

Funeral prayer offered
F.P. Report
ZHOB: The funeral prayers of Pakistan Army Major Babar Niazi who was martyred in a gunfight with terrorists Tuesday were offered at Zhob Cantt on Wednesday. According to ISPR, Major Babar Niazi Shaheed (age: 36 years, resident of district Mianwali) was martyred on May 14 during an intelligence-based operation against terrorists in Sambaza area of Zhob district of Balochistan.



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ISLAMABAD: Governor of Balochistan, Shaikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Corrupt practice of caretaker government KP Assembly demands setup of probe committee

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Finance Aftab Alam on Wednesday told the provincial assembly that we are passing the caretaker government budget for the year 2023-24 and also demanding constitution of a special committee to probe the corrupt practises of former caretaker government in the province.

Finance Minister Aftab Alam while on his winding up speech on the budget, said on floor of the house that legal term for the interim government is three months, but they former interim government has spend 13 months. He said that the former caretaker government have hired over 2700 illegal employees in its unconstitutional term.

Answering to the criticism of opposition benches, Aftab Alam said that we also have reservation over four months budget passed by the assembly, but there was no other way out and we had to fulfill constitutional responsibility. Alam said, "We consider this budget as punishment for the sins, we have never committed."

Criticising opposition, Minister Aftab said opposition benches have reservations over passing of one month budget, but they never speak on unconstitutional term of former interim government. He clarified that if assembly is not in house, government can pass review budget under article-126 of the constitution. "Opposition members have entered the assembly through illegal means," said Alam, we have passed the budget, but we are still demanding to probe what the former interim government has done.

Aftab Alam has also criticised federal government for not providing provincial net hydel profit of over Rs25 billion. He said if federal government wasnt providing KP fund, then how we will provide facilities to the public of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Speaking about National Finance Commission award, he said KP now has 14 percent share now in NFC award, but under the new NFC award, KP could get 19 percent of the award's share.

Alam said, "Federal government is not providing Rs100 billion development fund of merged districts." Earlier, Pakistan Peoples Party MPA Ihsanullah said that people in his constituency are forced to migrate due to lack of water. He said that Chief Minister complains about not getting funds from the federal government, people are suffering from problems in their own area.

The government had allocated 26 billion rupees for the health card, I wish 126 billion should be allocated to provide health facilities. There should be a check and balance on the use of health card, it is not being spent on the poor, said Ihsanullah. He said that billions of rupees are going into the pockets of private hospitals and doctors. He said that it is a pity that no voice is raised on the problems of the common man on this floor. JUI-F MPA Sajjad Khan said that the people of Kohistan are suffering from many deprivations. He said that our district has never been given any scheme in the last ten years of Tehreek-e-Insaf backed. He said that there are some areas in Kohistan where are no roads.

A special package should be announced in the upcoming budget

for three districts of Kohistan, said Sajjad Khan. He suggested a coordination committee should be formed to get their rights from the federation. Members should be taken from the government and opposition benches in the committee so that they can talk to the federation in an effective manner, Sajjad Khan added.

Pakistan Muslim League-N MPA Jalal Khan said that I thought that coming here, I would get to learn a lot from the seniors, but unfortunately the members here are fighting like children of KG class. He said that today, the province debt more than 1300 billion and no one pays attention to it.

He said that people do not have bread to eat and drinking water and here we are fighting among ourselves. How the so-called budget became a surplus in which loans to external institutions were not returned, Jalal Khan raised the question. Jalal Khan said that Rs30 billion were taken from the GP fund for the construction of Swat Expressway as GP Fund is the right of government employees, Finance Minister should tell whether this money has been returned to the fund or not.

He said that there is a need to take effective measures to prevent the growing trend of drugs in the province especially in his constituency. Ayesha Bano, Nilofar, Umer Ayub, Makhdoom Aftab, Zahid Chanzeb, Riaz Khan, Rajab Ali Abbasi, also spoke on budget debate and demanded to probe the corruption during caretaker government. Later, the Speaker adjourned the assembly proceeding till May 16 Thursday 2pm.

Two CTD personnel shot injured in S Waziristan

F.P. Report

WANA: Two Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) personnel were severely injured in a firing incident on the Wana Kari Kot road in South Waziristan. The attackers, traveling in a car with tinted glasses, opened fire on the police personnel who were riding a motorcycle.

The attackers fled from the scene, taking advantage of the darkness of night. The injured were identified as Nawaz Khan and Noor Muhammad. The injured were rushed to the headquarter hospital Wana for provision of first aid treatment; later, Nawaz Khan was shifted to Dera Ismail Khan for further treatment and remains in critical condition, according to police sources.

The incident created widespread fear among the locals, and the attack has also raised fears of terrorism resurgence in the area, which was once a hotbed of terrorism, but was largely cleared of militants in 2007 through the efforts of local tribes and security forces. Local ANP leader Noor Zaman Wazir condemned the incident, demanding a joint strategy to prevent such incidents and ensure security for the tribesmen.

An investigation is underway to identify and apprehend the attackers, but so far, no one has claimed responsibility for the attack. Meanwhile, local residents urged the government to take measures to prevent such incidents in the future.

Will takeover Pesco office if loadshedding not ended

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) firebrand Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has threatened to take over state-owned power distribution firm, Peshawar Electric Supply Company (Pesco) if the issue of loadshedding not unresolved by today (Thursday).

Expressing outrage over prolonged power outages in the province, CM Gandapur gave a stern message to the federal government to address the issue at the ear-

liest. He said that unannounced loadshedding must be stopped across KP, asking the stakeholders to sit together to find a solution.

He gave a deadline to the federal government to resolve the power outages issue by tonight and also demanded the power authorities change the loadshedding schedule, otherwise, he would take control of the Pesco chief's office. "It is my timeline but not a warning as I will formulate a schedule by myself. If Pesco chief wants to stay in the province, then the offi-



cer follow my schedule," said the chief minister.

He claimed that KP was forced to purchase expensive electricity despite generating power at lower cost. Gandapur further warned that he will get the due right of the KP people at any cost.

Fazl reiterates demand for fresh elections

F.P. Report

MULTAN: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief, Maulana Fazlur Rehman has demanded the incumbent government to resign and holding of fresh general elections without the 'interference of establishment'.

Addressing a press conference in Multan on Wednesday, he said that his party will fully support the environment for negotiations 'if created', noting that it is not possible for the establishment to be both the "servant and the ruler". Fazlur Rehman emphasised that the mindset that nothing can happen without the establishment's consent needs to be changed, demanding that the government resign and fresh elections be held, with the

establishment staying away from the electoral process.

He claimed that the incumbent government is "weak" as Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is not part of the cabinet, noting that his party had already launched a movement against the regime. "They [the government] cannot delivered in current circumstances," Fazlur Rehman also expressed concern over the country's economic situation, stating that Pakistan's budget is in the hands of IMF and World Bank.

The JUI-F chief claimed that the government is not a democratic entity, but rather a group of individuals who have been handed power. Castigating the recently-held general elections, he alleged that candidates have been

bribed, assemblies have been sold, and the system is corrupt. He also lamented the political culture of seeking power and positions, stating that this is not politics. Expressed confidence in the people's support, he said they will vote for him and he will become the President, Prime Minister or Chief Minister.

Maulana Fazl questioned whether the country is only meant for fighting and has given up on progress. He emphasised that those who are trained to fight cannot lead the nation. In his first National Assembly speech, JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman questioned the 'legitimacy' of the incumbent parliament, saying that they have compromised on principles and "sold the democracy".

Govt slashes petrol price by Rs15.39 per litre

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: In a major relief for the inflation-hit nation, the federal government approved a massive cut of Rs15.39 per litre in the petrol price for the next fortnight in line with the global oil rates.

According to an official notification issued the Finance Division on Wednesday, the new fuel prices will be effective from May 16 (Thursday).

In a notification, the finance ministry said the reduction was due to price variations in the international market since prices of petroleum products had seen a "decreasing trend" in the last 15 days.

It said the new petrol price was Rs273.1 per litre and that of HSD was Rs274.08.

Informed sources had previously told this scribe that the prices of petrol and HSD had declined in the international market by about \$8.7 and \$4.3 per barrel, respectively, in the last fortnight.

The import premium on petrol increased by more than seven per cent in the last fortnight to \$10.30 per barrel. Earlier, it had dropped in two phases to \$9.60 per barrel before April 30 from \$13.50 per barrel in March. The HSD price also dropped by about \$4.3 per barrel in the international market, and its import premium paid by the benchmark Pakistan State Oil remained unchanged at \$6.50 per barrel.

The government has already achieved the Rs60 per litre petroleum development levy (PDL) — the maximum permissible limit under the law — on petrol and HSD and collected Rs720 billion in the first nine months ending March 31. Under the International Monetary Fund commitments, the government had set a budget target to collect Rs869bn as petroleum levy during the current fiscal year.

Pakistan successfully tests Fatah-II rocket system

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Army on Wednesday conducted successful training launch of Fatah-II Guided Rocket System with a range of 400 kilometres, said the military's media wing in a statement.

The rocket is equipped with state-of-the-art navigation system, unique trajectory and manoeuvrable features. Fatah-II is capable of engaging targets with high precision and defeating any missile defence system. "Fatah-II is being inducted in Pakistan's Artillery Divisions for stand-off, precision engagement of deep targets. The rocket system will significantly upgrade the reach and lethality of Pakistan Army's conventional arsenal," said the ISPR.

Flight test was witnessed by Chief of the General Staff Pakistan Army, senior officers from the three services and dedicated scientists and engineers. President Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir and all services chiefs congratulated participating troops and scientists on this excellent achievement.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday congratulated the Pakistan Army and scientists over the successful launch of Fatah-II Guided Rocket System.

The prime minister, calling the launch an outcome of untiring efforts by Pakistan Army and scientists, expressed the hope that Fatah-II would help further strengthen the defense of Pakistan, according to a PM Office statement. He said the constant efforts by the Pakistan Army and scientists continued to making Pakistan's defense impregnable.

Bilawal calls for dialogue to fix national issues

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday demanded the federal government to announce special incentives for farmers in the upcoming budget and provide direct relief to small farmers by subsidizing the agriculture sector.

Speaking here in National Assembly, Bilawal Bhutto emphasized the provision of subsidies to small farmers and landlords through the implementation of a "Kisan Card" system. He highlighted that Pakistan's annual import of agricultural goods exceeds Rs. 10 billion and stressed the importance of facilitating small farmers to minimize this dependency.

He demanded the government to engage all stakeholders, including farmers' organizations, and proposed the declaration of a 10-year emergency along with the implementation of consistent agricultural policies. He emphasized that such measures would significantly contribute to the country's development.

He underscored the necessity for the government to restore the confidence of wheat-growing farmers by announcing support measures. This, he emphasized, is essential to ensure there is no shortage of wheat in the coming year. Bilawal Bhutto urged the government to take decisive action to resolve the wheat import controversy and hold accountable those responsible during interim set-up in the wheat import scandal. He stressed that the Prime Minister should identify the bureaucrats and former ministers involved in the scandal and take prompt action against them without any further delay.

He emphasized that all major parties have consistently recognized agriculture as the backbone of the country in their manifestos. Bilawal Bhutto pointed out that the funds involved in the scandal were derived from the tax contributions of the people of Pakistan, and those responsible for misusing them should be held accountable.



He highlighted that as a result of this scandal, wheat procurement by provinces and the government has decreased, adversely affecting farmers' ability to obtain fair rates for their produce. This loss to farmers and economy were a result of decisions made by incapable and inefficient individuals, and they must be held accountable.

Bilawal Bhutto emphasized that it is not the fault of the farmers, and the government should step in to assist them. He stressed the importance of recognizing Pakistan as an agricultural country and urged a renewed focus on agriculture as a means to earn and thrive. PPP Chairperson shared his views on the Presidential address to both Houses of Parliament on April 18, 2024.

He congratulated the assembly on this occasion, noting that it marked the 7th address by a civilian President. He commended the President for focusing on national issues in the speech, avoiding personal or political matters. Bilawal emphasized that as the representative of the federation, the President prioritized public concerns, emphasizing unity, reconciliation, and collective progress. He remarked that President Mr. Asif Ali Zardari recognizes that the solution to Pakistan's problems lies in dialogue among political forces.

PM for PSDP programmes ensuring sustainable development

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday stressed upon initiation of such projects under Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) that ensured sustainable development in the country.

While underlining the significance of third part validation of all the mega national development projects, he observed that with increase in revenues, enough funds could be made available for the uplift projects.

The prime minister chaired an important meeting on the matters related to the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives and Public Private Partnership Authority, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Petroleum Musadik Malik, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jehanzeb Khan, PM's Coordinator Rana Ahsan Afzal and other relevant senior officials.



The prime minister also directed for constitution of a cabinet committee headed by the minister for planning over the development budget and PSDP. The committee would furnish a mechanism over PSDP programmes through short, medium and long terms proposals.

The prime minister emphasized upon harmonizing the federal PSDP and provincial annual development programme and the need of improving links. He also asked for submission of proposals by all the federal ministries over public-private partnership projects.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also directed for removal of issues and concerns of the Sindh government with regard to development. He also directed for expediting work on the ongoing federal funded uplift projects in the province.

The prime minister issued these directives dur-

ing a meeting with Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah who called on him. Federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Ahad Khan Cheema and Sardar Awais Khan Leghari, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jehanzeb Khan and relevant senior officials also attended the meeting, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, the prime minister said that for the revival of economy, the cooperation among the federation and the provinces was imperative, stressing that economic stability was their main objective. The prime minister directed the federal ministers to seek permanent resolution to the financial, economic and other issues of the Sindh province. He also asked for taking of all the provinces on board and including them in the consultation process during the preparation of the upcoming development budget.

IHC grants bail to PTI founder in £190m case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday approved bail of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder in the 190 million pounds reference.

A two-member bench comprising IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Tariq Mahmood Jahangiri announced the verdict which was reserved a day earlier after the completion of arguments by both sides. The high court has granted bail to the former prime minister, who has been incarcerated in the Adiala Jail for months, against surety bonds worth Rs1 million.

During Tuesday's hear-

ing, PTI lawyer Latif Khosa argued that NAB's witness had admitted that there was no signature of the PTI founder anywhere. "NAB's witness admitted that no money was transferred to the accounts of the PTI founder or Bushra Bibi. The witness admitted that PTI founder or Bushra Bibi did not benefit personally. At no time did NAB oppose this witness's statement. What remains in the case after this witness's statement?" he added. The PTI chairman is facing corruption charges of billions of rupees in a case also involving a property tycoon.

Khan — along with his wife Bushra Bibi and other PTI leaders — are facing a NAB inquiry related to a

settlement between the PTI government and the property tycoon, which reportedly caused a loss of £190 million to the national exchequer. As per the charges, Khan and other accused allegedly adjusted Rs50 billion — £190 million at the time — sent by Britain's National Crime Agency (NCA) to the Pakistani government as part of the agreement with the property tycoon.

They are also accused of getting undue benefit in the form of over 458 kanals of land at Mouza Bakrala, Sohawa, to establish Al Qadir University. During the PTI government, the NCA seized assets worth 190 million pounds from the property tycoon in Britain.

Kundi witnesses harvesting of special type of wheat

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi participated in the harvesting ceremony of a special type of wheat at the Agricultural University Peshawar on Wednesday. The Governor hailed the collaboration between Washington State University, Agricultural University Faisalabad, and the Agricultural University Peshawar for improving the production of a special type of wheat. He appreciated the efforts of Senator Nauman Wazir in introducing the special type of wheat at the Agricultural University. The Governor stressed the need for guidance for the province's landown-

ers on new varieties of wheat. He emphasized the importance of transferring the research of agricultural universities and agricultural research institutions to farmers, cultivators, and landowners to increase the production capacity of high-quality wheat. He highlighted the need for serious efforts to improve agricultural self-sufficiency. Governor Kundi desired to work together with landowners, youth, and people from all walks of life for the betterment of society. Later, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi participated as a special guest in the 5th Convocation of the Qurtaba University of Science and Information Technology. The Governor distrib-

uted gold medals among 39 students who secured prominent positions from Session 2017 to Session 2023. "For the progress of the province, it is extremely necessary to efficiently utilize natural and human resources," stated Governor Faisal Karim Kundi. "We will have to find unconventional solutions to overcome the challenges facing the education sector," he added. Governor Kundi emphasized the need to give special attention to modern research in universities. "In the current era, knowledge of artificial intelligence and information technology is extremely crucial," Governor Faisal Karim Kundi emphasized.

He appreciated the commendable educational services provided by the private sector along with the public sector in the province. "Our country's bright future is secure in the hands of our capable youth," Governor Faisal Karim Kundi expressed. "It is our collective responsibility to provide proper guidance to the youth, who are our valuable asset," he added. In the convocation, President of Qurtaba University Major (Retd) Abdul Latif Khan Niazi, Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr. Hamidullah Alizai, Registrar Professor Dr. Musa Kaleem, Controller of Examinations Professor Dr. Azhar Khan Niazi, faculty members, students, and parents participated.



PESHAWAR: DG Rescue1122 Dr. Muhammad Ayaz Khan and Rescue 1122 officials giving briefing to Secretary Relief Yousaf Raheem regarding latest rescue equipment used in different emergencies at Rescue 1122 Headquarters.

Afghan scholar earns MPhil at KMU

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Dr. Ihsanullah, hailing from Afghanistan, has made history by becoming the first international scholar to successfully defend his MPhil thesis in Oral Pathology at the esteemed Institute of Pathology and Diagnostic Medicine (IPDM), Khyber Medical University (KMU).

Under the mentorship of Dr. Benish Aleem, Dr. Ihsanullah's groundbreaking thesis, titled "A Histopathological Study of Carious Permanent Teeth in the Population of Jalalabad," marks a significant contribution to the field.

Enrolled since spring 2022, Dr. Ihsanullah's academic journey was supported by the Allama Muhammad Iqbal scholarship, a testament to the enduring partnership between Afghanistan and Pakistan facilitated by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan.

Prof. Dr. Rubina Nazli, Dean of Basic Medical Sciences (BMS) at KMU, lauded the institute's commitment to fostering international collaborations and professional connections between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Dr. Yasar Yousafzai, Director of IPDM, emphasized the vital role of academic exchanges in promoting human resource development crucial for Afghanistan's reconstruction. He highlighted Dr. Ihsanullah's achievement as a beacon of excellence, showcasing KMU's commitment to provide world-class education and attracting students from neighboring nations.

Dr. Ihsanullah's accomplishment not only exemplifies academic excellence but also strengthens the bond between Pakistan and Afghanistan, paving the way for future generations of scholars to pursue high-quality education and contribute to the advancement of medical sciences.

Health Minister hands over mobile hospital to Adviser Tourism KP

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah and Advisor Tourism Zahid Chanzab visited the Directorate of General Health Services on Warsak Road here on Wednesday.

During a simple ceremony organized on this occasion, Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah handed over keys to the Tourism Advisor Zahid Chanzab of a modern mobile hospital for patients from remote and tourists' areas of his constituency PK 38 Mansehra. Additional DG Health Administration Dr Siraj and DHO Mansehra Mushtaq Tanoli were also present on the occasion.

Giving a briefing about the mobile hospital, Additional Director General Health Dr. Siraj said that modern treatment facilities including first aid, gynae, children and general check-up are available in this mobile hospital and it was specially built for extending medicare services in remote areas.

Zahid Chanzab on the occasion said the people of his constituency are grateful to the Minister of Health and the Directorate General of Health for providing this facility while such facilities will be made available in future too. He said apart from the backward areas of Mansehra, this mobile hospital will also be used at tourist places of Mansehra.

Syed Qasim Ali Shah further said that efforts will be made to provide best healthcare facilities at the doorstep of people in backward areas like Mansehra. The KP govt will provide the best possible healthcare facilities in every nook and corner of the province, he added.

Minister for Health, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, Takes Notice of Media Reports on

Leishmania Outbreak in Khyber District, distributed Glucantone injections in respective DHOs

In response to media reports regarding the Leishmania outbreak in the Khyber district, Minister for Health, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, has taken swift action. Concerned by the situation, he has directed authorities to immediately provide injections for the control of Leishmania.

Upon receiving the directive, Additional Director General Administration, Dr. Saraj, coordinated with Medicine Sans Frontier (MSF) to provide the first batch of glucantone injections to Khyber and Mohmand districts on an urgent basis. Minister Shah also visited the Directorate General of Health Services and instructed district health officers of Khyber and Mohmand to allocate six hundred injections for emergency treatment of Leishmania.

Minister Shah emphasized that procurement orders for injections were issued promptly to curb the Leishmania epidemic. With UNICEF's assistance, glucantone injections have been procured province-wide. The next batch of injections will be available in the province within two weeks.

He added that through the collaboration of MSF, Naseerullah Babar, and Badhbair Hospitals, Leishmania treatment centers are operational, providing treatment to affected individuals nationwide.

ADG Dr. Saraj stated that following the Minister's directives, immediate arrangements were made through MSF for the arrangement of glucantone injections. He further noted that oral medications are also available at treatment centers, urging the public to seek immediate and free treatment at these facilities.

