware. He questioned how such a large number of vehicles can enter the area without the police noticing.

The counsel Muhammad Nadir Shah advocate informed that petition was filed by Gullalai Alkozai, whose brother was also kidnapped. The lawyer argued that armed men in police uniforms kidnapped the three individuals. The police claim that they are investigating the incident, but the court has expressed skepticism over their

claims.

Justice Ijaz Anwar remarked that it is the responsibility of the police to maintain law and order, but they seem to be unaware of what is happening. He observed that why no relevant police officers are charged for the offenses instead of registering unknown culprits in the FIR.

PHC's Justice Ijaz Anwar ordered submission of deal report within seven days, however, it was extended to 15days on the request of Advocate General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while adjourned further hearing.

## Petition in LHC for NAB to probe wheat scandal

**F.P. Report**

LAHORE An application was filed on Monday in the Lahore High Court (LHC) for National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to investigate the wheat scandal.

The petition has been filed by the citizen Mashkoor Hussain through the mediation of Nadeem Sarwar Advocate. The Prime Minister through the Principal Secretary, former Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, NAB, and the Federal Government have been made parties in the petition.

In the petition filed, it has been argued that 0.778 million metric tons of wheat was imported in the first two months of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government. The government-level committee cannot conduct a transparent investigation as the government itself is part of the wheat scandal, inquiry on merit is not possible. It was further stated in the

application that NAB was requested to investigate the wheat mega scandal but no action was taken.

The petitioner has requested the High Court to order the NAB to investigate the wheat mega scandal, determine the motives of the wheat scandal and collect the money and deposit it in the national treasury. It is pertinent to note that despite the presence of abundant reserves of wheat in the country, revelations of large-scale import of wheat have come to light during the tenure of the caretaker government.

It was also revealed that the import of wheat continued during the tenure of the current government. On May 6, Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain constituted a high-level inquiry committee to look into the issue of insect-infected wheat imported during 2023-24.

According to media reports, the inquiry committee has so far revealed

that the caretaker government has imported wheat worth Rs330 billion during August 2023 to March 2024, of which 13 million tons of wheat is unfit for human consumption due to fungus.

Meanwhile, the former caretaker prime minister had a discussion with PML-N leader Hanif Abbasi on the issue of the wheat crisis. Hanif Abbasi allegedly blamed Anwaar-ul-Haq for the wheat scandal, while the former caretaker prime minister said that if they talk about 'Form 47' then the Muslim League (N) leaders will not be in a position to come before the people.

The PTI also jumped into the issue and demanded a judicial commission for a transparent probe into the wheat scam in the light of the feud between Kakar and Abbasi. Meanwhile, the PTI spokesperson said that the revelations by Anwaar-ul-Haq and Hanif are eye-opening, and have raised many important questions, which need to be investigated.