Dumping site in residential areas: PHC orders CEO to reply in 15 days

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising S M Atique Shah and Justice Syed Arshad Ali ordered Chief Executive Officer Water and Sanitation Company Peshawar (WSSCP) to submit a report within 15 days

regarding establishment of dumping site on Warsak Road, on Wednesday. The residents of Warsak Road filed writ plea against establishment of dumping site on 275 land in the residential area while Rab Nawaz Khan advocate argued that the dumping site causing environmental

issues and the entire city's garbage being dumping on the spot. The counsel further argued that Commissioner Peshawar didn't appear before court despite Peshawar High Court's orders on previous hearing as he also holds the additional charge of CEO WSSCP. Assistant Advocate

General informed that Commissioner Peshawar Riaz Mehsud is present in court and had taken charge of the office a few days ago. The Commissioner requested for provision of time to submit a report on the dumping site, which the court granted, directing him to submit the report within 15 days.

Police busts three members organized criminal gang

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Police arrested a three-member organized gang allegedly involved in looting of people after drugging in the guise of travelers while recovered the stolen money and drugs from their possession. According to details, Station House Officer

Dawoodzai Nasser Freed Khattak, received information that a person was lying unconscious near the Babuzai pump on Charsadda Road. The victim named Khan resident of Lahori Gate told the police that he was traveling in a rickshaw with three other people, who offered him a drink that made him unconscious. When he woke up,

he was in a hospital, and his wallet containing Rs 217,000 was missing. Police registered First Information Report and started investigation which led to the arrest of the three alleged culprits. The alleged culprits are members of an organized group that targets travelers, drugs them, and loots their valuables.

Speakers educate students on importance of democracy

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Speakers during a daylong event educated the students of the Government Post Graduate College Landi Kotal about democracy and its importance. The topic of the event was "Localizing Democracy" was held at GPGC Landi Kotal with the help of administration

of the college to let students aware about democratic values, constitution of Pakistan, rule of law, local government laws and others. The event was arranged by an organization known as CLADO and PUAN with the college administration. The project lead, Haris Shinwari, highlighted the importance of empowering

democracy at the local level, while the trainer, Shahabuddin, provided information about constitutional and democratic institutions and their roles. The college principal, Professor Saeed Khan, also spoke on the occasion and saying such events should be held in coming time as well. Later, organizers distributed certificates among the participants.

Minister holds open katchery

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Local Government, Arshad Ayub Khan on Wednesday held open katchery in his office to listen to complaints and issues of people. Speaking on the occasion, he assured to resolve issues of people on priority basis keeping in view their expectations. He said that government is working to serve people adopting policy of transparency and accountability. Minister said that flagship projects have been introduced in local government department adding these schemes are aimed to facilitate people and provide them needed convenience. He also directed officials to serve public with dedication and abiding by rules of professionalism.

KP services tribunal orders promotion of 41 Class-IV to junior clerks

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Services Tribunal ordered promotion of 41 Class IV employees in the Health's Department to Junior Clerk posts according to the quota policy, on Wednesday.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Services Tribunal comprising Chairman Karim Arshad and Member Muhammad Akbar Khan heard the petition while Barrister Hassan Adil argued that the petitioners had been working on Class IV posts in the Health Department for a long time but were not being promoted.

The Health Department had taken the stance that the posts created laying in the district and provincial cadres while the petitioners did not meet the criteria for promotion, the counsel argued.

The health department had failed to provide the rules under which the petitioners were not eligible for promotion, which led to the tribunal's decision in favor of the employees.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Services Tribunal ruled in favor of the petitioners, stating that they had the right to promotion.

Promotion of sports activities govt's priority: Meena Khan

Peshawar Zone won the Inter Zonal Provincial Girls Games

Shahid Afridi

PESHAWAR: Peshawar Zone won the Inter Zonal Provincial Girls Games organized by the Higher Education Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with Hazara Zone in second and Bannu Zone in third place. The colorful closing ceremony was held at City Gulbahar Girls College Peshawar, with the Provincial Minister for Higher Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Meena Khan Afridi as the chief guest. He was accompanied by Director HED Professor Dr. Fareedullah Shah, Additional Director Shabana Marwat, Principal of City Gulbahar Girls College Professor Rabia Sikandar, Organizing Secretary Najma Qazi, and principals, sports directors, and a large number of students from various colleges across the province. Addressing the closing ceremony, Provincial Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan Afridi, stated that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf



(PTI) government has always prioritized sports and has taken practical steps for its promotion. He mentioned that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is fortunate to have talent among both men and women, which is why girls from the province are making the nation proud at national and international levels. He emphasized that providing equal opportunities in

sports for women, just like men, is a top priority for the current government. He also highlighted the provincial government's efforts to provide free education up to intermediate level for orphans and destitute children in the province. He urged the students to focus on their quality education along with sports to achieve success in academics as well. In the end Meena

Khan distributed prizes and trophies among the winners. Government Girls City College Gulbahar won first place in cricket, Government Girls Degree College Sarai Naurang Bannu secured second, and Girls Degree College Sawal Der Mardan attained third place. In badminton, Girls Degree College Abbottabad Hazara Zone won first place, Frontier College second, and

Girls Degree College Chitral third place. In Peshawar Zone, City Gulbahar College earned 21 points, Frontier College for Women secured 16 points, and Bacha Khan Girls College attained 10 points, resulting in Peshawar Zone achieving first place with a total of 41 points, while Hazara Zone stood second with 28 points. In table tennis, Hazara

Zone won gold, Girls Degree College D.I. Khan silver, and Bacha Khan College Peshawar bronze. In netball, Peshawar Zone secured first, Frontier College second, and Hazara third place. In handball, Girls College Haripur won first, Srati Saleh second, and Girls College Nowshera third place. In volleyball, Girls College Dargai Malakand won gold,

Hazara silver, and Girls College Lakki Marwat Bannu third place. In throwball, Frontier College Peshawar won gold, Bacha Khan College silver, and Girls College Nowshera bronze. In chuckball, Frontier College won gold, Hazara Zone silver, and Girls Degree College Gulbahar bronze. Overall, Peshawar Zone secured first place with 41 points.



In brief

BDS defuses IED in Landi Kotal F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS) defused an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) placed at Charwazai, tehsil Landi Kotal on Wednesday. District Police Officer (DPO) Khyber Saleem Abbas Kulachvi informed that unknown miscreants had fixed Improvised Explosive Devices, fitted in ghee cane and was placed adjacent to the outer wall of Charwazai police check post to blow it. However, on timely response, the threat was averted and mal-design of the anti-social elements was foiled, he added. Soon after information, the police officials along with Bomb Disposal Squad rushed to the spot, evacuated the check post and defused it, he said. DPO further added that an investigation was launched to trace the culprits and security measures were further boosted up in the area.

Protest against load shedding F.P. Report

D I KHAN: Women protesting against the prolonged load shedding blocked a grid station in D I Khan on Wednesday. Women in DI Khan led a protest against prolonged load shedding, blocking the grid station and roads to express their frustration. The protesters claimed that the city faces 20-22 hours of load shedding daily, making life unbearable. The demonstrators criticized the government, saying that the Governor and Chief Minister are sitting in their air-conditioned offices while the general public suffers.

Education officer abducted F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Unidentified gunmen abducted a superintendent of the KP education department at gunpoint by putting him in a car along with his partner in Lakki Marwat on Wednesday. According to police, the incident took place in the city's busiest area of Lorry Adda. Arifullah is a district education officer and is a superintendent of BPS-17. Police said that the lifters seemed to be Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) cybercrime operatives. In this regard, president All Coordination Council Saeed Akhtar said that abducting a superintendent from the main base in broad daylight is a failure of the security agencies. He said that government employees are angry over the incident and will announce strict action plan soon after consultation.

Three killed on personal enmity F.P. Report

CHARSADDA: Three persons have been killed and two others injured as unknown assailants opened fire on them at Charsadda motorway. While confirming the casualties, the police said that the incident seemed to be of a personal enmity whereas further investigation is underway. The police said that the deceased and their colleagues were attacked when they were crossing the Charsadda motorway. According to police, the assailants managed to escape after the firing, while efforts were being made to arrest them. The dead bodies and wounded persons have been shifted to Lady Reading Hospital for legal formalities and treatment respectively. Heavy contingents of district and motorway police reached the police.

IG FC inaugurates Hamza Baba Shrine after preservation



F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Pak Army and Frontier Corps North have successfully completed the preservation work of the revered Ameer Hamza Baba Shrine in Khyber. In this regard, a grand ceremony was held to mark this significant milestone, with Inspector General Frontier Corps North Major General Noor Wali Khan gracing the event as the chief guest.

Major General Noor Wali Khan paid homage to the famous Pashto Poet Ameer Hamza Baba Shinwari by reciting Fatiha. The ceremony was enriched by the contributions of esteemed

poets, who eloquently portrayed the life and legacy of Ameer Hamza Baba Shinwari through their poetry collections. Local artists also showcased their talents, adding vibrancy to the event.

In his address, Major General Noor Wali Khan underscored the pivotal role of Ameer Hamza Baba Shinwari in promoting love for the country, Pashto language, and Pashto culture. He emphasized that the decoration of the shrine and library serves as a tribute to the visionary poet and aims to instill a sense of awareness among the youth about his remarkable life.

Born in 1907 in the Landi Kotal area of Khyber District, Ameer Hamza Baba Shinwari earned the title of Baba-e-Pashto Ghazal and Sufi Saint. His poetry played a vital role in galvanizing the youth during the independence movement.

Following the establishment of Pakistan, he continued to enrich the cultural landscape through his contributions to Radio Pakistan. Ameer Hamza Baba Shinwari's enduring legacy was immortalized with his burial in Landi Kotal, where a mausoleum was constructed to honor his invaluable services to the country and the area.

Chilam Josh festival attracts tourists

CHITRAL (APP): The Kalash valley's Chilam Josh festival—a voyage of centuries-old tradition to welcome the arrival of spring season amid blossom of flowers and melting of snow, has started attracted tourists in droves enjoying its cultural programs and musical shows on beats drums warmly applauded. Kalash valley, which is known for annual Chilam Josh festival being celebrated from May 13-16 every year, is more than just a tourists' destination but a voyage of ancient tradition believed to be started during an era of Alexander the Great and continued till date in Chitral.

Besides its ancient cultural rituals and customs, Kalash's vibrant live festivals, musical programs and colorful traditions strengthen bonds of warmth and friendship besides allowing tourists to explore its nearby snow-clad mountain peaks, especially of Trich Mir and Rakaposhi where they spend some hours amid complete clam and serenity. Began at Rumbur valley surrounded by lush green mountains of Bumbret, Kalash and Birir valley, the Chilam Josh leave an inerascable imprint on minds of thousands of visitors besides compel many to come again.

The unique dresses, cultural dances, ancient rituals and colorful traditions in Kalasha festival are one of the major attractions for tourists to see Kalasha girls and boys dances to the tune of traditional drum beats. The girls dressed in traditional clothes of vibrant colours, adorned with gold and silver jewelry and elaborate headgear, while men in traditional Shalwar Kameez with a woolen waistcoat impressed tourists. Kalash women and men cultural dance and sing in a circle to the rhythmic chant of drum beats. The Kalashi people also pray for the safety of loved ones, fields and animals besides distributes milk during the festival.

"Along with my family, I came from Nowshera to see the historic festival at my favorite Kalash valley in Chitral," said architect Imran Ali while talking to APP. He said Kalash culture and Chitralis hospitality impressed me the most during my stay here. "My visit to Chitral remained incomplete without seeing the live Chilam Josh cultural festival in Kalash valley amid traditional dances and cultural programs," said Engr Imran Ali. He said Kalash culture was the identity of Chitral and KP Govt patronage for development of its road infrastructure and establishment of camping pods would help bolster culture tourism here besides bolstering rural economy. He underscored the need for highlighting Kalasha culture through digital and social media so that more tourists especially from foreign countries could come here that would greatly benefit people of Chitral economically.

By promoting infrastructure at Kalash valley and Kalasha museum, he said tourists'

load on Kalam, Kumrat, Malam Jabba, Galayat and Murree would be reduced and people of Chitral especially of Kalash and Bumbarrat would be largely benefited. Bakhtzada Khan, senior research officer, Museums and Archeology Department KP, told APP that the history of Kalasha tribe was very primitive and carried significance in Asian history. "The people of Wadi e Kalash had been considered an ancient people of Asia whose elders migrated to Chitral and settled here at Hindu Kush mountain range believed during the era of Alexander the Great," he said. He said there are many myths about the origin of Kalash people and mostly it was believed that they are the descendants of Alexander the Great's army. "Another tale is about their ancestors migrating to Chitral from the land of Tsiyam – the original home place of the Kalash people, which they keep referring to in their folk songs."

To preserve the ancient art and culture of Kalasha tribe, he said work on Kalasha Dur Museum in Chitral was started in 2001 and completed in 2005. "There are about 1300 to 1500 objects exhibited in the museum which are of Ethnological interest from the Kalasha tradition and from the traditions of the wider Hindu Kush." In ground floor of the museum, he said ethnological collection of Kalasha culture besides primitive dresses, weapons and agriculture tools of Kalash women and men were kept preserved while a school of Kalasha culture with a library of books written on the valley's significance and local artist work housed in the second floor.

In addition to traditional weapons made of stones, metals and woods, the Museum has a great collection of other artifacts used by the Kalasha people for hunting and self-defense purposes. Kalasha museum also houses a vast collection of agricultural tools, which reminds the visitors about its glorious culture, history, and innovation changes in tool-making techniques.

A tourist could not remain unimpressed after seeing the indigenous dresses of Kalasha tribe at the museum. Various musical instruments used over centuries are also put on display in the Museum besides tabla, sarangi, sahnai, tambura etc. Besides the rare photographs, he said the museum has film rolls, journals, books, sculptures, maps, documents, and materials related to Kalasha Dur Chitral. He said the Kalasha tribe's primitive dresses of both men and women are very special because it is not just traditional dresses but also an expression of cultural identity of the Kalasha tribe. Besides other small events, he said three major festivals were organized by people of Kalash every year who enjoy dancing on traditional musical beats in these yearly events that were attracting tourists from across the country.

Muhammad Sarwar

THE world is quite well aware of the historic brutality, oppression, and dispossession that the European colonialists perpetrated against those they deemed as lesser humans. From the colonial plantations of slavery where the black bodies were eviscerated and dehumanized to the inglorious famine of Bengal, all the atrocities carried the implicit excuse that the Europeans were more civilized than the savages of their colonies which they were savagely exploiting and disposing. However, it was the Europeans who had thrown off the garb of humanity and were inhumanely destroying the indigenous colonized nations.

William Faulkner rightly said that "The past is never dead, it's not even past". The past is never disconnected from the present. Its reincarnation persistently occurs in the present. The recent conflict in Gaza is a testament to the reincarnation of history. With the modern

world witnessing so much horror during the two World Wars and after it, it is once again letting an unparalleled horror taking place. Gaza has been a colonial plantation for decades under the colonial occupation of Israel.

The occupying power has closely monitored and lashed the population of Gaza with extreme violence and brutality. It has denied the humanity of the subjugated population of Gaza just as the European colonialists had stripped-off the populations in their colonies of humanity.

However, the emboldened Zionist state is not alone in its atrocities. The western world is actively offering it diplomatic and material support while covering up its crimes through their mainstream corporate media. Nothing stops them from withdrawing their support. Not the UN, not the ICI, or the majority of the world which is appalled at the brazen genocide of the entire population.

The west is well aware that they are losing the war of narrative at home and abroad, yet with every passing moment they are getting deeply involved. The reason for this involvement is beyond understanding. Apparently, it seems to be irrational but the western governments, elites, and academia are not idiotic. They are very ingenious in their calculations. They must know the price they are paying as well as the prospective benefits they might reap.

To any sane human being, the benefits from the mass slaughter would appear ridiculous and irrational. However, there is a 'method in it'. At every stage of human civilization, humanity has tried to define itself. And in its attempt to define itself, it has excluded some part of itself. This exclusion has always been premised on the scale of difference.

Those with different race, class, color, creed and gender

Sports' festival at district jail concludes F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: A three-day sports gala arranged by the district jail in collaboration with the administration in the Timergara district jail concluded amid a colourful function held in the jail here the other day. Sports like volleyball, cricket and badminton were played during the festival. Matches were played among police officials and jail prisoners.

District police officer Roye Mazhar Iqbal, additional deputy commissioner Tariq Hussain and jail superintendent Riaz Mohmand distributed trophies and cash prizes among the best position holders. Speaking on the occasion the DPO said the event was aimed to share joys and mentally develop the prisoners. He said that several prophets of Allah also spent time in jails. The DPO said that jail inmates always learnt lessons from jail life. He said that arresting a person did not mean that he was being subjected to troubles but it meant to establish rule of law. The jail inmates took keen interest in games and entertained the audience.

Constable drowned: A police constable identified as Ishaq Khan s/o Rahim Zeb, a resident of Malala Khazana was drowned in a nearby stream while fishing along with his friends in the jurisdiction of Munda police station here the other day. The friends retrieved his body and shifted to the district headquarters hospital Timergara wherein the doctors announced him dead. The deceased left behind a widow and three children. Later he was laid to rest at his ancestral graveyard in Malala village. Residents said that so far several people had lost their lives by drowning in the Malala stream.

Meanwhile another youth identified as Mahboob Alam s/o Umar Badshah, a resident of Khadagzai was electrocuted when he touched a bare transmission line while working on the top of a house in the jurisdiction of Khadagzai police station here on Tuesday. The relatives shifted him to a nearby hospital but he was already dead. The youth was laid to rest at Khadagzai Koz Kalay later on.

Delay in issuance of visas impacting skilled laborers F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Work Visas United Arab Emirates have not been issued for more than 8 months, as a result of which national economy of the Pakistan is facing negative impacts and unemployment in the country is increasing in the great extent.

These views were expressed by the Prominent Overseas Employment Promoter Rana Muhammad Siddique while talking to journalists at Hafizabad, on Tuesday. He said that overseas employment promoters and Pakistani manpower were backbone of national economy whereas ratio of Pakistani manpower in developed countries was very small than other neighboring countries.

He urged the government to take effective measure and policy to get appropriate share in work visas for Pakistani manpower in aboard particularly in United Arab Emirates.

Protection of wildlife national obligation

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Wildlife is an integral part of life and an integral part of the earth. Allah Almighty has created animals, birds, water creatures and insects along with humans so that the diversity of the world can be maintained. Wildlife is the beauty of the world. Their survival, breeding and saving the endangered species is the national responsibility of all of us.

These views were expressed by the newly appointed DFO Wildlife Khyber Circle while addressing an awareness session at Government High School Sheraki, Dara Adam Khel, Kohat. DFO said that it is a fact that wildlife is the capital of any country and the protection of this creation of nature is the duty of all, but it is a bitter fact that the wildlife is decreasing in the world.

Despite the measures taken by the government and institutions to protect the wildlife and their breeding, the hunting of rare birds is not decreasing due to which the life span of the

wild life is getting shorter. Malik Wazir Afridi in his address said that animals not only balance the environment but also significantly increase the beauty.

Due to illegal hunting, smuggling and lack of awareness, wildlife is facing many threats and various species of animals are about to become extinct. Protection of wildlife is not only the responsibility of the government and related organizations, but of all of us. DFO presented the shield to Malik Wazir Afridi from the department, while Wazir Afridi also gave a gift to the DFO from his organization.

Meanwhile, Senior Leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Shehryar Khan Afridi MNA along with PTI Leaders visited Tolanj village of the constituency of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Finance Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate where he made inauguration of the Tolanj Road from the elders of the area and local party leaders which will be completed at a cost of Rs.12 Million.

Chairman Tehsil

Gumbat Sajid Iqbal, Ex-President PTI Kohat Malik Iqbal, party workers and local leaders were also present on this occasion. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Shehryar Afridi said that he is well aware of the problems of Kohat and Inshallah the day is not far when all the basic problems of Kohat will be solved with the mutual efforts of his team and put it on the road to progress and prosperity. He said, work on all his projects, stopped by the previous government has been resumed and it is hoped that most of the major problems of Kohat will be solved in the current period.

MNA maintained that all his elected colleagues are working day and night for the rapid development of Kohat to remove the sense of deprivation of its people. He also visited the Kohat Eidgah along with the officials concerned and directed them to prepare the estimated cost for the renovation and flooring of the Eidgah at the earliest. He assured provision of required funds for it.

AWKUM head of depts demand redressal of issues

F.P. Report

MARDAN: A meeting of the heads of all departments of Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan was held under the chairmanship of Prof. Dr. Muhammad Tahir in which Prof. Dr. Muhammad Tahir demanded installment of CCTV cameras and provision of clean drinking water in various departments as soon as possible.

Apart from this, all the problems faced by the students and employees will be solved as soon as possible through transparent procedures through teamwork. Dr. Muhammad Tahir further said that all resources will be utilized for providing quality education to students and for research.

He added that through checks and balances and through mutual consultation, we will resolve the problems of the students and the university as soon as possible. Dr. Majid, Director Admissions said that currently 39 percent of students are defaulters with a total cost of Rs.3 crore, all the chairman briefed the meeting regarding their respective departments.

Excise & taxation dept to start registration drive: Director Excise and Taxation Mardan Region Fawad Iqbal said that they are starting a special campaign for vehicle registration in Mardan Region from Thursday which will continue till the end of this month. Citizens are requested to register their unregistered vehicles by the specified date, after the specified date action will be taken against the unregistered vehicle owners.

During a press briefing at Mardan Press Club, Director Excise and Taxation Fawad Iqbal said that on the special instructions of Excise Minister Mian Khaleeq ul Rahman, Secretary Fayaz Ali Shah and DG Akmal Khattak is trying to achieve the target of 920 million across the Mardan region. He said that one-rupee registration scheme for vehicles from 660 cc to 1800 cc have been started two years for the convenience of the citi-

zens.

Director Excise and Taxation Fawad Iqbal said that the special campaign for registration of small and big vehicles, including unregistered motorcycles is starting from Thursday May 16 to May 30. It will be extended to the districts. He said that with regard to the registration campaign, along with other stakeholders, the bargainers will also be taken on board to make the campaign successful.

Community uplift stressed: Civil Society Organizations equipped with Public and Social Audits in the WASH Sector. The FANSA (Freshwater Action Network South Asia) & IRSP (Integrated Regional Support Program) organized a comprehensive training under the FANSA project "rising for right."

This training focused on equipping Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) with the skills, necessary to conduct public and social audits in the WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) sector. A renowned trainer, Dr. Israr Ahmad conducted the training.

The training yielded several significant outcomes, including: Participants enhanced their skills and knowledge in conducting social audits, enabling effective monitoring and evaluation of WASH services in their communities. Civil society activists and CBO representatives have now the capacity to hold service providers and authorities accountable through evidence-based advocacy and action.

Social audits foster greater transparency and accountability in WASH service delivery, ensuring efficient and equitable resource allocation. By identifying gaps in WASH services, participants can advocate for policy changes and resource allocations that improve access and quality for marginalized communities.

The training promotes active involvement of community members in moni-

toring and decision-making processes, fostering ownership and empowerment. Participants are equipped to form and lead Social Audit Committees (SACs) with clear mandates and guidelines, ensuring sustained monitoring efforts.

Understanding the application of legal instruments, such as the Right to Information (RTI) Act 2013, enables participants to access critical information for thorough social audits and advocacy. Participants develop tailored action plans for their communities, outlining specific steps and responsibilities for conducting social audits and implementing advocacy strategies. The training facilitates networking among participants, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing to address common WASH sector challenges.

Journalist shot dead in Muzaffargarh

MUZAFFARGARH (INP): Unidentified motorcyclists gunned a local journalist in a targeted attack here on Wednesday, police said.

According to details, unknown culprits riding a motorcycle stopped a journalist Ishfaq Ahmed Sial at Thermal Bypass in Muzaffargarh and opened straight fire on him leaving him seriously injured. The attackers sped the scene after committing the crime.

The injured journalist was rushed to District Headquarter (DHQ) Hospital in critical condition where he succumbed to his wounds during treatment. The body was handed over to heirs after post-mortem. The journalist community of the district strongly condemned the incident and demanded the authorities to take notice, issue directions to trace and arrest culprits at earliest. The police registered a case into the incident and started investigations.

The reincarnation of history

ago after seeing it commit unprecedented crimes. The concepts of human rights, justice, and equality that the west floats as universal are not universal. They are reserved for those who conform to the universal values of the west. "Be us or get out of the way", is the rule. That is what is happening today in the apartheid Gaza. All the hypocrisy and double standards are naked as never before. It is not far off to say that the current crisis is a remnant of the supremacist ideology attempting to keep the imperial hegemony of the west intact.

One wonders, why does history reincarnate? Is history the bad teacher or are human beings the dumb students not learning their lessons? These are puzzling questions with no simple explanation. However, one thing is certain, that is, we never learn from history. It repeats itself in its most atrocious forms. Perhaps, that is why

Faulkner refers to the past as a ghostly figure that always lurks and reincarnates in terrifying ways around us. It appears and disappears giving us chilling nightmares.

Faulkner's other contemporary James Joyce, who also saw the horrors of the First World War, says that "History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake". The war in Gaza is a nightmare from which the world is trying to awake. However, the nightmare has numbed the senses of the world so much that I fear while they are waking up, there might be no Gaza at all. The wholesale slaughter of the discounted Gazans would have reached its culmination, and then, humanity would wait for the return of another slaughter to knock at the door. Thus, the cycle of history marches on the well-trodden path of destruction relentlessly.

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Floods unite Brazilians in solidarity despite political rift

RIO GRANDE DO SUL (AFP): At a former railway station in Rio de Janeiro, a fast-growing mountain of food, bottled water and clothes donated to Brazil's thousands of flood victims testify to a rare unity of purpose in a country marred by deep political enmity.

In solidarity with residents of the water-ravaged southern state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazilians from around the country have been sending money and goods, volunteering at shelters and soup kitchens, and caring for pets left behind in the chaos. "What is happening is extremely sad, it is devastating," Natalia Maria Montenegro Cardoso sighed as she unloaded about twenty packs of bottled water from the boot of her small car at the train station -- now the headquarters of the Citizen Action NGO -- in Rio's Gamboa neighborhood.

The 30-year-old nursing assistant told AFP she and colleagues have started a collection at the hospital where she works. "Tomorrow we will bring animal food and blankets." The NGO collects donations and sends them hundreds of kilometers by truck to Rio Grande do Sul, which is grappling with the worst natural disaster in its history. "Ten days after the tragedy, the mobilization is still very strong," the NGO's president Rodrigo Fernandes Afonso told AFP. Citizen Action has raised the equivalent of about \$2.9 million and collected 3,500 tons of donations, he said -- just one of many such initiatives, private and public.

The government of Rio Grande do Sul said Tuesday it had received nearly 98 million reais (about \$19 million) via Pix, an instant payment app. The scale of the tragedy, which has claimed some 150 lives and displaced hundreds of thousands of people, has united a country that was deeply polarized by recent political events -- even to the point of violence. Schools and government institutions, private



companies, political groups, athletes, artists and ordinary citizens have mobilized en masse to help the destitute. The result has been the biggest donation drive in the country's history, according to President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, whose government has sent military and other aid and vowed some \$10 billion for reconstruction. But it is the mobilization of civil society that has perhaps been the most inspiring. Brazil's football federation, backed by the star power of players Vinicius, Neymar and Ronaldinho -- a native of the devastated city of Porto Alegre -- has been raising donations and helping transport them with private planes. In Porto Alegre, where tens of thousands of people have taken refuge in schools, sports clubs and other buildings turned into makeshift shelters, volunteers are legion.

There is even a field hospital where rescued dogs, cats, rabbits, chickens, pigs and horses are being treated, fed and photographed to hopefully be reunited with their owners. "At the moment, there is an image of national unity," political scientist Andre Cesar told AFP. This solidarity comes 16 months after another

national shock when supporters of far-right ex-president Jair Bolsonaro stormed state buildings in the capital Brasilia to protest his electoral defeat at the hands of leftist Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. Clamoring for a military coup to unseat Lula, the rioters clashed with police, beat up journalists and left a trail of destruction in their wake. This came after a deeply divisive and vitriolic electoral campaign that resulted in Lula taking victory with 50.9 percent of the vote to 49.1 percent for Bolsonaro, who retains a fanatical support base.

Lula has spoken on social media of a "government, society, everyone united for the south." But Cesar said the underlying disunity remains. "The polarization (of Brazil) is a fact. It's terrible but it is the reality," he told AFP. It can be seen in attacks from the opposition on the Lula government for its response to the tragedy, and a wave of online conspiracy theories blaming everything from jets' vapor trails and weather antennas for the devastating deluge. The government and scientists point the finger at climate change -- which Bolsonaro downplayed as president, and Lula has vowed to battle with all he's got.

Attack on a prison van in France kills two officers

PARIS (AP): Armed assailants killed two French prison officers and seriously wounded three others in an attack on a convoy in Normandy on Tuesday and an inmate escaped, officials said. A search was underway. The convoy was transporting prisoner Mohamed Amra to Evreux jail after a court hearing in Rouen when it was ambushed on the A154 freeway, which has been closed.

"All means are being used to find these criminals. On my instructions, several hundred police officers and gendarmes were mobilized," Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin posted on social platform X. French President Emmanuel Macron in a post on X called the attack "a shock for all of us." Authorities worked to secure the area in north-western France and apprehend the assailants. It was not clear how many were involved. Amra was detained at the Val de Reuil prison center near Rouen following his recent sentencing for burglary. He was also under investigation for a kidnapping and homicide case in Marseille, according to public prosecutor Laure Beccuau. French media reported that Amra was nicknamed "La Mouche" (The Fly). Beccuau announced an investigation into the attack, considered a case of organized crime and murder, and said two of the wounded officers were in critical condition. The investigation will also address organized escape attempts, possession of military-grade weapons and conspiracy to commit a crime.

76m people displaced within their countries

GENEVA (AP): Conflicts and natural disasters left a record nearly 76 million people displaced within their countries last year, with violence in Sudan, Congo and the Middle East driving two-thirds of new movement, a top migration monitoring group said Tuesday.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Center report found that the number of internally displaced people, or IDPs, has jumped by 50% over the past five years and roughly doubled in the past decade. It doesn't cover refugees -- displaced people who fled to another country. The report tracks two major sets of information. It counted 46.9 million physical movements of people in 2023 -- sometimes more than once. In most of those cases, such as after natural disasters like floods, people eventually return home.

It also compiles the cumulative number of people who were living away from their homes in 2023, including those still displaced from previous years. Some 75.9 million people were living in internal displacement at the end of last year, the report said, with half of those in sub-Saharan African countries. "The verdict of this report is that we are in a deep crisis globally because we have never, ever recorded worse figures for internal displacement by violence, by conflict, by persecution," said Jan Egeland, secretary-general of the Norwegian Refugee Council, which runs the monitoring center. Almost 90% of the total displacement was attributed to conflict and violence, while some 10% stemmed from the impact of natural disasters. The displacement of more than 9 million people in Sudan at the end of 2023 was a record for a single country since the center started tracking such figures 16 years ago. That was an increase of nearly 6 million from the end of 2022. Sudan's conflict erupted in April 2023 as soaring tensions between the leaders of the military and the rival Rapid Support Forces broke out into open fighting across the country. The group reported a total of 3.4 million movements within Gaza in the last quarter of 2023 amid the Israeli military response to the Oct. 7 attacks in Israel. That means that many people moved more than once within the territory of some 2.2 million.

Gaza war: Almost 450,000 people have fled Rafah

GAZA (BBC): Almost 450,000 Palestinians have fled from Rafah over the past week, the UN says, as Israeli tanks reportedly push deeper into the southern Gaza city. "People face constant exhaustion, hunger and fear," warned the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, Unrwa. Israel's military says it is continuing "operations against terror targets" in the east of the city, where more than a million people have been sheltering.

New Israeli operations in northern Gaza have displaced another 100,000 people. Israeli troops have gone back into the areas of Zeitoun and Jabalia, where the military says Hamas has regrouped only five months after it claimed to have dismantled the group's local battalions. The military ordered civilians to evacuate eastern Rafah and Jabalia for their own safety before starting the assaults, but the total of those displaced in recent days is equivalent to almost a quarter of Gaza's 2.3 million population. Israel launched a military campaign to destroy Hamas in response to the group's cross-border attack on southern Israel on 7 October, during which about 1,200 people were killed and 252 others were taken hostage. More than 35,170 people have been killed in Gaza since then, including 82 in the past 24 hours, according to the territory's Hamas-run health ministry. On Tuesday morning, Unrwa posted several photos showing empty streets in Rafah which were packed with tents and makeshift shelters before the start of the Israeli operation on 6 May. Families had fled in search of safety, it said, but added: "Nowhere is safe. An immediate ceasefire is the

only hope." Unrwa spokeswoman Louise Wateridge, who is in Rafah, wrote on X (formerly Twitter) that families still in the city had "moved as far west as possible" and had set up tents on beaches along the Mediterranean coast. Further inland was "now a ghost town", she added. This morning in western #Rafah: families have moved as far west as possible, now reaching the shore & along the beach. Today awoken by navy shelling. Hadeel Radwan, a displaced mother of a newborn baby who is sheltering in the western Tal al-Sultan area, said she was terrified by the constant shelling and was enduring shortages of drinking water and other supplies. She told AFP news agency that fellow residents had been fleeing, but "I had a C-section and moving quickly, under threat, would be difficult for me." Other Palestinians told Reuters news agency that Israeli tanks were advancing deeper into residential areas in south-eastern Rafah and had crossed the main north-south road to the nearby Rafah crossing with Egypt, which Israeli troops took control of on Tuesday. "The tanks advanced this morning west of Salah al-Din road, into the Brazil and al-Jneineh neighbourhoods," one resident said. "They are in the streets inside the built-up area and there are clashes," they added. Al-Jneineh was one of the eastern neighbourhoods covered by the initial Israeli evacuation order, while Brazil was included in the expanded evacuation zone declared. Residents have been told to head towards an "expanded humanitarian area", which stretches north from the coastal strip of al-Mawasi to the central town of Deir

al-Balah. But the UN has said the area lacks basic infrastructure. In a statement issued on Tuesday, the Israel Defense Forces said troops had "eliminated several armed terrorist cells in close-quarters encounters on the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing" and also "eliminated a number of terrorists and located weapons" in eastern areas of Rafah. Hamas -- which is proscribed as a terrorist organisation by Israel, the UK and other countries -- said its fighters had killed and wounded several Israeli troops after it targeted an Israeli troop carrier with an anti-tank missile in the al-Salam neighbourhood, south of Brazil, and blew up a booby-trapped building on George Street, which runs through al-Jneineh. The IDF said a soldier was seriously wounded in combat in southern Gaza. After seven months of war in Gaza, Israel has insisted victory is impossible without taking Rafah and eliminating the last remaining Hamas battalions. But the UN and Western powers have warned that an all-out assault could lead to mass civilian casualties and a humanitarian catastrophe. As well as the mass displacement of Palestinians in the city, the UN has warned that it is running out of supplies of fuel, food and other essential goods because the Rafah crossing is closed and the nearby Kerem Shalom crossing with Israel is inaccessible due to the hostilities in the area. The UN said an Indian staff member was killed in a strike as he travelled in a marked vehicle to the European Gaza hospital in Khan Younis, just to the north-east of Rafah, without blaming any party.

France imposes curfew in New Caledonia

PARIS (AP): Authorities in the French Pacific territory of New Caledonia announced a two-day curfew and banned gatherings on Tuesday after violent unrest on the archipelago with decades of tensions between indigenous Kanaks seeking independence and colonizers' descendants who want to remain part of France.

The French Interior Ministry announced that police reinforcements were being sent to the island that long served as a prison colony and now hosts a French military base. The ministry said 82 people were arrested and 54 police officers and gendarmes were injured. The airport was shut down and dozens of flights were cancelled. The president of the pro-independence Caledonian Union party, Daniel Goa, called for calm but said the protests "reveal the determination of our young people to no longer let France rule them." Goa condemned the looting that "dishonors us and in no way serves our cause and our fight."

The territory's top French official, High Commissioner Louis Le Franc, said the capital, Nouméa, had "high intensity" disturbances that damaged video surveil-

lance equipment and numerous stores. Schools were closed on Tuesday, and most businesses remained shut. Hundreds of cars were burned, and dozens of businesses and homes were seen in flames on videos posted on social media. The unrest started as French lawmakers debated voting reforms which would increase the number of people who could cast ballots in New Caledonia. Opponents say expanding voter lists that have not been updated since 1998 would benefit pro-France politicians in New Caledonia and further marginalize the indigenous Kanak people, who once suffered from strict segregation policies and widespread discrimination. People of European descent in New Caledonia distinguish between descendants of colonizers and descendants of the many prisoners sent to the territory by force. The vast archipelago of about 270,000 people east of Australia is 10 time zones ahead of Paris. France's Prime Minister Gabriel Attal condemned the violence and called for a return to dialogue "with all stakeholders and all local actors" over the reform proposal that was the subject of a heated debate in the National

Assembly. France's most influential house of parliament, Attal called on New Caledonia's political leaders to "take (France's) outstretched hand" and talk. He spoke at the National Assembly during a question session with government ministers. France's Interior and Overseas Territories Minister Gerald Darmanin asserted that "delinquents and sometimes criminals" were behind the violence. He said four mobile gendarmerie squadrons will be deployed as reinforcements including 15 gendarmes from an elite intervention unit. Local authorities also appealed for calm. The president of the Customary Senate, Victor Gogny, said the youth have the right "to express its legitimate demands and aspirations" but should strive for "dialogue and consensus." Le Franc, the high commissioner, told French broadcaster BFM that clashes between police forces and pro-independence protesters and opponents of the constitutional reform occurred overnight in Mont-Dore, a town in the southeast near the capital. Shots were fired at gendarmes "from high-caliber weapons and hunting rifles," he said. He said the situation remained "extremely tense."

EU agrees on a new migration pact

BRUSSELS (AP): European Union nations endorsed sweeping reforms to the bloc's failed asylum system on Tuesday as campaigning for Europe-wide elections next month gathers pace, with migration expected to be an important issue. EU government ministers approved 10 legislative parts of The New Pact on Migration and Asylum. It lays out rules for the 27 member countries to handle people trying to enter without authorization, from how to screen them to establish whether they qualify for protection to deporting them if they're not allowed to stay.

Hungary and Poland, which have long opposed any obligation for countries to host migrants or pay for their upkeep, voted against the package but were unable to block it. Mainstream political parties believe the pact resolves the issues that have divided member nations since well over 1 million migrants swept into Europe in 2015, most fleeing war in Syria and Iraq. They hope the system will starve the far right of vote-winning oxygen in the June 6-9 elections. However, the vast reform package will

only enter force in 2026, bringing no immediate fix to an issue that has fueled one of the EU's biggest political crises, dividing nations over who should take responsibility for migrants when they arrive and whether other countries should be obligated to help. Critics say the pact will let nations detain migrants at borders and fingerprint children. They say it's aimed at keeping people out and infringes on their right to claim asylum. Many fear it will result in more unscrupulous deals with poorer countries that people leave or cross to get to Europe. Europe's asylum laws have not been updated for about two decades. The system frayed and then fell apart in 2015. It was based on the premise that migrants should be processed, given asylum or deported in the country they first enter. Greece, Italy and Malta were left to shoulder most of the financial burden and deal with public discontent. Since then, the ID-check-free zone known as the Schengen Area has expanded to 27 countries, 23 of them EU members. It means that more than 400 million Europeans and visi-

tors, including refugees, are able to move without showing travel documents. Some 3.5 million migrants arrived legally in Europe in 2023. Around 1 million others were on EU territory without permission. Of the latter, most were people who entered normally via airports and ports with visas but didn't go home when they expired. The pact applies to the remaining minority, estimated at around 300,000 migrants last year. They are people caught crossing an external EU border without permission, such as those reaching the shores of Greece, Italy or Spain via the Mediterranean Sea or Atlantic Ocean on boats provided by smugglers. The country on whose territory people land will screen them at or near the border. This involves identity and other checks -- including on children as young as 6. The information will be stored on a massive new database, Eurodac. This screening should determine whether a person might pose a health or security risk and their chances of being permitted to stay. Generally, people fleeing conflict, persecution or violence qualify for asylum.

Those looking for jobs are likely to be refused entry. Screening is mandatory and should take no longer than seven days. It should lead to one of two things: an application for international protection, like asylum, or deportation to their home country. People seeking asylum must apply in the EU nation they first enter and stay until the authorities there work out what country should handle their application. It could be that they have family, cultural or other links somewhere else, making it more logical for them to be moved.

The border procedure should be done in 12 weeks, including time for one legal appeal if their application is rejected. It could be extended by eight weeks in times of mass movements of people. Procedures could be faster for applicants from countries whose citizens are not often granted asylum. Critics say this undermines asylum law because applicants should be assessed individually, not based on nationality. People would stay in "reception centers" while it happens, with access to health care and education.

Putin signs decree naming new Russian government

MOSCOW (AP): Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday signed a decree appointing a new government, including replacement of the defense minister with a former deputy prime minister who is an economics expert with no military background.

When Putin was inaugurated for a new six-year term on May 7, the government submitted its resignation in line with Russian law. Putin reappointed Mikhail Mishustin as prime minister three days later, which was quickly approved by the lower house of parliament. He signed a decree moving Sergei Shoigu from his post

as defense minister to head of the national security council. Putin also nominated deputy prime minister Andrei Belousov to take Shoigu's place.

Putin also proposed names for some Cabinet members to return to their posts and Mishustin submitted names for several new ministers, all of which were approved by the parliament. Shoigu has been widely seen as a key figure in Putin's decision to send Russian troops into Ukraine. Russia had expected the operation to quickly overwhelm Ukraine's much smaller and less-equipped army and for Ukrainians to

broadly welcome Russian troops. Instead, the conflict galvanized Ukraine to mount an intense defense, dealing the Russian army humiliating blows, including the retreat from an attempt to take the capital, Kyiv, and a counteroffensive that drove Moscow's forces out of the Kharkiv region. Shoigu also was shadowed by the arrest last month of deputy defense minister Timur Ivanov on charges of accepting huge bribes.

The decree by Putin largely retains the previous Cabinet, but names new energy, sports, transport, industry and agriculture ministers.

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The need for stability and local investment in Pakistan

PAKISTAN'S recent history is marred by volatility and missed opportunities for domestic investment. A poignant example is the revelation of Pakistani ownership of property worth an astonishing \$11 billion in Dubai, as highlighted by the 'Dubai Unlocked' investigative journalism project. This revelation is not just about vast sums of money moving offshore; it's a stark indicator of the lack of confidence in the stability of Pakistan's own economic and political landscape.

The issue at hand is multi-dimensional, involving the flight of capital that, under different circumstances, could have been invested in the local economy to spur development, create jobs, and bolster the nation's economic stature. Instead, what we witness is an unsettling scenario where significant Pakistani capital finds refuge in foreign lands like Dubai, which is perceived as a safer, more lucrative haven for investments.

This capital flight is symptomatic of deeper issues—primarily, the ongoing political instability, security concerns, and economic unpredictability that plague Pakistan. The recent legal debates, such as the controversy over the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) authority to block SIM cards of tax defaulters, reflect the complex interplay of governance and rights that further complicates the business environment. Such measures, while aimed at enhancing tax compliance, also raise concerns about overreach and the impact on fundamental freedoms, potentially deterring investment.

Moreover, the security situation, as illustrated by the operation in Zhob District that resulted in the martyrdom of an army major, underscores the persistent threats that destabilize regions and discourage economic engagement. In Balochistan, for example, the ongoing conflict and resultant sacrifices by security forces highlight the region's volatility that repels both local and international investors.

The economic repercussions of such instability are profound. Investments are deterred not just by the risk of financial loss but also by the unpredictability of the policy environment. The recent AJK protests and the government's response with a substantial subsidy package following intense demonstrations against inflation are a testament to the reactive rather than proactive governance that typifies the state's approach to crisis management.

In an alternative scenario where stability and robust governance prevail, the billions of dollars parked in Dubai could have been channeled into local enterprises, real estate, and development projects in Pakistan. Such investments would catalyze further economic activities, generate employment, and significantly enhance the government's tax base, creating a virtuous cycle of growth and development.

The narrative of Pakistani elites, including political figures and businessmen, parking their wealth abroad is detrimental not only to the country's economic health but also to its international image. It sends a signal that Pakistan's own leaders have limited faith in their country's stability and prospects, which in turn discourages foreign direct investment.

The solution lies in addressing the root causes of instability—be it political discord, economic mismanagement, or security challenges. Pakistan must strive for a stable and predictable political climate, bolster the rule of law, and ensure a business-friendly environment that respects property rights and contractual obligations. Transparency in governance, judicial reforms, and a consistent policy framework are essential to regain the confidence of potential investors.

In conclusion, while the allure of Dubai's real estate may be undeniable, the potential for investment in Pakistan is vast and largely untapped due to the prevailing instability. The nation's leadership needs to reflect on this scenario and pivot towards creating a conducive environment that reassures both local and expatriate Pakistanis that their homeland is indeed the best place for their investments. Only through such transformative changes can Pakistan hope to retain its capital and harness the potential to build a more prosperous future.

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The nation state may soon be a thing of the past

Nadim Shehadi

IN 50 years, future historians will look back on our times with a different perspective. What may seem to us as the rise of nationalism and populism with an authoritarian twist will have reached an endgame. What will be clear, with hindsight, is that the global order of nation states is now unraveling and is no longer viable.

But this is not how it looks today. Nationalist politicians with an agenda of putting their countries first, making them great again, closing their borders to immigration and protecting their national fabric dominate the news and often win elections. It is a global phenomenon. Nationalism threatens to break up the EU and drives conflicts that result in mass population movements.

I was born in the second half of the 1950s, when the ideal of a homogeneous nation state was at its highest. That ideal characterized the 20th century: we sang national anthems and created all things national, from football teams to philharmonic orchestras. National characteristics were being defined in newly independent states, including language, cuisine, music, literature and a proud history. You had to have a national dress, even if nobody wore it. Nations were great. Sushi was only consumed in Japan and pizza not even in all parts of Italy.

This all happened rather quickly. The ideas behind the nation state germinated in the 19th century and reached their peak in the 1870s following the unification of Germany under Bismarck and Italy under Garibaldi. It took two world wars, the fragmentation of three empires and the end of colonialism to complete the process. There were 50 states that signed the UN charter in 1945. Fifteen years later, the number had doubled, and it is now 193.

The world was rearranged to fit into the new model and the order of independent nation states that was emerging. This was accompanied by a redistribution of populations, with mass movements and demographic change.

New borders aimed to create homogeneous societies with common histories, culture and identity. If the process was glorious, it was not painless and, when the music stopped, some people, like the Kurds, the Basques and the Catalans, were left out. You cannot fit everybody in and the process included expul-

this is not driven by globalization but by demography. Like a full circle, the creation of nation states caused demographic changes and the conflicts that resulted caused even more movements of people. This in turn means that these states will never be the same again. The main reasons for these movements are vio-

demographic consequences. Other failing states are also leading sources of refugees and asylum seekers. The demographics of the new boat people show a mix of Middle East, Africa and Southeast Asia.

In the borderless world of yesterday, this would not have made much difference, as movements were slower and more readily absorbed. The UN created institutions to facilitate this movement, but they actually slowed them down and made them almost impossible. When millions of Germans were displaced from Eastern Europe post-Second World War, there was no Geneva Convention, no UN Refugee Agency and no International Organization for Migration. They were resettled faster and with far less paperwork than it takes now. The bureaucracy we see today drives a large proportion to move illegally and the phenomenon of human trafficking is on the rise.

The intended direction of population movements is toward the developed countries, which are more efficient in controlling their borders. The result is that developing countries like Sudan, often in crisis themselves, end up receiving the bulk of those forcibly displaced. Countries like Lebanon, with up to a third of its population being refugees, may be unrecognizable in a generation.

Europe and the US are desperately trying to ward off illegal immigration and confronting political crises as a result. Politicians win votes by describing immigrant caravans and fleets of small boats as an assault on their borders.

While most states see demographics as a threat and shut down their borders, perhaps some of the Arab Gulf states have the answer in their ability to accommodate foreign workforces multiple times the size of their own population.

If the phenomenon of nation states has existed for barely two centuries, that of population movements and demographic change has been a reality for millennia; it is irreversible and a main driver of historical change.

Ask the Armenians, Greeks, Turks, Jews, Germans, Palestinians, Indians and all sorts of other people who did not fit into national narratives and have had to move on over the last century or so. Turkiye and Greece and India and Pakistan exchanged populations by agreements and millions of Germans were expelled from Eastern Europe. The Armenian genocide and the Holocaust exterminated millions and the breakup of Yugoslavia came with ethnic cleansing.

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Ask the Armenians, Greeks, Turks, Jews, Germans, Palestinians, Indians and all sorts of other people who did not fit into national narratives and have had to move on over the last century or so. Turkiye and Greece and India and Pakistan exchanged populations by agreements and millions of Germans were expelled from Eastern Europe. The Armenian genocide and the Holocaust exterminated millions and the breakup of Yugoslavia came with ethnic cleansing.

But hold on, what is the fuss all about now with the apparent rise of nationalism? This did not happen as intensely as with globalization in the 1990s, so why now? If nation states were great to start with, why do we need to make them great again? What we are seeing is the end of the nation state, not the beginning.

The wars in Ukraine and Gaza will undoubtedly have unpredictable

lent conflicts or failing states and economies. A sovereign state with secure borders and a homogeneous national population and culture is a thing of the past. Furthermore, the 20th century model of excessive state spending and welfare provision also resulted in inflation and an unmanageable debt burden.

The Syrian conflict caused the largest population movement in history. Globally, according to the World Bank, more than 180 million people live outside their countries of citizenship. In 2021, 42 percent of asylum applicants in the UK were from the Middle East (three of the top five countries being Iraq, Iran and Syria) and UK Home Office data shows that, of all refugees resettled in the UK from January 2010 to December 2021, about 70 percent were Syrian citizens.

The wars in Ukraine and Gaza will undoubtedly have unpredictable

Gaza lost much more than a hospital when it lost al-Shifa

Bahzad al Akhras

LAST month, the Israeli military finally withdrew from Gaza's al-Shifa Hospital after a two-week raid, leaving behind nothing but apocalyptic scenes of death and destruction.

Grounds were littered with dead bodies. Most buildings were burned and reduced to empty shells.

What Gaza lost in al-Shifa was much more than its largest medical complex. Because Al-Shifa stood as much more than a hospital for the people of Gaza.

For members of the healthcare community, al-Shifa was home – it was where we trained, conducted research and learned. It was where we found the inspiration to become the best healers we could possibly be.

For our patients, it was a centre of hope. They knew that they would receive the best care at al-Shifa, which was far better equipped than most other hospitals in the strip.

Furthermore, al-Shifa was a popular gathering place and a national landmark. Before the genocide, it was surrounded by restaurants, libraries and two universities, all within walking distance. It was truly the beating heart of Gaza City.

Israel reduced it to burned rubble, and the site of a massacre.

Al-Shifa offered a number of unique services that people could not get anywhere else in Gaza. It had the most brilliant doctors and advanced medical instruments such as dialysis machines for kidney patients and radiological equipment. Its expert medical teams could carry out rare surgical procedures. For many decades, it stood strong among sieges, shortages of materials, and many Israeli assaults and provided lifesaving care to millions of Palestinians.

Advertisement

Al-Shifa was a hub of knowledge for medical professionals from outside Gaza. All medical teams visiting Gaza would make sure to visit al-Shifa to witness unique operations, learn about the latest developments in medicine and follow many studies being conducted there.

And, for us, doctors, medics and healthcare workers of Gaza, al-Shifa was a symbol of medical excellence and a source of inspiration as it was where Gaza's best and brightest medical professionals worked and served the community.

Al-Shifa was a symbol of our hopes for the future, but also a big part of our past. Many of us had been treated there long before the start of our medical training. It was a gem that everyone in Gaza was immensely proud of. Its destruction was an indescribable loss.

"I could not hold back my tears upon witnessing the damage here," Dr Marwan Abu Sada, a well-known surgical consultant, said following a visit to the medical complex after Israel's assault.

"I did not shed tears for my own home being damaged, but for the destruction of the hospital, and for all the medical staff and the wounded people in Gaza," he added.

I share his feelings of loss and devastation and I

know many other healthcare workers do too.

Israel had long threatened al-Shifa, but so many of us didn't believe, didn't imagine destruction on the scale we eventually witnessed could happen. I cannot begin to describe the shock of seeing al-Shifa, the heart of Gaza's healthcare system, in flames.

Israel knew that attacks on al-Shifa would violate international law and the Geneva Convention, so it lied and said there was a military "operations base" under it. After spending weeks ransacking the complex, the Israeli military failed to provide any evidence to support this claim. But it did not matter – al-Shifa was destroyed, and another aspect of this ongoing genocide was justified.

The purpose of Israel's attack on al-Shifa was not to achieve a military advantage against its enemy, but to worsen the suffering of the Palestinian people. The attack took away from the people of Gaza their main refuge at a time when they are facing multiple threats. It displaced once again thousands of refugees taking shelter there. It left people maimed by bombs and snipers, children pulled from under the rubble, hungry infants and fragile elders without access to healthcare. The attack transformed a place of healing and safety into a site of massacres and mass graves. It made a mockery of international law and exposed Israel's cruelty.

When Israel destroyed our homes, it was a horrific loss. But the destruction of al-Shifa was an even bigger tragedy for many of us.

It was not only a personal loss, but also a collective one.

With al-Shifa gone, we are left with an incurable wound. What will we do now, what can we do, and how can we rebuild after the very heart of our society has been ripped out?

Israel destroyed all of Gaza's universities and ensured that the majority of its hospitals were non-functional.

It turned al-Shifa into a pile of rubble. It killed countless medics, nurses, doctors and academic clinicians.

So many others had to evacuate to stay alive. Most recently, we received the tragic news of the killing of Dr Adnan al-Bursh, director of the orthopaedic department at al-Shifa, following his kidnapping and interrogation by Israeli soldiers. Those of us still in Gaza can do nothing other than sit and wait to see who will be killed next, or which vital building will be targeted. This is no life.

As we hope for Israel's war on Gaza to come to an end, and a ceasefire agreement to be reached, we also fear what will happen next – what will life in Gaza look like after this genocide, what will it look like without al-Shifa, and can we rebuild our health sector after all the losses we experienced? We know that we cannot replace al-Shifa, at least in the short term. But we can keep alive what it represented: our hopes for a better future, and the strength and resilience of our community.

A united Arab stance is becoming increasingly vital

Dr. Khaled Manzlawiy

THE Arab League, a union of Arab states, collaborates on political and economic issues to foster Arab solidarity. Continuous efforts are needed to develop and revitalize joint Arab action. The Arab League plays a crucial role in enhancing cooperation among its members, particularly at the economic level, to address the challenges stemming from international crises.

Against this backdrop, the Arab League Summit that will be held in Manama on Thursday aims to bolster Arab fraternal partnerships and comprehensive solutions to current crises and challenges, notably the Palestinian cause. It is essential for the summit to establish a unified Arab stance on the conflict in Gaza and reflect the Arab people's yearning for

unity, security, stability, peace and sustainable development.

The agenda of the summit in Bahrain will have to accommodate developments in the region and elsewhere in the world. Overall, the Arab League Summit could be an opportunity for leaders to take steps to turn the organization from a symbolic regional bloc to a more influential one. This could involve increasing collaboration and coordination between Arab states in more concrete terms and strengthening and expanding the league's institutional capabilities.

However, the most crucial step could be revisiting the Arab League's founding principles and mission to ensure its relevance in the current geopolitical climate. This action is of the utmost importance and urgency, as it could shape the future of the organization and its role in

the region. It remains to be seen whether the Arab League can become an effective platform for regional collaboration or if it continues struggling to coordinate a common approach to the region's most pressing challenges.

The dire situation in the Gaza Strip underscores the significance of Israel's partners and allies applying pressure on it to halt its military operations targeting innocent civilians. These actions not only violate international laws, treaties and agreements but also underscore the international community's failure to secure a ceasefire or curb Israeli aggression.

Amid growing global unpredictability, it is imperative for the Arab world to confront its challenges and shape its destiny. In a region where conflict and its aftermath threaten stability, a united Arab stance becomes increasingly vital

to navigate the turbulent landscape.

The challenges facing our region have subjected Arab peoples to unprecedented threats to their security and safety, causing widespread anxiety about the present and the future. In such turbulent times, the unity of the state and the fortification of its institutions are not merely obligatory but a sacred duty. Allowing the hopes of the Arab people to be jeopardized by chaos and external interventions that exacerbate unrest and impede conflict resolution efforts will lead to further destabilization. It falls upon us to ensure the stability and prosperity of our nation.

A crucial aspect is the imperative to endorse solutions based on political consensus for resolving crises in certain Arab countries. This necessitates promoting inclusive dia-

logue and national reconciliation, while vehemently opposing any meddling in the internal affairs of states. Upholding their sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity is paramount in this endeavor.

Furthermore, safeguarding peace and stability in the Arab region is paramount for the well-being of nations and populations within the area. This not only contributes to global peace but also underpins economic growth worldwide and secures the stability of the energy supply.

The most effective remedy for these challenges lies in establishing a robust Arab regional order. With mounting issues in the region, Arab states face an escalating need to shield their populations from internal strife and detrimental foreign influences.

Amid the escalating challenges, divisions are deepening and geopolitical

tensions are on the rise. It is imperative for the Arab League to enhance its regulations to foster collaboration on global public goods, ensure fair competition and provide adequate protection for the most vulnerable. In navigating the evolving global landscape, Arab states must draw lessons from both successful and unsuccessful endeavors of the past.

In conclusion, as the region undergoes a profound reevaluation, it is essential to address the existential global threats, including significant disruptions to economic and financial systems, trade relations and the imperative to avert unchecked fragmentation. Arab states must prioritize unity and collaboration to effectively address the Palestinian cause and work toward a future where Palestinians can enjoy peace, security and self-determination in their own independent state.

Not even the US govt knows the US government line on Rafah

Belén Fernández

IN an interview on Sunday with NBC News, United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken was questioned about President Joe Biden's recent threat to withhold offensive weaponry from Israel in the event of an all-out assault on Rafah, the city in the southern Gaza Strip where more than 1.4 Palestinians are sheltering.

When asked by the interviewer what exactly Biden's "red line" is and "what would trigger him to say, 'I am now withholding weapons,'" Blinken responded: "Look, we don't talk about red lines when it comes to Israel."

This was a curious statement, to say the least, since Biden himself has talked about red lines when it comes to Israel. During an interview with CNN last week, the president laid out the latest red line with characteristic eloquence: "I made it clear that if they [the Israelis] go into Rafah – they haven't gone in Rafah yet – if they go into Rafah, I'm not supplying the weapons that have been used historically to deal with Rafah, to deal with the cities – that deal with that problem."

Clear, indeed.

Clarity, it turns out, was also an ostensible aim of Blinken's NBC intervention – and, after announcing "Let me be clear", the secretary went on to explain that "what the president said is that if Israel goes in with a major military operation in Rafah, in that case, there are certain systems that we will not provide to Israel that would aid in – aid that effort."

In other words, perhaps, a red line.

But while it appears that not even the US government knows what the US government line is on Rafah, officials seem fairly uniformly committed to ignoring the fact that Israel has long been conducting a "major military operation" in the city – just as it has been doing in the rest of the Gaza Strip since October 7.

After all, there's no such thing as a selective genocide. And the idea that Rafah has somehow been spared the past seven-plus months of continuous US-backed slaughter is patently ludicrous. Officially, the Israeli war has killed more than 35,000 Palestinians although the true death toll is without a doubt far higher given the number of corpses buried beneath rubble and otherwise disappeared. The United States's sudden professed concern for civilians in Rafah – many of whom were forced to flee to the city from other parts of Gaza – raises the obvious question of why Palestinian civilians weren't a red line from the get-go.

Recall that the US Congress approved \$26bn in supplemental wartime aid to Israel just last month, ie more than half a year into the genocide. Of course, this money was authorised on top of the billions of dollars that the US already sends the country on an annual basis.

When on May 8 US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin confirmed that the Biden administration had paused a shipment to Israel of 3,500 bombs due to concerns over a Rafah offensive, he took care to specify that the pause would do nothing to affect the \$26bn. And a recent

Department of State report paved the way for ongoing arms transfers to Israel despite finding it likely that US-supplied weapons had been used in a manner "inconsistent" with international law.

So much for red lines – or the notion that Biden is somehow being tough with Israel.

For his part, the US ambassador to Israel, Jack Lew, has stressed that only a single shipment of "one set of munitions" has been suspended and "everything else keeps flowing" – an indication, he said, that nothing has "fundamentally changed in the relationship" between the US and Israel.

Furthermore, the ambassador noted, the Israeli military has not yet commenced whatever sort of behaviour in Rafah would be required to trigger opposition from the US – which continues to insist that the Israeli operation in and around the city is of "limited" nature despite all manner of blood-drenched evidence to the contrary. The Times of Israel quotes Lew as remarking that the Rafah operation has thus far not "crossed over into the area where our disagreements lie, I'm hoping we don't end up with real disagreements."

But if you agree that genocide in general is fundamentally OK, what else is even left to disagree about? Now if only US officials could agree what the official policy is.

In honour of the current spectacle in Washington, the Axios news website has compiled a predictably brief "history of US presidents drawing red lines with Israel", which lists exactly three

US heads of state aside from Biden. One of these is Ronald Reagan, who in 1981 delayed two shipments of F-16 fighter jets to the Israelis – and whose own administration would become increasingly divided over its Israeli policy.

The following year, after apparently interpreting mixed US signals as a green light, Israel invaded Lebanon with the help of American-made weapons, slaughtering tens of thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians. Over three days alone in September 1982, the Israeli military supervised the Sabra and Shatila massacre of up to several thousand civilians and refugees outside the Lebanese capital, Beirut.

What was that about "drawing red lines"?

Fast forward more than four decades, and the US-Israeli relationship remains as special as ever – even as contradictory rhetoric continues to spew from the US political establishment. Ultimately, all the confusion over whether there's a red line in Rafah serves to distract from the reality that the US remains fully on board with genocide, notwithstanding intermittent noises about reigning in Israeli excesses.

Meanwhile, the illusion that there has been some sort of meaningful falling-out between the US and its Israeli partner in crime is bolstered by right-wing suggestions in both countries that Biden and Hamas are hopelessly in love with each other – which merely does the disservice of making Biden & Co seem slightly less genocidal.

And as conflicting chatter carries on in Washington, Israel keeps on killing.

Is technology undermining our mental well-being?

Mohamed Chebaro

HAVE you been waking up with a heavy chest, collapsing shoulders and a sense of despair at the state of our cruel world? It seems that modern life, its tools and bad habits have maybe caught up with you. And you are not alone. Apparently, modernity and our new technology-infested world is damaging our mental well-being, particularly in rich countries.

So, what is happening to humans' mental well-being? Increasingly, research is pointing to people feeling more distressed and suffering than thriving.

Human nature has always been anchored in rather negative and ungrateful sentiments, so maybe that is increasingly the case nowadays. Today, we all live in a

mental health, it also taps into our global sense of despair and shows that, no matter if you ask people from the Global South or the Global North, it seems that we all tend to share a sense that life is visibly and obviously spiraling.

The new report collected data from more than 500,000 respondents in 13 languages and across 71 countries, assessing their cognitive and emotional capabilities, as well as tapping into participants' ability to navigate the stresses of life and function productively. It stated that our mental health has not shown any improvement in the last year and remains at its post-pandemic low. The report also raises important questions about how the way we live and work

health.

If anything, the study's findings reconfirmed the already widely shared fears that owning a smartphone at a young age, not paying attention to one's diet and failing to nurture friendships and family life are all contributing factors to our poorer mental health and well-being.

I have long believed in the common good for all, naively maybe. But through education, adequate healthcare and economic opportunities, coupled with doses of justice and some liberties, individuals will feel stable and secure enough to participate, contribute and play a role in their own prosperity and that of their nation, regardless of how democratic or despotic the form of government.

In addition, I attach great importance to the

Some blame the internet, others processed foods, others economic disparities or a dozen other reasons. However, I believe that glaring inequalities, magnified by our super-connected digital world, surely has something to do with the decline in our mental well-being. Above all, I believe that an erosion of trust, especially in our state system and its many institutions, plays a key role. These institutions used to mediate some of the disparities engrained in our societies, such as between rich and poor, with varying degrees of success. Strangely, the fourth "Mental State of the World Report," which is part of the Global Mind Project and highlights trends and insights on the mental well-being of internet-enabled populations around the globe, was hardly reported when it was published in March.

rather challenging and adversity-ridden world, amid geopolitical clashes among big powers, weaker leadership, rising uncertainties and diminishing resources. These are just some of the factors that are pushing citizens everywhere to feel on edge.

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This is despite it being one of the most comprehensive tools to inform us about how humanity is coping in the ever-evolving states and societies of today's world.

Most importantly, even though the report identifies smartphones and ultra-processed foods as being conducive to poorer

has evolved and the way that the emerging trends of remote work, online communication and the consumption of ultra-processed foods have cumulatively pushed us into a space of poorer mental well-being.

According to the report's findings, the younger generation, particularly those aged under 35, saw the steepest declines in mental well-being.

For today's 18 to 24-year-olds — the first generation born into a world of the internet, smartphones and social media — the younger they were when they first got connected, the worse their mental health is in adulthood.

The report gave the example that 74 percent of female respondents aged 18 to 24 who got their smartphone at age six had scores that were within the "distressed or struggling" range. This decreased to 61 percent for those who acquired their first smartphone at age 10 and 52 percent at age 15.

Another key finding of the report was that greater wealth and economic development do not necessarily lead to improved mental well-being.

As seen in the past few years, those faring best were largely from Latin American and African countries, while many wealthier countries from the "core Anglosphere," such as the UK and Australia, fared worse. This, the report stressed, runs counter to the common perception that wealth enhances mental

state fulfilling its contract as per its raison d'être, which is to ensure the happiness, well-being and protection of its subjects. Sadly, in today's world, a deficient state system has been fueling the uncertainties strongly felt by people both young and old, whether they are regularly connected to the internet or not. The calls to regulate the digital realm to ensure better accountability and transparency in a way that reduces harm to everyone are becoming increasingly urgent, as per this report's findings.

Efforts should also be refocused to hold the state accountable to society in a way that curbs its tendencies to give market forces carte blanche to exploit all in the name of profit — even if that means putting up guardrails that are primarily aimed at protecting the weak and vulnerable, especially children.

Over decades, and despite the multitude of conflicts and the tons of blood and flesh wasted, lessons ought to have been learned regarding the need for leadership and the state to tame human selfishness, extreme competitiveness and excesses.

Our mental health and increased levels of despair thrive on uncertainties, whether social, economic or political. Turn on the news or open your smartphone feed at any moment of the day and you will quickly understand why our mental health is in decline and people are feeling more desperate than ever.

How Israel can be restrained as it eyes an attack on Lebanon

Dr. Dania Koleilat Khatib

ISRAELI Defense Minister Yoav Gallant last week warned of a "hot summer" with Lebanon. He said that Hezbollah had been pushed away from the border areas but it had not "disappeared." This implies that, after Rafah, Israel will go north and hit Lebanon, hoping to weaken Hezbollah and prevent it from reconstituting itself, at least in the short to medium term. However, Hezbollah is not Hamas. It is far more powerful. Hezbollah is also far more important to Iran than Hamas. All this means that a war with Lebanon would turn into a regional war.

A war has many unforeseeable consequences. Wars are endeavors usually undertaken with a high degree of uncertainty. Regarding Hezbollah, the uncertainty for Israel is the greatest. Despite the different assessments and intelligence reports, no one really knows Hezbollah's capabilities. It is said that the group has 200,000 missiles, many of which are precision-guided. Does anyone know how the group operates its arsenal? Can it fire them simultaneously, hence overwhelming Israel's Iron Dome defense system? What is the range of Hezbollah's missiles? Can they reach Haifa or Tel Aviv? No one really knows.

Waging a war would be a big risk, especially if Iran gives Hezbollah its air defenses. So far, Iran has kept its air defense system on its own territory. However, late last year, reports started emerging that Iran was planning to supply its Khordad-15 advanced medium-to-high-altitude air defense missile system to its proxies in Syria and Lebanon. If this is as effective as Iran claims it to be, this would be a game-changer in any potential fight with Israel. One thing is for sure, for Iran, Hezbollah is its first line of defense against Israel. Protecting Hezbollah means protecting Iran. Tehran will mobilize Hezbollah if attacked and will also use all its

capabilities to protect the group.

A war on Lebanon would definitely not be a walk in the park. What any observer can deduct is that Hezbollah does not want war. However, parties usually go to war not because they want to or because it is in their interests to do so, but because they have no other choice.

Iran will not watch its main deterrence get destroyed. It will mobilize. The report about the transfer of its air defense system shows that Iran will not spare any tool to defend the group.

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Hence, the US should make sure to tame Israel. So far, Israel has been unhinged. Despite the calls not to enter Rafah, Tel Aviv gave the US a slap in the face and is now conducting an assault. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last week bluntly rebuked American President Joe Biden and said Israel would conduct the incursion with or without the US' blessing.

A regional war would definitely not help Biden in the upcoming presidential election. A recent poll conducted by The New York Times showed that Biden is trailing Trump in five key states, as young and non-

white voters are dissatisfied with the economy and his handling of the war in Gaza. Hence, the US should coerce Israel into stopping the war, or at least prevent a strike on Lebanon. An attack on Lebanon would lead to a regional war and would not eradicate Hezbollah. It can merely give Israel five to 10 years of peace of mind. After an Israeli strike, the group might be busy reconstituting itself and managing internal divisions, but it would not go away.

Therefore, a strike on

Maybe not. However, the stakes are really high for the US and for Biden personally.

Though the US and its regional allies do not want the war to spread to Lebanon, they do not want to hand a win to Iran. They definitely do not want to see Hamas or Hezbollah emerge victorious. On the other hand, the Israelis might say that they need assurance that what happened on Oct. 7 will never happen at their northern border. In this respect, the US should work hard to make sure there is a solid buffer between Israel and Hezbollah — a buffer that cannot be broken and that will restrict the freedom of Hezbollah to operate in the south of Lebanon, while also restraining Israel.

Perhaps the Kosovo model should be revisited. Kosovo was successful because it had one strong state that was ready to deploy: the US. Hence, no one wanted to mess around with the Americans. The US should invite a strong state to be the core of any buffer between Lebanon and Israel. It would also be the security guarantor. A security guarantor that can make sure Hezbollah keeps its arms in the basement and that keeps Israel from attacking Lebanon or breaching its airspace.

The risks are too high and the current arrangement, which is led by the UN Interim Force in Lebanon, is not enough. If anything happened to break the status quo, who would be held responsible? The UN? The individual observers? The UN mission alone cannot make sure that both parties abide by UN Security Council Resolution 1701. There is a need for a security guarantor.

I suggested in a previous article Türkiye could play this role. This would also help balance out the Iranian influence. In a nutshell, the US should make sure to impose a buffer that removes the possibility of a war on Lebanon. Again, if a war were launched on Lebanon, it would not just be Lebanon at stake but the entire region.

Khalid Rahman

WHILE the Chinese Economic Corridor projects have yielded tangible benefits for the local economy and its people, recent attacks targeting the CPEC should serve as a cause for serious concern. Despite the enduring ironclad friendship between the two nations, the security issue must be prioritized.

The killing of seven workers in the Pakistani coastal city of Gwadar in Balochistan province on May 9 hit the headlines around the world. A few weeks earlier, 11 people were shot dead in two separate incidents in Balochistan.

The fact that all the seven victims in Gwadar and the nine bus passengers who were gunned

down near Noshki were from Punjab province adds an ethnic dimension to the incidents, especially because the Baloch Liberation Army, designated a terror group, has been openly threatening to target people from Punjab. However, this viewpoint is too simplistic because Pakistan is facing a multidimensional terrorist threat.

In the context of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and its extraordinary importance for Balochistan, Gwadar in particular, and Chinese nationals working on projects there, it would not be wrong to say the killings are a continuation of the attempts to create instability in Pakistan to check the progress of the CPEC and damage China-Pakistan relations.

On March 26, five

Chinese nationals and a Pakistani citizen were killed in a suicide attack on a vehicle carrying Chinese staff working on the Dasu Dam in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Similar attacks happened in 2021 and 2022, too.

Each of these incidents has its own specific dynamics, with the identity and motivation of the perpetrators and facilitators varying. However, given the current global and regional situations, it wouldn't be wrong to assume that the masterminds of the attacks want to cause instability in Pakistan. Their other objectives include derailing the CPEC projects and straining Sino-Pakistani ties.

While these incidents attract global attention, they cause severe con-

cerns in China, undermining its confidence in investing in development projects in Pakistan, eroding the trust between the two governments and weakening the spirit of Chinese investors and workers engaged in Pakistan.

Beijing's reaction to the incidents has been firm. After the March 26 Dasu attack, Beijing called for a "thorough investigation", insisting on forming a joint investigation team. The Chinese embassy in Islamabad demanded that Pakistan take practical and effective measures to improve the situation. Although it was reassuring to see the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson emphasize that as all-weather strategic cooperative partners, China and Pakistan's

cooperation cannot be sabotaged by any attempt, several Chinese companies suspended work on their projects. They resumed operations only after security was beefed up and the Pakistani prime minister visited the Chinese workers at the Dasu site and promised to make "foolproof" security arrangements and hand down "exemplary punishment" to the attackers.

There is no doubt there have been administrative failures and security lapses, and strict measures are required at every level to safeguard China-Pakistan interests and, most importantly, protect human lives. As such, a comprehensive joint strategy is needed to address the situation.

Security issues are not a new phenomenon in

Pakistan, and there are many internal, regional and international reasons for that. As a matter of fact, terrorism attacks were more frequent and deadly when the CPEC was negotiated and launched. Nevertheless, the two countries agreed to launch the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative because of their mutual trust and a desire to achieve common development.

In the years that followed, Pakistan achieved remarkable success in curbing terrorism, but could not uproot all terrorist groups. In fact, the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan in August 2021 made the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, an amalgam of several terrorist groups, even stronger thanks to the release of prisoners

and terrorists getting access to the sophisticated weapons and equipment left behind by the Americans. Although there is little common between the Afghan Taliban and Baloch terrorist organizations, the room for cooperation with various elements of the TTP at the tactical level has increased compared with the past.

On the other hand, with polarization and instability being at their peak in Pakistan, economic, security and social vulnerabilities have increased, creating governance issues and slowing the pace of the CPEC projects. Apart from creating a favorable environment for terrorist outfits, the situation has also made it easy for outsiders to interfere in Pakistan's internal affairs, especially to sabotage the

CPEC projects and ruin Pakistan-China friendship in order to fulfill their own narrow goals.

Despite the evil designs of the anti-Pakistan and anti-China forces, however, the Chinese and Pakistani peoples' opinions about each other remain positive. In the case of Pakistan, where almost everything is debated, successive public opinion surveys and political discourse verify this fact.

There is indeed a need to ensure the safety of workers and projects by strengthening security and taking administrative measures, but those moves should be accompanied by a comprehensive strategy in order to maintain an environment of mutual trust at the public and government levels.



Aleem: Govt taking steps to facilitate investment

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has said that the government was trying its best to facilitate investment in the country.

He said that the government was making it easier for the business community to start new initiatives, said a press release issued here Wednesday.

Expressed his views while addressing as Chief Guest at the 16th All Pakistan Chambers Presidents' Conference organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, he said that the Board of Investment was providing

fast-track platforms of "Ease of Doing Business" and "One Stop Shop" which would ultimately boost investment in the country.

"According to the business trends of the world, we also have to make changes in our system", he said adding that it is not the government's job to do business but its responsibility is to provide all kinds of facilities to the business class and create a congenial environment which can attract investment.

Abdul Aleem Khan further said that when business flourishes it will automatically increase foreign exchange reserves and benefits will reach the common man at the grassroots level. He said that the govern-

ment has decided to privatise 24 institutions, in which PIA is at the top while the privatisation of PIA will be shown live on TV, as well.

He assured that transparency will be ensured at all costs in the privatisation of all projects including PIA, for which we will also seek help from the media.

Abdul Aleem Khan further said that if a better environment is provided in Pakistan, investors will be immediately interested as so far many leading business groups have contacted for the privatization of PIA.

Appreciating the role of the Chamber of Commerce, Abdul Aleem Khan said that this forum should continue to play a positive role

in maximum investment in the country. He congratulated the Chamber for organizing the 16th All Pakistan Chambers Presidents' Conference.

President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce Saqib Rafique said that the Special Investment Facilitation Council is playing an important role in economic improvement and restoring the confidence of the business community.

Group Leader Sohail Aftab highlighted that the confidence of local and foreign investors has to be restored.

Presidents of Chambers of four Provinces, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan and Presidents of Women's Chambers participated.

Meezan Bank certified as first PCI 3DS standard compliant bank

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Risk Associates, Pakistan's leading PCI Qualified Security Assessor (QSA), has recently announced Meezan Bank's certification with the PCI 3DS (Payment Card Industry Three Domain Secure) standard. This milestone positions Meezan Bank, the country's Premier Islamic bank, as the first in Pakistan to attain such an accreditation.

The certification ceremony was held at Meezan House, Karachi where Mr. Aziz A. Rahim - Chief Operating Officer of Risk Associates presented the PCI 3DS Certificate of Compliance to Mr. Faiz Ur Rehman - Group Head Information Technology,

Syed Fahd Azam - CISO & Head Information Security and Syed Iftikhar Ul Haq - Group Head Consumer Finance, from Meezan Bank.

The certification highlights Meezan Bank's focus on maintaining a secure banking infrastructure that ensures data protection and provides secure transactions for its clientele. Aimed at mitigating online transaction fraud, this accreditation follows a thorough evaluation, ensuring compliance of the Bank's systems with the PCI 3DS protocol that has been mandated by the Payment Card Industry Security Standards Council. The 3DS protocol serves as an additional layer of security, that

authenticates consumers with their card issuer during online purchases.

Commenting on this achievement, Kashif Hassan - Managing Director of Risk Associates, applauds Meezan Bank as the first bank in Pakistan to achieve PCI 3DS certification at present. It signifies Meezan Bank's commitment to implementing robust security measures.

"We are pleased to certify Meezan Bank with the PCI 3DS standard," said Aziz A. Rahim - Chief Operating Officer at Risk Associates. "This achievement highlights Meezan Bank's dedication to ensuring the security and integrity of its digital transactions, setting a benchmark for other financial institutions

in Pakistan."

Risk Associates congratulates Meezan Bank on this milestone and remains committed to promoting a secure digital ecosystem in Pakistan through its certification and compliance services.

While speaking at the occasion, Mr. Faiz Ur Rehman - Group Head, Information Technology at Meezan Bank said, "This achievement reflects our ongoing commitment to safeguarding our customers' financial well-being. As the first bank in the country to achieve PCI 3DS certification, Meezan Bank remains steadfast in providing our customers with the highest standards of security and reliable banking services."

APL opens its flagship Park View Fuel Station at New Blue Area

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: One of the leading fuel retail brands in Pakistan, Attock Petroleum Limited organized the inauguration of its flagship Park View Fuel Station at New Blue Area, Islamabad. The fuel station was inaugurated by the Chief Guest Mr. Masroor Khan, Chairman OGRA, in attendance of a number of other government officials and Attock Petroleum Management.

At the inauguration, Shuaib A. Malik, the Group Chief Executive for Attock Group of Companies expanded on Attock Petroleum's vision for fueling progress and development in Pakistan. "Today, with over 800 retail outlets and extensive storage as well as transportation network, APL is committed to contributing to the nation's development by not only meeting the unique demands of the region but also catering effectively to the requirements of an international clientele. APL takes great pride in serving its customers nationwide and on more than 50% of

the motorways. With the recent incorporation of storage terminal in D.I Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, APL has enhanced the storage capacity of the nation making the supply chain of the country stronger. With a focus on sustainability, Attock Petroleum is also taking the lead in delivering EV charger services in the twin cities. The establishment of the Park View Fuel Station is a part of the PKR 5 billion investment by Attock Petroleum Limited for expanding its presence in Islamabad. Delivering superior customer service and ensuring safe environment is a priority for Attock Petroleum and addition of another flagship company operated site will go a long way in value delivery in Islamabad."

From Attock Oil Group of Companies, Mr. Sajid Nawaz, the Managing Director of Pakistan Oilfields Limited, and Mr. Adil Khattak, CEO of Attock Refinery Limited, were also present at the inauguration. The inauguration was attended by the



Director of Explosives from the Petroleum Division was also present at the event apart from officials from various departments of the Capital Development Authority. The government officials praised Attock Petroleum for leading from the front in establishing fuel stations in

sectors that may become the central focus for economic development in Islamabad.

The Park View Fuel Station is the only filling station at the New Blue Area, Islamabad, which is leading the way as the sector is under development for its future shape.

PPAF, NCSW unite for women's empowerment in Pakistan

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) and the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) have entered into a strategic partnership, marking a significant milestone in Pakistan's journey towards gender equality and economic empowerment. This alliance reflects a joint effort to harness the potential of women as catalysts for change. Signing a Letter of Intent (LOI) in Islamabad, CEO PPAF Nadir Gul Barech and NCSW Chairperson Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar were the signatories of this momentous document. The ceremony was attended by the representatives from academia, media, and civil society organizations.

Through this partnership, PPAF and NCSW will initiate a series of programs aimed at advancing women's social and economic empowerment safeguarding their constitutional

and fundamental human rights. These initiatives include advocacy efforts with the Women's Parliamentary Caucus to promote gender-equal policies, as well as inter-ministerial dialogues to address barriers hindering women's economic participation. Additionally, Both organisations aimed collectively to take forward the initiatives of partner organisation Dukhtar-e-Pakistan across the country. It was agreed that collaborative research initiatives with academia and research institutions will explore avenues for women's involvement in poverty reduction, economic growth, digitalization, participatory development, and climate change response.

CEO PPAF Nadir Gul Barech highlighted the transformative power of collective action in empowering women and creating a more equitable society. He expressed profound optimism about the partnership's potential to catalyze tangible change, enriching the lives

of women across Pakistan and nurturing a future defined by equal opportunities and prospects for exploring their hidden potential. Nadir Gul also shared that since inception, PPAF has established linkages and partnerships with civil society organizations, community-based organizations and engaged with international donors to serve the most marginalized communities in Pakistan. Till date PPAF has formed 94,000 women's community institutions to promote leadership skills in community women, helping them to contribute towards conflict resolution and peacebuilding. To ensure women's economic empowerment and build sustainable livelihoods, the organization has provided 128,400 productive assets, 125 matching grants to small and medium enterprises, 1,738,000 interest-free loans, and vocational/enterprise development training to 222,000 women, he further added.

Chairperson Nilofar Bakhtiar praised the collabo-

ration as a landmark in promoting gender equality in Pakistan which is prerequisite for achieving sustainable development goals and creating a tolerant and peaceful society. She emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to create an enabling environment for women to contribute to an economically stable Pakistan. She expressed the need for private and government institutions to implement the National and provincial policies on Gender Equality for ensuring gender responsive institutions that serve men and women according to their distinct needs. Nilofar Bakhtiar highlighted that this strategic collaboration between PPAF and NCSW underscores Pakistan's commitment to advancing gender parity, empowering women and fostering inclusive growth and development. A society that treats its women as equals encourages lasting peace and prosperity and together NCSW and PPAF will strive for it.



KHUZDAR: Participants of Bolan Mining Enterprises' internship programme with Pakistan Petroleum Limited and Local Government officials at BME facility during concluding ceremony.

PSX stays bullish, gains 132.79 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 132.79 points, a positive change of 0.18 per cent, closing at 74,663.98 points against 73,531.19 points the previous trading day.

A total of 572,420,772 shares valuing Rs 25.947 billion were traded during the day as compared to 574,182,210 shares valuing Rs 23.425 billion on the last day.

Some 382 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 148 of them recorded gains and 213 sustained losses, whereas the prices of 21 remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were The State Company with 41,142,937 shares at Rs59.39 per share, Hum Network with 35,681,587 shares at Rs 9.95 per share and World Call Telecom with 32,673,166 shares at Rs 1.40 per share.

Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 73.42 per share price closing at Rs 7,380, whereas the runner-up was Ismail Industries Limited with Rs 59.21 increase to close at Rs 1,444.78.

Service Industries Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 48.88 per share closing at Rs 784.77, followed by Hallmark Company Limited with Rs 46.05 decline to close at Rs 567.89.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port, where seven ships-Maersk Columbus, Capricorn, Scorpio Glory, Zhe Hai-511, Asia Inspire, Victoria Kosan, and Jag Pavitra-were scheduled to load and offload containers of iron ore, rice, coal, palm oil, chemicals, and mogas at the Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, Grain Terminal, Liquid Terminal, and Oil Terminal, respectively, on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, two more ships, Ammos and Alba Gas, carrying steel coil and LPG, also arrived at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

A total of nine ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours; out of them, two ships, Maersk Columbus and PH Giang Minh, left the port today morning, while two more ships, Victoria Kosan and Horizon-1, are expected to sail today afternoon.

A cargo volume of 75,404 metric tons, comprising 46,443 metric tons of import cargo and 28,961 metric tons of export cargo, was carried in 2,339 containers (806 TEU imports and 1,533 TEU exports) handled at the port during the last 24 hours.

There are nine ships at the outer anchorage of Port Qasim; out of them, three ships, Scio Spirit, HV Alice, and Alba Gas, and another ship, Maersk Cabo Verde, carrying palm kernels, coal, palm oil, LPG, and containers, are expected to take berths at MW-1, PIBT, SSGC, and QICF today, while two more container ships, Addison and San Diego Bridge, are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Thursday.

BME concludes internship programme

F.P. Report

KHUZDAR, Balochistan: Bolan Mining Enterprises (BME), a pioneering mining joint venture between Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) and Government of Balochistan, has successfully concluded an intensive 8-week internship programme designed to nurture local talent and empower young graduates from the region.

The programme, a testament to BME's longstanding commitment to community development and fostering skilled professionals for the mineral sector, saw 25 graduates' participation, including seven women, for the first time,

marking a progressive step towards gender inclusivity and diversity within the traditionally male-dominated field.

The ceremony, held at BME's facility in Khuzdar, was graced by PPL's Chief Operating Officer, Mr. Sikandar Ali Memon. In his address, he underscored BME's unwavering dedication to nurturing young talent and equipping them with the requisite skills and knowledge to excel in the dynamic field of resource extraction and management through hands-on training and on-job experience.

He also distributed certificates amongst graduating interns, comprising individuals from diverse

educational backgrounds such as engineering, geology and management sciences.

Throughout the internship programme that started off on March 8, the interns were provided with invaluable hands-on experience and exposure to BME's operational facilities in Khuzdar, gaining insights into the intricacies of extracting and processing barytes.

BME's internship programme stands as a beacon of hope and opportunity for the youth of Balochistan, offering a platform for skills enhancement, professional growth and meaningful engagement with the mining sector experts.

HABIBMETRO organizes roadshow on economic insights

F.P. Report

KARACHI: HABIBMETRO organized its Economic Insights Treasury Roadshow 'Changing Dynamics of Pakistan's Economy Amidst a Global Perspective' with informative sessions held in Faisalabad, Multan and Lahore.

As Pakistan's leading trade finance bank, HABIBMETRO is dedicated to facilitating trade businesses across the country. The seminars aimed to assist key trade industry professionals and decision-makers in addressing economic challenges and provided a platform for discussions on Pakistan's economic recovery within the global trade context.

"HABIBMETRO's role as a leading trade finance bank underscores our commitment to fostering financial intermediation, and catalyzing trade and economic growth in Pakistan. With this roadshow, we aim to equip our clients with expert insights, enrich their understanding of the evolving economic landscape,

and foster constructive dialogue," said Khurram Shahzad Khan, President and CEO of HABIBMETRO.

Renowned economist Mr. Sakib Sherani shared his expert analysis on the economy and offered insights on the path to economic recovery, highlighting Pakistan's progress towards gradual macroeconomic stability. "An expected IMF arrangement in the coming months will unlock additional bilateral and multilateral financing opportunities, likely stabilizing the external account. This will support exchange rate stability and reinforce anticipated disinflationary trends in the economy," said Sherani.

Syed Ali Sultan, Group CEO of Global Financial Institutions at Habib Bank AG Zurich, shared his expert insights on the evolving global economic landscape. "The shifting global economic environment, marked by ongoing conflicts, presents new challenges. It is crucial for stakeholders at all levels to

understand and adapt to these changes," said Sultan. Habib Bank AG Zurich (HBZ) has played a vital role in supporting Pakistan's trade during these difficult times. We believe Pakistan is moving towards gradual stability, and through HABIBMETRO, our franchise in Pakistan, HBZ will continue to serve as a responsible financial intermediary.

The HABIBMETRO Economic Insights Treasury Roadshow was well-received by key businessmen and decision-makers of the country, and concluded in Lahore on May 15, 2024.

As a trusted institution in Pakistan's financial landscape, HABIBMETRO serves millions of customers through a nationwide network of over 525 branches, including 208 dedicated Islamic Banking branches in more than 200 cities nationwide. HABIBMETRO is a subsidiary of Habib Bank AG Zurich, which operates in 11 countries across four continents.

Bank of Punjab Joins SME Finance Forum

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Bank of Punjab, a key player in Pakistan's SME banking Segment, has joined hands with SME Finance Forum (SMEFF) managed by International Finance Corporation (IFC). SMEFF is a global membership network dedicated to expanding access to finance for small and medium businesses worldwide. Notably, BOP is the only commercial bank from Pakistan to attain membership status with SMEFF.

With approximately Rs. 2.2 billion in assets and 815 branches across Pakistan, BOP has earned recognition for its excellence in SME banking. The bank has received prestigious awards such as the 'Best SME Bank in Pakistan' at the 2024 Global SME Banking Innovation Awards, the AsiaMoney 2023 Awards, and the Pakistan Banking Awards in 2022 and 2023.

Zafar Masud, President & CEO of BOP, upon attaining the membership status, expressed his enthusiasm about the collaboration and said that we are excited to enhance our commitment to empowering small and medium enterprises through our partnership with the SME Finance Forum. Together,

we will leverage innovative financial solutions to create impactful opportunities for entrepreneurs and drive sustainable growth.

Qamar Saleem, Head of SMEFF, welcomed BOP to its network, as a key player in SME banking, Bank of Punjab's innovative practices in data usage, sustainability, digital solutions, and agriculture finance

align perfectly with SMEFF's mission to drive impact in emerging markets, he added.

The primary focus of both BOP and SMEFF is to promote and accelerate the growth of SMEs. As a member, BOP will benefit from global best practices, product innovation, risk mitigation tools and strategic partnerships to attract investment and gain recognition among a community of global innovators and partners.

Rupee loses 08 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Rupee on Wednesday lost 08 paise against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.26 against the previous day's closing at Rs 278.18.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs 277.25 and Rs 279.80 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs.1.31 to close at Rs 301.24 against the last day's closing of Rs 299.93, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

COURT NOTICE

In the court of civil judge / Illaqa qazi - IV, Swat, case No. 120/1 Instituted: 5/7/2023 Next Date of Hearing 16/5/2024 Case Title Yusuf Khan versus Bakht Zara Bibi etc Publication against Defendants Razia, Chand Bibi, Amina Bibi Daughter of Dr.Niaz Mohammad Khan Residents of Lundex Mingora presently abroad In the case cited above the service of defendants are not possible in easy way, therefore, they are hereby informed through this publication to ensure his attendance personally or through their counsel or attorney on date fixed mentioned above.



In brief

Haaland tells Man City to 'relax' ahead of title race finale

LONDON (AFP): Erling Haaland has urged his Manchester City teammates to "relax" after they closed in on making English football history with a 2-0 win away to Tottenham Hotspur. Tuesday's triumph in north London saw City, courtesy of two goals from Haaland, win their game in hand as they returned to the top of the table as they moved two points clear of Arsenal. Victory at home to West Ham on Sunday's final day of the season will now assure City of a fourth successive Premier League title -- an unprecedented feat in the top tier of English football. "Yeah, fantastic mentality," Haaland told City+. "Focus on game by game and now relax. We came here to try to win and we won. Haaland opened the scoring six minutes into the second half when he tapped in from Kevin De Bruyne's pass before doubling City's lead from the penalty spot after Jeremy Doku was brought down by Pedro Porro. Spurs, however, had a chance to equalise but City reserve goalkeeper Stefan Ortega, who came on after Ederson was injured in a challenge with Cristian Romero, stood up well to deny Son Heung-min when one-on-one with the South Korean. "They're a fantastic team," Haaland said of Spurs. "You know everyone knows that they want to play all the time and all praise to them." "It was really difficult, but yeah, we came here to try and win and we won. That's my only thing and I'm happy. "I think we were a bit nervous. I think that's normal, there's a lot of emotions for everyone. "Everyone knows the situation, but it's about not thinking too much. Try to focus on your things to do and try to win." He added: "Ortega man of the match... What can I say? He's incredible and such a good guy as well, so I'm happy for him."

National Sports Conference on Friday

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination and Planning Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday announced to hold the National Sports Conference on May 17 in Islamabad. This was decided in an important meeting between IPC Minister and Federal Secretary, Nadeem Irshad Kayani. Speaking in the occasion, the Minister said the conference aims to bring together professionals, technical experts, athletes, provincial sports boards, sports federation presidents, and other stakeholders together to discuss the challenges faced in sports in Pakistan and propose recommendations for its revival, said a statement issued here. The conference is part of the government's efforts to revitalize sports in the country, following the Prime Minister's vision to declare 2025 as the 'Year of Sports'. Ahsan emphasized that the conference aims to create a constructive environment where athletes can be prepared for international competitions. He also highlighted the importance of sports in promoting mental and physical health and the government's commitment to upgrading sports infrastructure across the country. "Our goal is clear, to bring our athletes to the standard of Olympic medals and increase their performance in other international competitions," the Minister said. "The federal government, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, is taking steps for the development and improvement of sports across the country, which have started to have positive effects," he said.

Pakistan qualifies for Central Asian Volleyball League final



ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan team has reached the final of the Central Asian Volleyball League here at the Liaquat Gymnasium of Pakistan Sports Complex on Wednesday. Pakistan defeated Kyrgyzstan in the semi-finals with a convincing 3-0 set victory, winning 25-18, 27-25, 27-25. This

marks Pakistan's fourth consecutive win in the tournament.

The Pakistan Volleyball Federation is hosting the event, where Pakistan has continued its winning streak, defeating Kyrgyzstan with its aggressive gameplay.

Pakistan has already defeated Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Sri

Lanka in previous matches. In another match, Sri Lanka beat Iran by 3-0 with a score of 25-22, 25-17, 25-21.

Meanwhile, Turkmenistan outplayed Afghanistan by 3-1 in sets, winning the match 18-25, 33-31, 25-17, 25-17. Pakistan would face Iran in the final round of matches on Thursday.

Misbah: Amir's experience will be crucial in T20 WC

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Former Pakistan captain Misbah-ul-Haq has expressed his support for pace bowler Mohammad Amir, stating that his experience will be crucial for the Green Shirts in the ICC T20 World Cup 2024, beginning on 1 June.

Amir made his return to international cricket last month during the home T20I series against New Zealand after taking back his retirement.

The left-arm pacer has taken four wickets in five matches during New Zealand and recently concluded Ireland series.

Misbah-ul-Haq acknowledged that Amir may not be as effective as he once was but emphasised his potential to contribute to Pakistan with his experience.

"Last time back in 2017 in the Champions Trophy, there is quite a difference between that Amir and today's Amir. Back then, there was more pace, more swing, more zip in his bowling. But now these factors might have been slightly reduced, but there is an advantage. He has huge experience," Misbah-ul-Haq said while speaking during the Star Sports Press Room.

The former captain spoke highly of the fast bowler's skill in handling pressure and bowling in the final overs. He emphasized that Amir has demonstrated his ability to perform in high-pressure matches, especially

against India.

"And his experience as a death bowler, how to bowl under pressure and use variations. These factors will be a crucial asset in Amir's forte this time. "He might not be that effective with the new ball, but in the death, he will be crucial with his slower balls, aimed at outside the off stump.

"And lastly, comes the major factor of pressure handling. In big games, where you have previously faced big teams and won games, it is more for Amir while facing India."

Notably, Amir was part of Pakistan sides that won the T20 World Cup in 2009 under Younis Khan and Champions Trophy in 2017 under Sarfaraz Ahmed.

Pakistan wins bronze in Asian Taekwondo C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a superb display of talent and athleticism, Pakistan Poomsae team bagged a bronze medal in the over 30 event category of the Poomsae event of the Asian Taekwondo Championship at Da Nang, Vietnam. The national players comprising Shehbaz Ahmed, Mudassar Hussain and Muhammad Mumtaz reached the victory stand by showing excellent performance.

Iran won the gold

medal with 8.182 points, Vietnam won the silver medal with 7.630, whereas Chinese Taipei & Pakistan got the bronze medal with 7.583 and 7.533 points.

Saudi Arabia was fifth with 7.299 points and the Indian team finished in sixth position with 6.349 points. Master Seongoh Choi, the poomsae coach of the Pakistan national team, while appreciating the performance of the national athletes, said that our players have made a

place on the victory stand by using their full potential against their competitors.

Good results are expected in further competitions, he added. Meanwhile, Pakistan Taekwondo Federation President, Colonel (R) Wasim Ahmed, CEO Omar Saeed and Secretary General Murtaza Bangash congratulated the medal winners for their outstanding performance and winning a medal for the nation.

Fifa to explore impact of moving domestic matches abroad



LONDON (Agencies): Football's world governing body Fifa is to set to establish a working group to look at the impact of playing competitive domestic matches overseas.

A legal settlement agreed between Fifa and match promoter Relevant Sports in the USA has, in the words of Premier League chief executive Richard Masters, "left the door ajar" for league games to be played in different countries.

Whilst the Premier League say they have no plans to do so, despite being the instigators of the infamous '39th game' idea during Richard Scudamore's time at the

helm, La Liga are already planning overseas games for the 2025-26 campaign.

La Liga have revived their plans to play league fixtures overseas after cancelling Barcelona's league match against Girona in 2019, which was due to be held in Miami.

Fifa had previously been opposed to the idea, feeling it had the potential to take valuable finance away from domestic clubs.

But the matter was discussed at its Council meeting in Bangkok on Wednesday, when it was agreed to set up a working group to 'gather further information and issue recommendations' and to

also look at the impact on host countries.

Before making any decision, Fifa want to address issues such as the amount of notice over the scheduling of matches, the impact on the balance of sporting competition and the effect on the development of football in the host countries.

The Council said any proposal must take various factors into account, including "whether adequate provision has been made for fans of the teams playing a proposed out-of-territory match to attend the match in the host country".

Relevant Sports had driven the idea of overseas matches being played in the United States, having launched the pre-season International Champions Cup. They also tried to host an Ecuador League game in the United States in 2019, but that was blocked by Fifa.

Last summer they promoted the six-team Premier League summer series that featured Chelsea, Newcastle, Aston Villa, Brighton, Fulham and Brentford.

Babar Azam promises 'positive intent', aggressive approach against England

LAHORE/DUBLIN (APP): Pakistan Men's cricket team captain Babar Azam has said that Pakistan cricket team will continue to play with the same 'positive intent' against England, it showcased against Ireland in the last two T20Is of the series in Dublin.

In post-match conversation with the PCB Youtube channel in Dublin on Tuesday night, he said the team has improved on many areas of the game during the series in both batting and bowling. Pakistan team bagged the T20I series against Ireland 2-1 after victory in the third T20I by six wickets through extraordinary performances from Shaheen Shah Afridi, Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan. Pakistan are due to fly to England to play a four-match T20I series from May 22 to May 30.

On the improvements, Babar said Mohammad Rizwan and Fakhar Zaman have given good performanc-

es in the middle order in the second and third T20I against Ireland, adding that their form is a good omen for the country. "We were struggling in the lower middle order in the past but Azam Khan and Iftikhar Ahmed played good knocks during the series," he added.

"The team played with 'positive intent' after defeat in the first of the three T20Is against Ireland and it achieved the game plan it was given," the skipper said, adding that the team had struggled after the first six overs of the power-play in the first match of the series but overcame the weakness in the last two games.

"We will carry the same momentum in the four-match T20I series against England," the white-ball captain said. He hailed the senior bowlers like Shaheen Shah Afridi and Mohammad Amir who led from the front in the last two T20Is, adding

that Abbas Afridi has acclimatized well with the pressure of the international cricket and bowled well.

Babar Azam was all praise for Imad Wasim who helped the team to through difficult situations during the series, adding that he rescued the team from difficult scenarios with his bowling. Babar Azam resolved to make amends for the mistakes committed during the Ireland T20I series, adding that there are only four matches prior to the departure for ICC T20 World Cup.

On partisan fan base in a foreign land, the Pakistan captain said that the team enjoyed such partisan support from the fans at the ground in Dublin, adding that Pakistan fans had travelled from all across Europe to watch them play in Ireland.

The ace batsman Babar Azam urged the Pakistan cricket fans to continue supporting their team with the same zeal in the days to come.

Punjab CM presents Rs30m cheque to hockey team

LAHORE (PPI): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz lauded the national hockey team's achievements, inviting them to her office where she presented a cheque worth Rs 30 million for their silver medal win at the Azlan Shah Hockey Tournament. During the ceremony, she individually congratulated the players, emphasizing hockey's significance as both a national sport and a source of pride.

At the meeting, Maryam pledged unwavering support for the hockey team, promising initiatives to bolster the sport's development across Punjab. She vowed to revamp infrastructure and organizing competitions at various levels, according to a statement issued today.

Expressing gratitude on behalf of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and herself, she hailed the team's accomplishment as a moment of national pride. She affirmed her commitment to providing financial assistance, enhancing training facilities, and enlisting international expertise to elevate hockey standards.

The players reciprocated the Chief Minister's sentiments, pledging to strive for further excellence in future tournaments. The event, attended by government officials including Senator Pervaiz Rasheed and Provincial Information Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari, underscored the government's determination to rejuvenate Pakistan's hockey landscape."

Rabada leaves IPL early but set for T20 World Cup



GUWAHATI (Agencies): South Africa speedster Kagiso Rabada has returned home from the Indian Premier League due to a "soft tissue infection" but remains on track for the T20 World Cup in June.

Rabada played 11 matches and took 11 wickets for his IPL team Punjab Kings, who are out of the play-off race and will play their final league game on May 19.

"Kagiso Rabada has returned home from the IPL due to a lower limb soft tissue infection," Cricket South Africa said on Wednesday.

"The 28-year-old consulted a specialist on arrival in South Africa (on Sunday evening) and is being closely monitored by the CSA medical team. His preparation for the upcoming T20 World Cup in West Indies and the USA is not expected to be affected."

Rabada is the only black African player in the South African 15-man squad for the tournament in the United States and the West Indies from June 1-29.

Rabada has represented the Proteas in 62 Tests, 101 ODIs and 56 T20 internationals since his debut in 2014 in the shortest format.

Sabalenka cruises to Rome Open semi finals



Rome (AFP/APP): Aryna Sabalenka cruised into the semi-finals of the Rome Open on Wednesday after comfortably defeating Jelena Ostapenko in straight sets, 6-2, 6-4.

Second seed Sabalenka needed an hour and 13 minutes to see off Ostapenko and improve her record against her Latvian opponent to three wins and no defeats.

In the last four crowd favourite Sabalenka will face the winner of two-time Australian Open champion Victoria Azarenka and Danielle Collins, this year's Miami Open winner, who face off later on centre court.

"With this amazing atmosphere and with this amazing support... that's why I'm super motivated here and that's why I always say that this is the

dream tournament for me to win," said Sabalenka.

"I really enjoy playing here so I don't have to think about being focused... I'm just here enjoying it and doing everything I can to win every point I play no matter what the score. I guess that's the key."

The 26-year-old could get a rematch of the Madrid final which she lost in dramatic fashion to world number one Iga Swiatek earlier this month.

And Sabalenka, who has won the two most recent Australian Opens, was in a different class to Ostapenko who could do nothing in the face of some punishing hitting.

Rome is the first time since the 2013 French Open that the top three women have reached the last four

of a WTA event of 250 level or higher, with Swiatek and world number three Coco Gauff in the other semi-final.

Following Sabalenka will be Alejandro Tabilo whose fairytale run in the men's tournament continues against China's unseeded Zhang Zhizhen for a place in the semi-finals.

Tabilo knocked out six-time Rome champion Novak Djokovic on Sunday and as the 29th seed will be favourite to set up a last four clash with either world number five Alexander Zverev or Taylor Fritz who play the day's final match.

Zverev, who won the Rome title in 2017, is the highest ranked man left in the event after Daniil Medvedev's elimination on Tuesday.

As well as Novak Djokovic's exit, Italian world number two Jannik Sinner and third-ranked Carlos Alcaraz both dropped out injured before the tournament.

Holger Rune, who lost last year's final to Medvedev, Madrid champion Andrey Rublev -- ranked sixth in the world -- and beaten finalist Felix Auger-Aliassime have also been eliminated.

VC commends women, children's interest in challenging sports

HYDERABAD (APP): The provincial Judo competitions for men and women under the Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt Youth Sports League have commenced today at Sindh Agriculture University (SAU), Tandojam, Players from five regions of Sindh are participating in these competitions, which include various weight categories for men, women and children.

The competitions hosted by Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) and supported by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Islamabad featured

ten male and female teams from the Hyderabad, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sukkur, Larkana and Karachi regions. Additionally, children's competitions are also taking place.

According to the spokesman of SAU, the event was inaugurated by the Vice Chancellor Dr. Fateh Mari and Air Commodore (Retd.) Nayyer Qayum Khawaja, Principal of SST Public School Rashidabad. On the first day, in the women's open weight category, Karachi's Saboor won the gold medal, Hyderabad's

Maria got silver and Larkana's Noor Fatima won bronze medal. In the men's open weight category, Mehar Rahman won the gold medal, Shaheed Benazirabad's Khurram acquired silver and Karachi's Muhammad Talal clinched the bronze medal.

On this occasion, the Vice Chancellor Dr. Mari praised the interest of women and children in challenging sports, stating it is commendable. Air Commodore (Retd.) Nayyer Qayum Khawaja noted that the sports activities at SAU will promote a healthy generation.

Milan secures Giro stage double, Pogacar holds lead

FRANCAVILLA AL MARE (AFP): Jonathan Milan claimed his second win at this year's Giro d'Italia after taking the honours at Wednesday's 11th stage in a messy bunch sprint.

Having already won stage four, Italian Milan pipped a clutch of top sprinters to the line at Francavilla al Mare, on the shores of the Adriatic Sea, after 207 kilometres from Foiano di Val Fortore.

After an easy day heading north along the Adriatic coast, all of the sprint and general classification contenders were involved in the long straight final sprint into a headwind.

A nasty crash left several riders on the ground in the final kilometre but in the sprint to the line Lidl-Trek rider Milan broke off Tim Merlier's wheel, bursting through to notch his fifth win of the season.

"It's not just this 20-second sprint or the victory in the end that made me



happy. It was all the work the guys did today to support me and bring me to the crucial position for the sprint," said track specialist Milan.

"This is what has made me happy. A real team, as we are. I think today it's just unbelievable what the guys did for me today."

Milan's win was a reversal of the third stage when Soudal Quick-Step's Belgian rider Merlier took the victory ahead of the current points jersey holder.

The 23-year-old Milan leads Alpecin's Australian rider Kaden Groves, was third across the line, by 63

points. Merlier is some way off the pace for the cyclamen jersey and was replaced on the podium by Giovanni Leonardi for dangerous riding.

Slovenian Tadej Pogacar retains the leader's pink jersey with an unchanged lead of 2min 40sec over Colombian Daniel Martinez, while Welshman Geraint Thomas is a further 16sec back in third overall.

Thursday's 12th stage takes the peloton from Martinsicuro to Fano, a 190km run which takes in a series of punchy small climbs.



In brief

Police arrest 02 bike lifters

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested two bike lifters and street criminals and recovered three stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession, said a Police spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, Rawat Police Station managed to net two bike lifters namely Zohaib and Kashif and recovered three stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Saddar, Muhammad Nabeel said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars.

IRSA releases 178,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 178,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 217,200 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1471.00 feet and was 73.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 58,100 cusecs and 36,200 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1173.95 feet, which was 123.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 58,700 cusecs and 42,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 126,500, 89,200, 44,300 and 13,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 69,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 16,700 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

Suspect held for shooting real brother

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police on Wednesday apprehended a suspect in connection with the fatal shooting of his own brother following a domestic dispute. The suspect identified as Waqas, allegedly conspired with his brother-in-law, Intizar, to commit the heinous act, resulting in the death of his brother, Sajjad. Police with the help of human intelligence and latest technology arrested the accused in connection with the tragic incident. The case of the incident was registered in Patriata police station on the complaint of the victim's brother. Superintendent of Police (SP) Saddar Muhammad Nabil Khokhar said that the arrested accused will be brought to court with solid evidence and will be punished. It is imperative that individuals involved in such grave crimes must be held accountable for their actions, he added.

AIOU holds seconds session of 68th BASR meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): The second session of 68th meeting of the Board of Advanced Studies and Research (BASR) was held at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) yesterday to review the synopsis of students. The Directorate of BASR organized the meeting and the Director BASR, Prof Dr. Syed Amir Shah, moderated the session, said a press release on Wednesday. All four Deans, prominent scholars, subject specialists, supervisors, heads of departments attended the meeting. Nineteen students presented synopses, including 12 scholars from the Department of English and 7 from the Department of Pakistani Languages.



ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Donald Blome calls on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja. —APP Photo

PM committed to building country's climate resilience: Romina

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam has said that global warming is adversely affecting glaciers, ecosystems, lives and livelihoods of the people in mountain regions around the world.

However, addressing the challenges of rapidly melting glaciers, loss of ecosystem and protection of lives and livelihoods is not possible without the global community join hands to tackle the drivers of the global warming, particularly containing emissions of heat-trapping gases.

Chairing a meeting with Italian non-governmental organisation EvK2CNR here on Wednesday, the

PM's Coordinator observed that soaring temperatures in the mountain regions including Pakistan are accompanied by changes in seasonal weather patterns, the melting of glaciers, the thawing of permafrost, and reductions in the extent and duration of snow cover.

As a result, water flows and its availability for industrial, household and agricultural uses has been shrinking and becoming increasingly unreliable, she added.

"Initiatives, which can help slow down global warming, are direly needed to overcome devastating impacts of climate change on glaciers, mountains, ecosystems, water flows, agriculture, public health and education," Romina

Khurshid Alam stressed.

Since the early 1900s, many glaciers around the world have been rapidly melting. Human activities are at the root of this phenomenon. Specifically, since the industrial revolution, carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions have raised temperatures, even higher in the poles, and as a result, glaciers are rapidly melting, calving off into the sea and retreating on land.

She said that adopting sustainable means of production and consumption is key to tackle climate change and its impacts on various socio-economic sectors, particularly water, agriculture, energy, health and education.

Majority express satisfaction with Hajj services under govt scheme

ISLAMABAD (APP): As Hajj flight operation to Saudi Arabia is in full swing, majority of intending pilgrims Wednesday have expressed complete satisfaction over the remarkable hajj arrangements made by the government of Pakistan during their stay in Saudi Arabia and saying their experience has so far been "better than private hajj schemes."

Talking to PTV news channel, a group of hajj pilgrims commented that they are performing Hajj through the government initiative, conveyed utmost satisfaction with the facilities provided by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and expressed gratitude over warmly welcomed on Madinah airport.

"The arrangements made

for us here by the Pakistani government are better than expected", said another elderly woman.

"The hotel resident is right opposite the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah which is very convenient for us," said a male pilgrim.

"I am here for Hajj for the first time and this experience has been very good," said a pilgrim from Lahore, adding, "I will recommend all people who wants to plan next year hajj that they should prefer government hajj scheme as compared to private schemes as it is more secure and safe."

Pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia also thanked the present government for providing excellent arrangements enabling them to pay more focus and devotion on

their prayers at the Masjid-e-Nabawi.

In-charge Lost and Found Cell Rana Mujahid also highlighting services that several measures have been taken to ensure the safety and security of pilgrims and their luggage.

He said all the 93 complaints of lost luggage received so far have been addressed successfully. He further added that there were sixteen reports of missing Hujjaj and all of them have been traced and dropped to their respective groups.

Rana Mujahid said the ministry's staff in Madinah has been working round the clock to ensure seamless Hajj experience for the intending pilgrims.

ANF recovers 47 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting seven operations across the country managed to recover 47 kg drugs and arrested 12 suspects, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday.

He informed that 600 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel booked for UK at a courier office in Sialkot. 13 kg heroin was recovered from two suspects arrested near M-1 Motorway Islamabad.

10 kg opium and 320 grams weed were recovered from three accused netted on M-8 Gwadar.

10 kg Ice was recovered from three Afghans held in Torkham area while 8 kg heroin was recovered from two suspects rounded up near Divine Garden Lahore. 4 kg heroin was recovered from an accused arrested near Bhaini Road Lahore. The spokesman informed that 1 kg hashish and 130 grams Ice were recovered from an accused in Tando Thoru, Hyderabad.

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

SSP holds "Khuli Katchery"

RAWALPINDI (APP): Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Investigation Rawalpindi, Zunera Azfar here on Wednesday held a 'Khuli Katchery' at Police Line Headquarter to address public complaints.

According to a Police spokesman, the SSP issued directives to the officers concerned to take action and submit detailed reports on the complaints submitted by the citizens.

She said that negligence on part of the officials concerned would not be tolerated. 'Khuli Katcheries' were being held to provide the citizens immediate relief and address their complaints besides it also helped improve standards of policing, she said and issued orders to the officers to complete inquiries and send reports within the given time frame.

All-out efforts should be made to ensure the dispensation of speedy justice purely on merit to the people and improve service delivery standards in the district, she added.

The spokesman informed that the Senior Police Officers under the Punjab government's open door policy were holding 'Khuli Katcheries' here to provide relief to the citizens.

DG PNCA Checks on Abida Parveen's Health

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Director General of Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA), Mr. Muhammad Ayoub Jamali visited the eminent folk singer and artist Abida Parveen to inquire about her health. The DG during the visit at her home expressed his concern for her well-being and extended his best wishes for her continued health and prosperity.

As a legendary artist and Sufi singer, Abida Parveen is an acclaimed icon of Pakistani culture. The DG prayed that Allah blesses her with a long and healthy life.

Pakistan, US to enhance IT, Telecom cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja and US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome on Wednesday agreed to enhance cooperation in the IT and Telecommunication sector. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest related to IT and Telecommunication, the digitalisation of Pakistan's judicial system and the promotion of the gaming industry were discussed, said a news release.

While talking to US Ambassador, Shaza Fatima said that the IT and Telecom sector of Pakistan is progressing. She said that Pakistan wanted to enhance its relations with the US in

the field of IT and Telecom.

The minister said that Pakistan wanted to work on the promotion of gaming industry with the collaboration of the United States. She also emphasised increasing business-to-business relations between Pakistan and US. Pakistan aspired to benefit from the experiences of America in the field of technology and exchange of IT experts between the two countries.

The minister of State for IT said that the present government is focusing on digitalisation in the country. Economy, governance and society are being digitalised under the Prime Minister's National Digitalisation Plan, she maintained. Shaza Fatima noted that connecti-

ty is the foundation of digitalisation, adding that steps are on for the provision of connectivity and quality broadband services in the country.

Shaza said that the private sector has a very important role in the uplift of the economy, adding that the private sector is being fully supported under the vision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan. US Ambassador Donald Blome said that the US will fully cooperate with Pakistan in the field of IT and Telecommunication. The meeting was also attended by Additional Secretary MoITT, Aisha Humera Moriani, Member IT Syed Junaid Imam and Member Telecom Muhammad Jahanzeb Rahim.

ICT goes digital: E-Stamps set to simplify legalities



ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant move aimed at modernizing administrative processes, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon, spearheaded the transition from traditional stamp papers to e-stamp papers.

According to the Spokesman of ICT's Administration, this decision promises enhanced convenience for citizens

engaging in property transactions and other legal matters within the capital. By embracing technology, Islamabad aimed at to streamline the cumbersome process of acquiring manual stamp papers.

In a recent meeting with representatives from Punjab Bank, DC Memon discussed the implementation of e-stamping, highlighting its benefits and ease of ver-

ification through barcoding.

This transition marked a progressive step towards digitizing administrative procedures, aligning with global trends of digital governance. Soon, citizens of Islamabad would bid farewell to the hassle of manual stamp papers, embracing the efficiency and reliability of e-stamp papers for their legal transactions.

Consumer courts providing relief to citizens

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak on Wednesday said that the consumer courts are providing relief to the citizens.

Chairing a Divisional Coordination Committee (DCC) review meeting held here, the chairman directed the deputy commissioners to fully activate the Consumer Courts/Consumer Protection Councils as the consumer courts are a major source of public relief. To protect the rights of the consumers, there are very strong laws in consumer protection which require public awareness of their use, he added.

The commissioner said that the public should be informed on how they could register their complaints and get immediate responses. He said that a complaint management system was being made in the Commissioner's Office

with the help of the Punjab Information Technology Board.

The Commissioner informed that the application received under the Complement Management System could be traced.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Hasan Waqar Cheema, Director General, Rawalpindi Development Authority and other relevant officers participated in the review meeting.

He directed the DCs to ensure that the Price Magistrates were checking all areas in their respective jurisdiction.

In the next review meeting, the status of the pending NOCs under all the offices should also be shown and the detailed reason for the pendency should also be recorded, he directed.

A total of 66 manholes were covered on the complaints received across the division during the last 24

hours, he said adding, that out of 1108 faulty street lights 854 were activated. Out of 224 complaints regarding block drains, 141 were cleared, he informed.

The price of Roti had been fixed at Rs 15 across the division. 142 price magistrates checked 947 Tandoors in the last 24 hours to ensure the availability of Roti at a fixed price, he added.

During this period 97 violations were reported and fines amounting to Rs 240,000 were imposed while 12 people were arrested. Complaints of overcharging at 167 locations during 7337 raids were checked in last 24 hours.

In action against overcharging, a fine amounting to Rs 650,000 was imposed, two First Information Report (FIRs) were lodged, two buildings were sealed and 46 violators were arrested, he added.

Students of PIEAS display creative projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): Final year students of Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS) being run under the aegis of Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) displayed their creative projects at the institute's ninth Open House organized at its campus here on Wednesday.

The event was organized by the Office of Research Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) at PIEAS that marks the culmination of the academic efforts of PIEAS graduating students who demonstrated their final year projects for evaluation by the academia and experts.

This year's open house also included a career fair, in which various companies participated for recruiting talented students of the university who possess the necessary skills and quali-

fications.

These companies conducted on-the-spot interviews and technically reviewed resumes of students to streamline their recruitment process and identify promising PIEAS candidates for job placements.

Over two dozen projects were displayed in the day-long activity. The event was attended by a large number of students, intellectuals from different organizations and industry professionals.

The event also provided the students, who displayed their products, with an opportunity to interact with professionals and potential employers.

The faculty of PIEAS was also available for further healthy cooperation and discussion. The innovative products developed by the students were of high standard and received

overwhelming response from the visitors.

A large number of professionals from the industry both from private and public sectors participated in the event.

The projects covered crucial areas in science and technology such as fluid mechanics, power electronic, brain imagery techniques, structural analysis, bio-medical engineering, thermal hydraulics, analytical techniques power and heat transmission techniques and automotive engineering control.

The creative projects of the students showcased during the Open House reflected the productive education being imparted at the university and spoke volumes of the standard of research being carried out at the university under the supervision of highly qualified and experienced faculty of PIEAS.



ISLAAMBAD: Ambassador of Turkmenistan Atadjan Movlamov called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House. —APP Photo

Exports totaled \$1.79 billion

KABUL (Ariana News): NSIA said on Wednesday that last year, the value of exports totaled \$1.79 billion while imports totaled \$8.57 billion. According to NSIA, fruits accounted for the largest share of export items last year, totaling over \$645 million. Medicinal plants, minerals and vegetables were the next top three items respectively to be exported. Meanwhile, petroleum and oil accounted for the largest portion of imported goods, totaling over \$1.37 billion.

Deminer killed in Uruzgan

URUZGAN (Ariana News): A deminer died in a landmine explosion in Afghanistan's southern Uruzgan province, police said. The incident happened around 10:00 a.m. in Khurma area of provincial capital Trink Kot, said Hazrat Bilal Uruzgani, the provincial police spokesman. Another deminer was injured in the incident, he said. Uruzgani said that the incident happened during an operation to clear the area from mines.

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

Eight govt institutions merged into ministries

KABUL (TOLONews): Based on a decree from the leader of the Islamic Emirate, eight government institutions that were not previously under the management of ministries have now been merged into ministries.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, stated that this decision was made following the leader's decree to prevent institutional inflation, control excessive expenditures, and enhance effectiveness in operations.

Zabihullah Mujahid told TOLONews, "These institutions have been changed and merged into other institutions, meaning they have been integrated into other departments. This process has been undertaken to prevent institutional inflation, control unnecessary expenditures, and ensure effective management of the institutions."

The Supreme Audit Office (SAO) has been merged into the Directorate of Supervision and Prosecution of Decrees and Orders.

The Afghanistan Medical Council (AMC) has been turned into the General Directorate of the Ministry of Public Health.

The Afghanistan Food and Drug Authority has been merged into the Ministry of Public Health as the deputy body.

The Afghanistan Railway Authority has been given to the Ministry of Public Works and its directorate has been assigned to it.

The Central and Provincial Laboratories for Oil and Gas and its structures have been merged into the Revenue and Customs Deputy of the Ministry of Finance.

The Central and Provincial Laboratories for Food and its structures have been merged into the Deputy of Medicines and Food under the Ministry of

Public Health.

The Vocational Training Directorates have been merged into the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, and the National Olympic Committee has been merged with the General Directorate of Physical Education and Sports, which has been renamed the General Directorate of Olympics, Physical Education, and Sports.

The leader's decree states that employees of the merged institutions and directorates of the Islamic Emirate should be employed based on their needs while ensuring their rights are preserved.

Mohammad Amin, an economist, responded: "If a group of people become unemployed and do not find alternative employment, it is natural that this can become a challenge. However, it is better that the fate of former employees be determined before

merging."

Previously, there were nineteen departments in the formation of the Islamic Emirate, and now, after merging some of these departments, only eleven departments remain in the formation of the Islamic Emirate, alongside twenty-seven independent ministries.

23 killed Takhar floods

TAKHAR (Khaama Press): Recent flash floods in the districts of Farkhar, Chal, Bangi, Namak Ab, Kulfagan, and the center of Takhar province have caused substantial loss of life and extensive financial damage, leaving over a thousand families displaced.

The head of the migrant affairs department of the province stated Wednesday, May 15th, in a statement, that as a result of Friday night's floods, 23 people lost their lives, 18 were injured, dozens of residential houses were destroyed, thousands of jerbis of land were washed away, and hundreds of livestock perished, with over a thousand families displaced in these districts.

The head of migrant affairs mentioned that the displaced families are currently taking shelter in schools, mosques, and neighboring villages. They are in dire conditions and crisis and urgently need humanitarian assistance and shelter.

Additionally, relief teams from the migrant affairs department, in coordination with relevant authorities, have been dispatched to the districts of Chal, Ashkamish, and Farkhar.

There, they have distributed dozens of tent bases, hundreds of bedding materials, and food supplies to the affected individuals. A mobile health center has also been set up to provide medical aid.

The migrant affairs department appeals to aid organizations and charities for more assistance and urgent help for those affected by the floods in the province.

Thousand migrants deported

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Migrants and Repatriates of Afghanistan has announced the expulsion of over 900 migrants and 15 Afghan prisoners from Pakistan.

The ministry said on its social media platform X on Wednesday, that these individuals entered the country through Torkham and Spin Boldak border crossings.

According to the ministry's newsletter, 15 prisoners whose imprisonment in Pakistan ranged from three days to 18 months have been released.

Meanwhile, 954 migrants have been forcibly repatriated and registered by the Ministry of Migrants, receiving assistance.

Three prisoners were also released from detention in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and returned to the country yesterday. Additionally, 500 migrants were forcibly expelled from Pakistan on Tuesday.

The return of these migrants follows the continued expulsion of over one million illegal Afghan migrants from Pakistan.

In Afghanistan, a dire humanitarian crisis is unfolding as the situation worsens due to flash floods compounded by the expulsion of migrants from neighboring countries.

The recent flash floods have devastated communities, displacing thousands from their homes and exacerbating a fragile situation.

With infrastructure damaged and access routes cut off, aid delivery becomes increasingly challenging, leaving many without essential supplies such as food, clean water, and medical assistance.

Hanafi urges global cooperation in Afghanistan



KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi, Deputy Prime Minister for Administrative Affairs of Afghanistan, and Jorge Moreira da Silva, the Executive Director of United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in a meeting both sides emphasized the necessity of global collaboration and cooperation in implementing development projects in Afghanistan.

During the meeting, Jorge Moreira da Silva expressed his satisfaction with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's support and cooperation in aligning the projects of UNOPS.

He highlighted that UNOPS is currently the largest program of the United Nations, focusing on social assistance, infrastructure development, and the irrigation of agricultural

lands within Afghanistan. Da Silva further elaborated on the positive impact of UNOPS projects, stating that over 1.3 million families in 30 provinces and 90 districts of Afghanistan have already benefited from social assistance programs. He also mentioned the organization's aid to earthquake victims in Herat, where houses were provided for those affected.

In response, Mawlawi Abdul Salam Hanafi expressed gratitude for the activities of UNOPS and the assistance provided by the United Nations to the people of Afghanistan.

He affirmed the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's full support for UNOPS projects and the provision of necessary facilities to adapt and execute them effectively.

Nakamura canal project completed in Nangarhar

NAKAMURA, Nangarhar (Ariana News): The construction of a water canal, planned by the late Japanese doctor and aid worker Tetsu Nakamura, has been completed in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province.

Nakamura was from Japan, but had honorary citizenship of Afghanistan. He was killed in 2019. He worked in Nangarhar for many years, focusing mainly on building water canals.

Nakamura was working hard to complete his projects, but these were suspended following his death.

Later, the projects were resumed with the help of the government of Japan.

During his time in Nangarhar, Nakamura built

several health centers and carried out more than 1,600 irrigation projects, canal constructions and provision of clean water.

His greatest work was the construction of a 25-kilometer long canal from the Kunar river, which irrigates hundreds of acres of land. He also built a recreation park, dug wells, and established agricultural research farms.

"Dr. Nakamura made 9 weirs in Kama, Shewa and Behsud districts.

Thousands of acres of land are irrigated and millions of people benefit from it. All the projects planned by Nakamura have been completed," said Ajmal Stankzai, the representative of the Nakamura Foundation.

"Nakamura would behave with a laborer like a laborer. He used to tell us that the people of every country serve their country and you should also serve the ruined Afghanistan," said Deen Mohammad, a resident of Koz Kanar district of Nangarhar.

In Kama district, the work of Nakamura projects is ongoing. One of the projects is the construction of a second canal from the Kunar river. "There was a huge water problem in Kama district. Fortunately, with Nakamura's cooperation, many lands were irrigated," said Bashir Ahmad Kamawal, a resident of Kama district of Nangarhar.

After Nakamura's death, now an NGO called PMS is following in his footsteps and is working to build canals and dams.

Recently, the construction of a canal in Kot district of Nangarhar was completed and inaugurated. The canal is 5 kilometers long.

"Many projects are planned and our ministry has taken care of them... We thank them for feeling the pain of Afghans and helping our country," said Abdul Latif Mansour, Acting Minister of Energy and Water.

Tetsu Nakamura was shot and killed by unknown men in 2019 when he was going to work from Jalalabad city. It is not yet known who was behind the assassination.

A week after devastation: Murghab district still awaits relief

GHOR (TOLONew): A number of residents from the flood-stricken Murghab district in Ghor say that a week after the devastating floods, they have still received no assistance.

Flood victims add that they have lost their homes and all their possessions, and they have no bread to eat.

Mohammad Zaman, a resident of Murghab district, Ghor, said: "We people are perishing, we have no way out, no bread, no water, and no shelter. If no help comes our way, we will perish."

Abdul Jalil, another resident of Murghab district, said: "We are dying of hunger, we have no place and nothing to eat."

Meanwhile, health officials in Murghab district report that following the floods, due to the lack of clean drinking water, diseases such as pneumonia and diarrhea have spread among children.

Mohammad Taher, head of the clinic in Murghab



district, said: "The floods that occurred in Murghab district have increased respiratory illnesses and diarrhea."

Local officials in Murghab district say that the lack of clean drinking water and food threatens the lives of the flood-affected citizens.

Mir Aqa Musleh, deputy district governor of Murghab, said: "The problem with the areas that have

been damaged is that the water from the Murghab river is contaminated, and there is no access to clean water, nor is there sufficient food." Abdul Basir Yazdanpanah, a civil society activist, said: "People are still displaced; they have lost their homes, land, and livestock. They have no bread to eat, no clean water, and no shelter."

In recent days, several

districts in Ghor, including Murghab and Charsada, have witnessed deadly and destructive floods.

According to local authorities in Ghor, the floods have claimed seven lives and nearly 600 homes have been destroyed, along with 7,000 jerbis (approximately 1,400 hectares) of agricultural land, dozens of shops, and several water channels.

Several dead in helicopter crash

KABUL (Khaama Press): On Wednesday morning, an "MI 17" military helicopter crashed into the Ferozkoh-Herirud River, resulting in several deaths and injuries.

The helicopter had been dispatched to Ghor to rescue two individuals who had drowned in the river.

Enayatullah Khawarazmi, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Defense, informed Khaama Press that the helicopter was retrieving bodies from the Harirod river in the province when it encountered technical issues after a rescue operation.

He explained that the helicopter attempted an emergency landing in Ferozkoh but crashed into a wall.

One person was killed, and 12 others were injured in the incident, with local reports indicating that several casualties were transported to a hospital in Ghor.

Images from the scene show the helicopter wreckage by the river and a crowd of panicked onlookers.

After the withdrawal of the US and its allies from Afghanistan and the



takeover of the Taliban in August 2021, military equipment was left behind, and some of them needed recovery. Still, their operational status and the expertise required to maintain and operate them efficiently remain uncertain.

This situation has led to incidents, including a notable crash of a US-made Black Hawk helicopter during a Taliban training exercise in Kabul, which resulted in three fatalities and additional injuries due to technical problems.

Competitive exhibition of painting organized



KABUL (TOLONews): A competitive exhibition of calligraphy and painting was held in Kabul. In this exhibition, more than seventy artists displayed their works of painting and calligraphy.

They criticized what they consider to be the neglect of the arts of painting and calligraphy in Kabul.

Zarina, a participant, said, "Until today, I have never had a master to work with; however, I am proud that we have reached this level today."

Fereshat, another participant, stated, "Art is fundamentally a necessity in a society because it portrays the realities of a society."

Artists are asking the Islamic Emirate for support and the provision of facilities in the area of raw materials for themselves and their peers.

Mozammil, a participant, remarked, "Although we work very hard, culture and art make up half the body of society; yet no one supports us, our art is diminishing day by day."

Gholam Hossein, another participant, commented, "The exhibitions that have been held this year are very good and have had positive effects on all participants."

Meanwhile, officials from the Afghanistan House of Culture and Arts state that the aim of launching the competitive program is to develop and support painters and calligraphers.

Officials from this institution add that the program was conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Culture and the Afghanistan House of Culture and Arts at the Kabul International Exhibition.

Reza, an official at the House of Culture and Arts, said, "We hope to motivate artists who have become housebound and reluctant to visit their galleries, so that through this initiative they may continue their art and not waste their talent."

According to the officials of the House of Culture and Arts of Afghanistan, currently, ninety percent of the painting and calligraphy galleries have been closed for various reasons, leading to a decline in the presence of painting and calligraphy among the youth.

Iranian investors looking to invest in Afghanistan



KABUL (BNA): The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing has announced that it has received interest from Iranian investors looking to invest in Afghanistan's urban development and housing sector.

A meeting was held between Sheikh Hamdullah Nomani, the Acting Minister of Urban Development and Housing, and representatives from the Iranian construction company Sanpo.

During the meeting, officials from Sanpo Construction Company expressed their readiness to invest in housing and urban development projects in Afghanistan, highlighting

their extensive experience in similar ventures in various countries.

Sheikh Hamdullah Nomani warmly welcomed the investors and provided them with comprehensive information about investment opportunities in the housing and urban development sector.

The Acting Minister assured the investors that the ministry has laid the groundwork to facilitate both domestic and foreign investors in the housing sector, towns, and urban development across all provinces of the country.

Sanpo Construction Company officials shared their extensive portfolio, highlighting their successful

completion of construction projects in various countries such as Oman, Uzbekistan, Iraq, and Iran.

The Ministry of Urban Development and Housing reiterated its commitment to welcoming both domestic and foreign investors, offering favorable conditions and support to those interested in investing in the housing, townships, and urban development sector.

This investment opportunity signifies a positive step towards enhancing bilateral relations between Afghanistan and Iran, while also contributing to the economic growth and development of Afghanistan's urban areas.



KARACHI: Members of civil society chanting slogans during a demonstration against Israeli airstrikes on Gaza, and to show solidarity with Palestinian people.

Fund allocation for uplift projects in KP reviewed

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Third round of meetings regarding the formulation of draft Annual Development Plan 2024-25 was held here on Wednesday with Chief Minister

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair. The meeting discussed the proposed projects of Local Government, Excise, Auqaf and other different departments in addition to reviewing progress on the ongoing development projects of these sectors.

Matters related to fund allocation for ongoing and newly proposed projects of aforementioned departments and other important aspects were also discussed in the meeting. The chief minister on this occasion, has directed the Excise department for immediate steps to ensure recovery of Excise vehicles under the use of unauthorized per-

sons, and made it clear that proper notices be served to all such persons in this regard, adding that necessary action should be taken against all those (unauthorized persons) who failed to return the Excise vehicles within the stipulated timelines.

The chief minister also directed the quarters concerned for necessary steps to retrieve the Auqaf department's properties, further directing them to prepare detailed report of all agricultural and commercial properties of the department. He also directed them to come up with a viable strategy to ensure efficient use of all such properties for enhancing revenue stream of the province. "An effective and modern mechanism of assets management should be devised for this purpose", he directed and added all such properties are public asset and must be used in the public wellbe-

ing; no one would be allowed to utilize this asset for his personal interest, said the chief minister.

He further directed the relevant quarters to propose projects for solarization of Deeni Madaris as well as imparting technical skills to the students of Deeni Madaris and the projects for the welfare of minorities to be reflected in the next annual development plan. Speaking on the occasion, the chief minister termed the forest promoting and preserving as one of the priority areas of his government, and directed the authorities concerned to introduce a mechanism of scientific management for this purpose. "Billion Tree Plus project would be launched for increasing the forest cover of the province", he said and directed that pragmatic steps should also be proposed for the protection of wild life across the province.

Biden and Trump agree to debates

WASHINGTON: United States President Joe Biden and his Republican challenger Donald Trump have agreed to debates in June and September, as the rivals traded barbs on social media about the prospect of the show-downs. In a post on X, Biden said on Wednesday morning that he had received and accepted an invitation from CNN to debate Trump on June 27. "Over to you, Donald. As you said: anywhere, any time, any place," he wrote. Later, Trump said on his Truth social platform that it was his "great honor" to accept the CNN debate invitation. The presumptive Democratic and Republican presidential nominees also said they had agreed to a second debate on September 10, to be hosted by ABC News. The announcements came just hours after Biden challenged Trump to two debates before November's election but said he would bypass a traditional debate schedule set by a bipartisan commission.

"Donald Trump lost two debates to me in 2020, and since then, he hasn't shown up to a debate," Biden said in a video posted online earlier in the day. "Now he's acting like he wants to debate me again. Well, make my day, pal. I'll even do it twice," Biden had called on Trump to join him for two televised presidential debates in June and September. His proposal, outlined in a letter and a video, called for direct negotiations between the Trump and Biden campaigns over the rules, network hosts and moderators for the one-on-one meetings. Trump responded swiftly, writing on his Truth Social media platform earlier on Wednesday that he was "Ready and Willing to Debate Crooked Joe" on the proposed dates. — Aljazeera

US announces \$2b in new aid for Ukraine

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has announced \$2bn in additional military aid for Ukraine as he visits the country at a crucial phase in the war, with Russia striking deeper into Ukrainian territory and claiming to have seized three more settlements.

Speaking at a joint news conference in Kyiv alongside Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba on Wednesday, Blinken said the support, which comes on top of \$61bn in US support approved by Congress last month, would be aimed at investing in Ukraine's industrial base. He announced that the United States and Ukraine had already done the "heavy lifting" on a bilateral security agreement, which could be signed within weeks. He said the US was rushing ammunition, armoured vehicles, missiles and air defences to Ukraine in order to ensure their speedy delivery to the front line.

His remarks came as Ukrainian forces are being stretched across the long front line, struggling to fend off a renewed Russian offensive. On Wednesday, Russia's Ministry of Defence said Russian forces had taken control of the settlements of Hlyboke and Lukiantsi in the north-eastern Kharkiv region, and Robotyne in the southern Zaporizhzhia region, the latest in a run of incremental gains that have alarmed Kyiv. — Aljazeera

Slovak PM in life-threatening condition after being shot

HANDLOVA (Reuters): Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico suffered life-threatening injuries on Wednesday when he was shot and wounded in an attempted assassination that stunned his small Central European nation and drew a chorus of international condemnation.

Slovak media said the shooter was a 71-year-old man but the motive was not immediately clear. Slovakia, a member of NATO and the European Union, has little history of political violence. Russia's President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Joe Biden joined Slovakia's EU partners in expressing shock and condemnation of the shooting. Fico, 59, was rushed to hospital in the central Slovak town of Handlova where he had been chairing a government meeting. He was then transported by helicopter to regional capital Banská Bystrica for urgent treatment, it said, adding that his condition was too serious for him to be taken to Bratislava.

A Reuters witness heard three or four shots as Fico exited a building to shake hands with a crowd of people who had been waiting to greet him. Police then wrestled a man to the ground. "An assassination (attempt) on Prime Minister Robert Fico was carried out today at the government's off-site meeting in Handlova," the government office said in a statement.

Slovak news media reported the shooter was a former security guard at a shopping mall, an author of three collections of poetry and a member of the Slovak Society of Writers. Aktuality.sk cited his son as saying his father was the legal holder of a gun licence. "I have absolutely no idea what my father intended, what he planned, what happened," news outlet Aktuality.sk quoted the shooter's son as saying. Broadcaster TA3 reported four shots had been fired, and that the leftist prime minister had been hit in the abdomen.

"I don't think I will wake up from this," Lubica Valkova, a 66-year-old resident told reporters. "This kind of thing just can't happen in Slovakia." Fico, who returned as prime minister last October for the fourth time, has



drawn criticism in some quarters for taking a more pro-Russian stance in the Ukraine war and initiating reforms of criminal law and the media which have raised concerns over the rule of law and prompted street protests.

Describing the shooting as a "monstrous" crime, Putin said in a telegram sent to Slovakia's President Zuzana Caputova: "I know Robert Fico as a courageous and strong-minded man. I very much hope that these qualities will help him to survive this difficult situation." Biden offered U.S. help to Slovakia, saying in a statement: "We condemn this horrific act of violence." Fico's close ally Lubos Blaha, deputy parliament speaker and deputy chairman of the prime minister's SMER-SSD party, blamed what he called the "liberal media" and opposition for creating an atmosphere that led to the shooting.

"For SMER-SSD, I want to sharply condemn what happened today in Handlova and at the same time express heavy disgust over what you have committed here in the past years," Blaha said. "You, liberal media and political opposition. What hatred you spread against Robert Fico." Slovakia's biggest opposition party Progressive Slovakia called off a planned protest against government

public broadcaster reforms set for Wednesday evening.

"We call on all politicians to refrain from any expressions and steps that could contribute to an escalation of tension," said Michal Simecka, leader of Progressive Slovakia, a liberal pro-Western party. During a three-decade career, Fico has moved between the pro-European mainstream and nationalistic positions opposed to EU and U.S. policies. He has also shown a willingness to change course depending on public opinion or changed political realities. An admirer of Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban, Fico has grown increasingly critical of Western support for Ukraine in its war with invading Russian forces and has expressed opposition to allowing Kyiv to join NATO in the future.

Fico was forced to resign as premier amid mass protests in 2018 triggered by the contract killing of Jan Kuciak, a journalist who had been investigating high-level corruption. Those protests exacerbated divisions in Slovak society that still linger. Slovakia's President-elect Peter Pellegrini cut short a foreign trip and is returning to the country, a spokesperson for his HLAS party said.

CJP warns of systematic destruction of Varsities

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa has sounded the alarm on the systematic erosion plaguing the nation's universities, warning of dire consequences for the country's future.

During a hearing pertaining to the appointment of permanent vice-chancellors in government universities, a three-member bench of the Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa to issue a solemn warning regarding the future trajectory of Pakistan.

Expressing dismay over the deteriorating state of affairs, Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa lamented the absence of concerted efforts to address the systemic challenges plaguing universities. He decried the wanton neglect and indifference displayed towards the educational infrastructure, cautioning against the detrimental impact on Pakistan's socio-economic development. In a scathing rebuke, Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa denounced the prioritization of political rhetoric over substantive discussions on educational reform. He bemoaned the

interim vice-chancellors or have vacant leadership positions. This concerning trend underscores a pervasive lack of stability within the higher education sector, prompting Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa to issue a solemn warning regarding the future trajectory of Pakistan.

Drawing parallels between the destruction witnessed in other sectors, such as the national airline, and the deterioration of educational institutions, Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa underscored the urgent need for proactive measures to stem the tide of decay. He called for greater accountability and transparency in governance, emphasizing the critical role of universities as the bedrock of Pakistan's intellectual and social progress. As the judiciary continues to scrutinize the state of higher education, Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa's impassioned plea serves as a rallying cry for concerted action to reverse the tide of systemic destruction and safeguard the future of Pakistan's universities.

JI calls for resignations over Dubai leaks

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman has demanded immediate resignations from all individuals implicated in the Dubai Property Leaks scandal, citing widespread concerns over the transparency and legitimacy of their overseas investments.

Addressing the latest revelation of Pakistani elite's vast property holdings in Dubai, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman condemned the pattern of wealth accumulation among the country's political and influential figures, characterizing it as a betrayal of public trust. With over 22 thousand Pakistanis reportedly owning properties worth a staggering \$12.5 billion in Dubai, the scandal has once again laid bare the extent of financial impropriety within the ruling class.

Raising pointed questions regarding the origins and legality of funds used to purchase properties abroad, He called for full disclosure from those implicated in the leaks. He challenged the ruling elite to clarify whether these investments were duly declared to relevant authorities and whether they were acquired through legitimate means.

Expressing grave concerns over the implications of such revelations on Pakistan's economic stability and governance, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman warned against the detrimental impact of capital flight on domestic investment and development initiatives. He asserted that individuals involved in offshore investments were undermining Pakistan's prospects for prosperity and security.

The Dubai Property Leaks have cast a spotlight on several prominent figures, including political scions and high-ranking officials, raising questions about their financial dealings and ethical conduct. Among those named in the leaks are Hussain Nawaz, son of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, and various members of political dynasties.

With Pakistanis ranking second among foreign property buyers abroad, the scandal has underscored the need for greater transparency and accountability in wealth management practices. The revelation that retired generals and other public figures are also implicated in the leaks further underscores the pervasive nature of the issue.

PHC adjourns hearing on KP CM plea against NAB

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A two-member bench Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Shakeel Ahmad adjourned hearing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur plea against National Accountability Bureau (NAB) notice on petitioner's lawyer request, on Wednesday.

The lawyer representing the Chief Minister, Alam Khan Adeenzai advocate requested PHC for adjournment of the hearing as the previous lawyer had become a government lawyer and he has submitted new power of attorney.

NAB prosecutor Hashmat Jehangir argued that the petition had become ineffective as no new notice had been issued after the previous. Justice Ijaz Anwar asked what kind of inquiry this was, and the NAB prosecutor explained that the Chief Minister was accused of misusing his authority when he was the Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs. PHC's divisional bench comprised Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Shakeel Ahmad adjourned further hearing by granting time to the Chief Minister's lawyer for preparation to argue the case.

Meanwhile, PHC's divisional bench comprised of Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Syed Arshad Ali disposed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) social media In-

Cut on free textbooks: KP govt ordered to submit reply

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising of Justice Ijaz Anwar and Shakeel Ahmad ordered provincial government to submit report regarding reduction in budget for free textbook in the public sector schools of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Wednesday.

The petitioner, Fawad Afzal Safi advocate, argued that providing free education is a constitutional obligation of the state, and the government has also legislated on this matter. He pointed out that Article 25-A of the Constitution makes education free and compulsory for children between the ages of 5 and 16 years.

The lawyer also mentioned that previously, the province used to provide free textbooks to students, but the government has now reduced the supply of free textbooks by 20% for primary classes and 50% for classes 6th to 12th. The petitioner argued that this reduction is illegal and violates Article 25-A of the Constitution. He also pointed out that education is key to economic progress, and the government should prioritize it instead of reducing the education budget.

charge Azhar Mashwani wife and brother pleas against enlisting their names in the Exit Control List (ECL) and the Provisional National Identification List (PNIL).

The counsel Syed Sikandar Hayat Shah and Ali Azim Afridi advocates argued that the petitioners enlisted in ECL and PNIL, which prevented them from traveling abroad. Additional Director Legal of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Abdul Rehman informed PHC that the petitioners' names had been removed from the list. However, the lawyer Ali Azim argued that Azhar Mashwani wife was off-

loaded from airplane.

Justice S M Attique Shah asked why the petitioner being stopped from going abroad, however, Additional Director Legal replied that it was possible that their names were still on the list at the time of her travel. The court expressed surprise at how this could happen, and the FIA representative assured the court that the petitioners' names had been removed from the list. PHC's divisional bench comprising of Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Arshad Ali disposed of the petition, accepting the FIA's assurance that the names had been removed from the list.

Erdogan says Israel will 'set sights' on Turkiye

ISTANBUL (AFP): President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday claimed that Israel would "set its sights" on Turkiye if it succeeded in defeating Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Erdogan, a vocal critic of Israel's war in the Palestinian territory following Hamas's attack on October 7, has often expressed support for the Palestinian group as defenders of their homeland.

Hamas is classed as a terrorist organization by Israel, the United States and the European Union, among others. "Do not think that Israel will stop in Gaza," Erdogan told his party lawmakers in the parliament in the capital Ankara.

"Unless it's stopped... this rogue and terrorist state will set its sights on Anatolia sooner or later," he said, referring to the large Turkish peninsula also called Asia Minor that comprises more than half of Turkiye's territory. "We will continue to stand by Hamas, which fights for

EU urges Israel to end Rafah military operation 'immediately'

BRUSSELS (AFP): The European Union on Wednesday urged Israel to end its military operation in Gaza's Rafah "immediately," warning that failure to do so would undermine ties with the bloc. "Should Israel continue its military operation in Rafah, it would inevitably put a heavy strain on the EU's relationship with Israel," said the statement issued in the EU's name by its foreign policy chief Josep Borrell.

"The European Union urges Israel to end its military operation in Rafah immediately," the statement said, warning it was "further disrupting the distribution of humanitarian aid in Gaza and is leading to more internal displacement, exposure to famine and human suffering." The bloc — the main aid donor for the Palestinian territories and Israel's biggest trading partner — said more than a million people in and around Rafah had been ordered by Israel to flee the area to other zones the UN says cannot be considered safe.

the independence of its own land and which defends Anatolia," added Erdogan. The Turkish leader on Monday said more than 1,000 members of Hamas were being treated in Turkish hospitals amid the ongoing war in Gaza.

The October 7 attack on

Israel resulted in the deaths of more than 1,170 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures. Militants also seized some 250 hostages, 128 of whom Israel estimates remain in Gaza, including 36 the military says are dead.



گیس چوری کی سزا

بدنامی، حیرمانہ، جیل کی ہوا

<p>ذیلی یا محلی گیس لائن کو نقصان پہنچانا</p> <p>10 برس قید اور 30 لاکھ روپے جرمانہ</p>	<p>گیس پائپ لائن کو نقصان</p> <p>14 برس قید اور 1 کروڑ روپے جرمانہ</p>
<p>تخریب کاری کے ذریعے گیس لائن کو نقصان پہنچانا</p> <p>14 برس قید اور 10 لاکھ روپے جرمانہ</p>	<p>کوشش یا منصوبہ کو نقصان پہنچانا</p> <p>10 برس قید اور 50 لاکھ روپے جرمانہ</p>
<p>گھریلو صارف کا گیس چوری میں ملوث ہونا</p> <p>6 ماہ قید اور 1 لاکھ روپے جرمانہ</p>	<p>بدلتی سے گیس کا فیصلہ یا گیس کے ترسیل نظام کو نقصان پہنچانا</p> <p>7 برس قید اور 50 لاکھ روپے جرمانہ</p>

گیس چوروں کے خلاف

CRACKDOWN

خبردار!

گیس چیف کنٹرول اینڈ ریکوری ایکٹ 2016ء کے تحت گیس کے غیر قانونی استعمال، گیس تنصیبات کے ساتھ چھینچھاڑ اور گیس فراہمی میں رکاوٹ پیدا کرنا قابل سزا جرم ہے

PID(L)3609-D

گیس چوری کی اطلاع 1199 پر دیں